

TouchPoint

The North American Baptist Conference Women's Connection Newsletter

July/August 2019

Remembering the I AM Statements of Jesus



BY BECKY HARLING

Leadership has its ups and downs. It's kind of like the Olympics: the agony and the ecstasy. There are

seasons when ministry is awesome and other seasons when, well... it feels pretty awful. During the seasons when leadership is most challenging, a good practice is to remember.

In my own life, I remember a season when ministry quite frankly was not going well at all. Criticism was coming from every direction, and my husband, Steve, and I felt ready to quit. One morning we received an email from our eighteen-year-old son who was away at college.

JJ, knowing what was going on, wrote, "Dad, don't forget that God called you. Remember the miracles

of the past. God's used you before and He will even now." That short email, reminded me of Asaph's choice, "I will remember the deeds of the Lord" (Ps. 77:11). After everyone left the house that day, I opened my Bible to the book of John and began to write down all the I Am statements of Jesus. What I discovered was that it was a great way to remember the goodness of Jesus and a great pattern for my praise.

Jesus said, I Am the Bread of Life (John 6:35). As I praised and thanked Jesus for being my Bread of Life, I was reminded that even though others felt frustrated with me, Jesus offers continual perfect love.

Jesus said, I Am the Good Shepherd (John 10:11). As our Good Shepherd, He offered protection from fear and anxiety. His rod and staff (Ps. 23:4) brought comfort even through all the criticism.

Jesus said, I Am the Light of the World (John 8:12). Even though life felt very dark, His presence was with us and guiding us. He would shed light on what to do next.

Jesus said, I Am the Resurrection and the Life (John 11:25). Although we felt our dreams had died, I praised Jesus that He was able to resurrect our shattered dreams. I could trust Him.

Jesus said, I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14:6). In His time and in His way, He would reveal truth. I didn't need to try to

prove truth to people; Jesus was the truth and He would reveal truth at some point in time.

Jesus said, I Am the Vine (John 15:5). All we had to focus on was abiding in Him. What He called us to do He would empower us to do. We were anointed and appointed. He had been faithful through past problems and He would continue to be faithful in the present.

WHAT I DISCOVERED WAS THAT IT WAS A GREAT WAY TO Remember THE GOODNESS OF JESUS AND A GREAT PATTERN FOR MY PRAISE.

As I learned to use my list of I Am statements to remember the goodness of Jesus, the Holy Spirit strengthened my heart and filled me with courage.

Here's the thing: when we choose to remember not only all that God has done but all that He is, our faith and courage are strengthened, and we are able to faithfully continue even in the challenging seasons of ministry life.



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Becky Harling is the author of Who Do You Say That I AM?, an 8-week Bible study released in February 2018 (includes video curriculum). She is the author of numerous other books including Rewriting Your Emotional Script, The 30-Day Praise Challenge, and How to Listen So People Will Talk. Visit her website at beckyharling.com.

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Women's Connection Luncheon: Connecting in NorCal

Our Vision

To connect with women of the North American Baptist Conference and help them fulfill their calling

Our Mission

To connect with women of the North American Baptist Conference, encouraging them in their desire to serve God, and providing them with valuable tools and resources to accomplish what God is calling them to do.

Our Core Values

CALLING AND WORTH
 We value the essential role women play in ministry.

QUALITY RESOURCES
 We value God's Word and seek resources that are Biblically sound, applicable and accessible.

BROADER CONNECTION
 We value supporting the broader vision of the North American Baptist Conference and developing a connection among North American Baptist Conference women.

LEGACY & THE FUTURE
 We value the legacy of women who have gone before us and are committed to engaging the next generation.



Ali McGregor, Executive Director of 180Lodi

This past April, more than 20 women attended the Women's Connection Luncheon in Sacramento, California. This diverse group of women came from the different churches in the NorCal Region for an afternoon of encouragement and sharing. We are so grateful to Casa de Luz Sacramento, Tony and Fabiola Campos and the women who joyfully hosted us.

During our time together we had the opportunity to share our stories, pray for one another, and encourage each other in our ministries. One of the most memorable moments was sitting at the table with other women in what we call "Table Talk." We were able to get to know each other better; we exchanged helpful ideas for our ministries, and talked about

our passions, struggles, and about life in general. Alison McGregor, from One-Eighty Lodi, shared with us her experience with Blue Ocean and encouraged us to consider attending gatherings like this with the goal of becoming more missional.

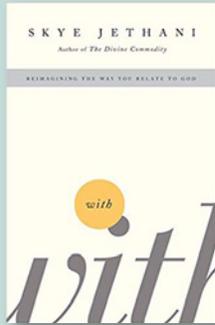
We ended with a reminder of the vision of the NAB and the important role we, as women, play in the work of the Kingdom. We pledged to be connected to one another, and to continue praying for each other as we move forward in participating in the mission of God in our churches.

Women's Connection Leadership Team

- Jean Ewing
- Heather Senges
- Amber Dowd
- Dale Fast
- Fabiola Campos



Book Links



With: Recognizing the Way You Relate to God
by Skye Jethani

as obey=blessing. For means that I purpose to do great things for God. Finally, From means Gods blessings are desired but not relationship. Knowing these four postures challenges my own thought process and has created a desire to change the way I am thinking. The book inspired me to something richer, more joyous and wonderful and more biblically correct. There is no goal except God himself. God wants to “be with us”. This book is a road map that takes you down all the rabbit trails before showing the narrow path that redirects us to seek and serve God in the way He desires and designed us to.

The book ends with a flurry of wonderful insights explaining how to

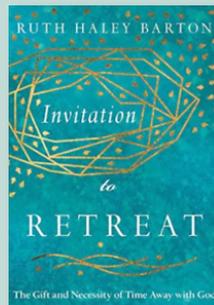
move toward being WITH God. One of the challenges he suggests is to, as Paul says in the Bible, “pray without ceasing.” Jethani describes how setting aside several times throughout the day to pray, combined with prayer books as a way to deepen intimacy with God. I have been using the book *The Divine Hours* (Summertime) and find the discipline and guidance with words very enriching. It pulls me into Gods arms and reminds me of the first commandment that I am here to love Him with all my heart and that everything else flows out of that. There are many other great suggestions. I highly recommend this book to challenge, correct and inspire.

A review by Tanya Humphries who read this book as a member of a LifeGroup at Whyte Ridge Baptist Church, Winnipeg, Manitoba

Our universal innate need is to be deeply connected with someone – not isolated and alone. The book *With* by Skye Jethani guides us to “reimagine the way” we relate to God. His thoughts and language is strong, challenging, fresh and insightful.

He begins by describing four mainstream but, biblically incorrect ways of thinking and communicating with God. I, like most readers, can see myself in several of them and understand now, thanks to Jethani, how they skew my relationship with God. The first half of the book will make you uncomfortable at times as you see yourself in these unhealthy spiritual attitudes and postures. His goal is to usher us into a more intimate and desirous relationship with God.

The four postures are all prepositions: over, under, for and from. Over means that awe, wonder and mystery are ignored and replaced with formulas and controllable results. Under means a cause and effect focus such



Invitation to Retreat
by Ruth Haley Barton

Have you thought about spending time alone with God this summer? Ruth Haley Barton prepares the way in *Invitation to Retreat: The gift and necessity of time away with God*.

“Come away and rest awhile.” Jesus invites us to be with him, offering our full and undivided attention to him. When we choose retreat we make a generous investment in our friendship with Christ. Truth is, we are not always

generous with ourselves where God is concerned. Many of us have done well to incorporate regular times of solitude and silence into the rhythm of our ordinary lives which means we’ve gotten pretty good at giving God twenty minutes here and a half an hour there. And there’s no question we are better for it! But we need more. Indeed, we long for more. In these pages Transforming Center founder and seasoned spiritual director, Ruth Haley Barton, gently and eloquently leads us into an exploration of retreat as a key practice that opens us to God. Based on her own practice and her experience leading hundreds of retreats for others, she will guide you in a very personal exploration of seven specific invitations contained within the general invitation to retreat. You will discover how to say yes to God’s winsome invitation to greater freedom and surrender. There has never been a time when the invitation to retreat is so radical and so relevant, so needed and so welcome. It is not a luxury, but a necessity of the spiritual life.

This Review comes from the inside book cover of Invitation to Retreat



British Columbia Women Connect at Annual Retreat: The Great Escape

REFLECTIONS BY HEIDI STRYBOS

A group of wonderful ladies met again this spring at Rockridge Canyon to connect with both ladies from their own churches and from across the province.

We have been meeting over the last 10 years at this beautiful facility. We invite NAB churches from across the province and get a wonderful cross section of women.

Many faithful women return year after year but we also get ones that have never been away before. It is an opportunity for women to take a weekend for themselves.

Some churches put on their own retreats which we truly encourage. This retreat was started to provide an option for NAB churches that do not have the facilities or means to do so.

Our association is very large geographically and there is no easy solution of a midpoint but

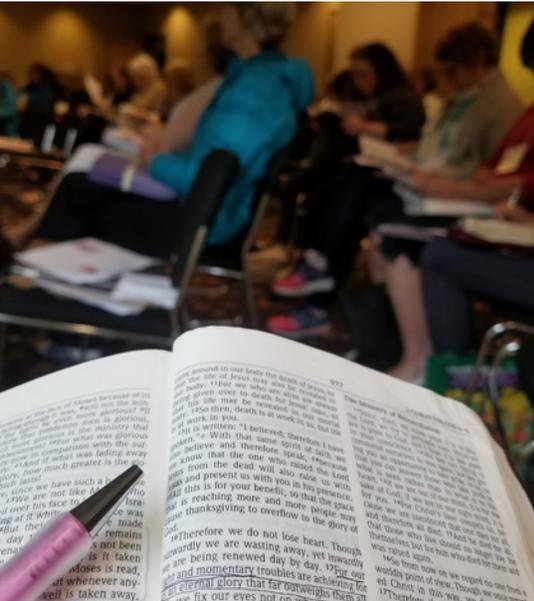
Rockridge Canyon serves a beautiful facility to retreat and be pampered.

It is a breathtaking lodge where we are fed spiritually and literally. The food service always treats us special with extra bacon and extra desserts.

We have had many different speakers over the years but this year we invited Karen Wilk from Forge Canada in Edmonton to speak about literally what it means to love our neighbor.

It was very eye-opening and convicting to remember that we are the church many of our neighbors will only see.

Women need women. Our little retreat hopefully provides a weekend for connection with sisters, girlfriends, church associates, and new friends yet to be made.





NAB Youth Workers and Wives Experience *The Summit 2019*

BY DANICA KIRLIK
Youth Pastor's Wife, Sunshine Ridge

The Summit is a conference / retreat for all youth workers/pastors and their wives. The purpose is to provide a space to unplug and relax, look deeper into God's Word, connect with other youth workers from across the NAB, and have fun. The Summit takes place every three years and includes times of worship, a guest speaker, free time, and intentional times to connect with other youth leaders to share and pray for each other. Ric Olsen, senior

pastor of The Beacon in Orange County, California, guided the group with his word from God.

Scholarships were provided by Women's Connection for 3 youth pastors' wives to attend. Read how this time away blessed Danica Kirlik, Sunshine Ridge in Surrey, British Columbia.

The timing of the summit was perfect. My own workplace had been stressful and this retreat came at a perfect time for Grant and me. On top of that, I was coming out of a season where I struggled with

mental health, rest was the one thing I really needed. I was able to rest during this week, as well as meet other Pastor's wives who are in the same boat as I am. I was reminded that "I am not alone", which is something that I had really been struggling with, leading up to the Summit. This week was Christ's reminder to me that he is for my marriage, and that it's important that Grant and I are taking care of ourselves and our marriage, before we are able to pour into others in ministry.

THE SUMMIT
A RETREAT FOR YOUTH WORKERS & SPOUSES

APRIL 23-26, 2019
PHOENIX, ARIZONA
nabconference.org/The-Summit/

Blue Ocean Group



An invitation to be a part of an exciting missional/formational adventure!

The goal of Blue Ocean is to help its participants to think clearly and biblically about the church in this season of change in North America, and dream together about how we can form a community of leaders who can help lead our churches and our conference in the areas of mission and formation. With authors and practitioners in the area of mission and formation, we will reflect deeply together on missional theology, spiritual formation, and the church. Over the last few years, Blue Ocean has had a significant influence in building a community of leaders who are traveling together on this missional/formational journey we have been on at NAB.

– Kent Carlson NAB Vice President of Leadership Formation

Contact Kent at kcarlson@nabconf.org if you would like to be a part of the journey

The dates for the next Blue Ocean Group

GATHERING 1

**Missional Theology and Ecclesiology
Vancouver, Canada
Oct. 28-30, 2019**

This first week aims at understanding God's missionary nature. Throughout scripture, God sends His word and His people as He seeks to redeem all things. There are many implications for the way in which we, as a sent people, live together to bear witness to God. In this week, we will focus on creating a sense of team and common journey together, as well as encountering a couple of churches who are developing local and international missionaries.

GATHERING 2

**The Formation of God's People, Sacramento
Feb. 24-26, 2020**

This second week will be at a retreat center as we focus on being shaped into the image of Christ. We will pay attention to the process of how Christ is formed in us, both as individuals and as a community of faith. Being at the retreat center allows us to have times of silence and solitude, as well as to be taught and led by others who have walked this journey ahead of us.

GATHERING 3

**Living as a Faithful Presence, Chicago
April 28-29, 2020**

In this event, we visit with David Fitch at his church near Chicago. David will help us learn what it means for us, as God's people, to reflect the image and presence of Christ in the context of our current culture. There is an emphasis on participating in spiritual practices as a community, where we learn to identify the presence of God in the midst of our neighborhoods.

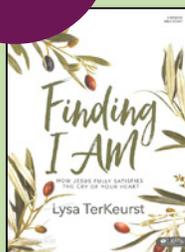
"The Bonfire" – Chicago April 30-May 1, 2020

Come and join those who have journeyed together in these first four rounds, as well as others who have been on this missional/formational journey, as we gather for two days to encourage one another, tell stories, and learn more about who God is and how He is at work in the world.

If you are interested in being a part of this journey please contact:

Kent Carlson - kcarlson@nabconf.org
Lisa Schmidt - lschmidt@nabconf.org
(916) 797-6222 ext 237

FINAL OFFER



Women's Connection is offering your NAB church **ONE FREE COPY** of *Finding I Am* by Lysa TerKeurst

This copy can be requested by a woman in leadership in your church.

Please contact Heather Senges at hsenges@telus.net

Include in your request:

- Your name
- Your address
- Your phone number
- Church name
- Leadership position in your church

CONNECT WITH US

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