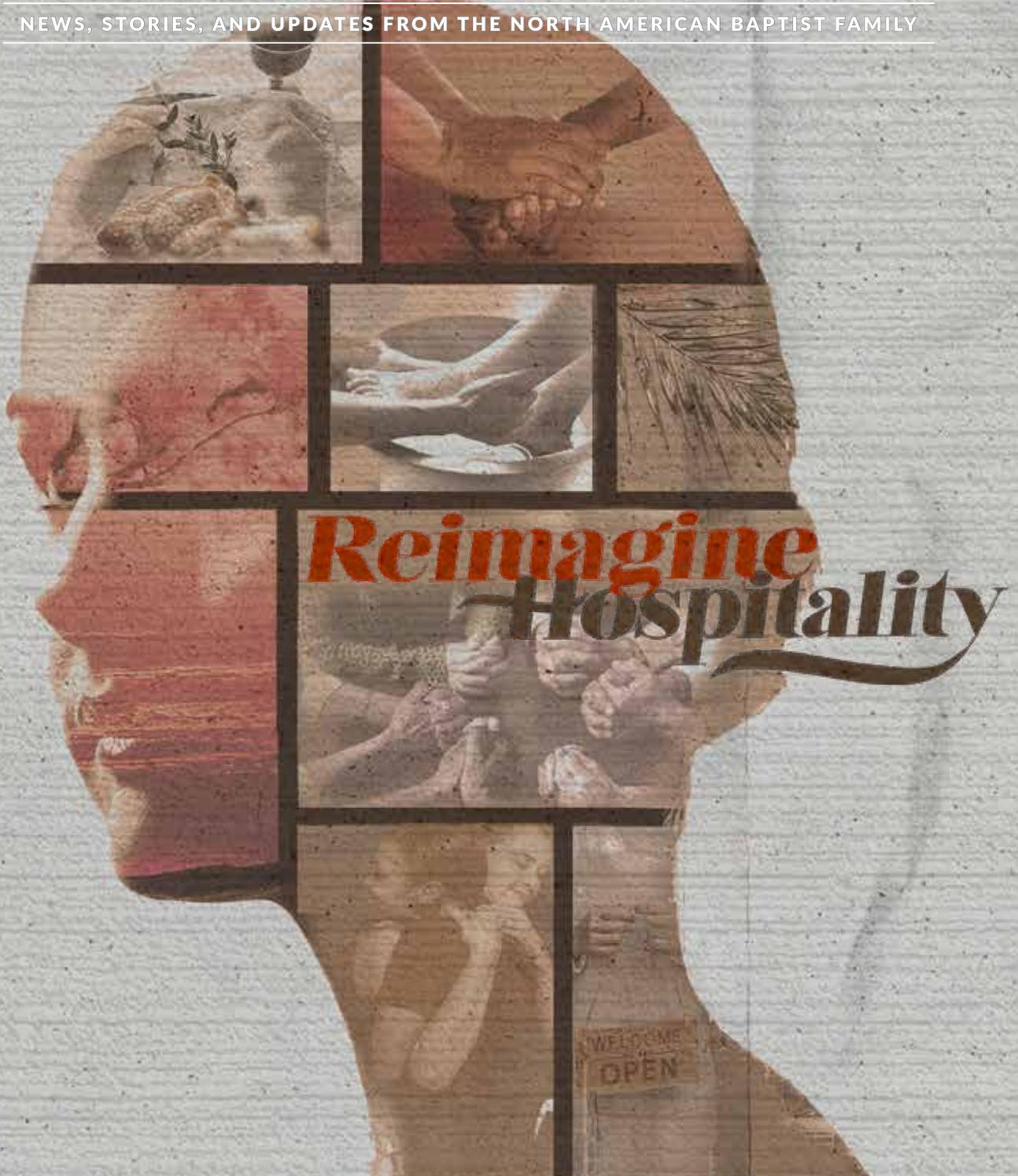


# ONWARD

NEWS, STORIES, AND UPDATES FROM THE NORTH AMERICAN BAPTIST FAMILY



*Reimagine*  
Hospitality

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In the twenty-one years we have been married, as well as the handful of years prior, Jen and I have been the quintessential representation of the adage that opposites attract. She hates seafood; I love it! I tend toward spontaneity, especially on vacation, while Jen finds great joy in planning a full itinerary. I am mostly an extrovert; she is an introvert. In fact, I was once spontaneously asked to preach a message to a room of pastors with just thirty seconds to collect my thoughts. I trust the message was terrible, but my anxiety was nil. On the other hand, Jen is currently taking a public speaking course at the local community college and gets as anxious as I have ever seen her prior to recording her speeches.

But this we share: a deep love for hosting people. We adore preparing a meal and setting a table that meets every need you might have during the evening. It feeds our soul to retire to our front porch after meals like this, with twinkling lights and background music playing softly to set the tone for invigorating conversation over dessert and coffee. And to be honest, this has been my general view of hospitality over the years. We love our friends and, in general, love them well.

While I think this is admirable – I know our friends enjoy our company – it's not a full reflection of the hospitality Jesus demonstrates when He, being the guest, shows genuine love for the stranger, the other. NAB's missional/formational journey is teaching me through Ethos, Blue Ocean, The Bonfire, and more that a second-nature reflection of the unity experienced in the Godhead is marked by authentic love for the least, the lost, and the left out.

Hospitality is learning to be a grateful guest, not just the host.

It is giving to the most vulnerable, with no hope of reciprocity.

It's being a true friend to the lowly, never seeking to climb the social ladder.

In this edition of *Onward*, we have done our best to curate a collection of stories, articles, and resources that help us all begin to reimagine hospitality. There will be tension points and internal conflict as you read, but isn't this always the case when challenging ideas we have held tightly and realigning practices that mirror the ways of Jesus? I pray this *Onward* stirs in you a renewed commitment to redefine hospitality in ways that proclaim the Gospel of Jesus. Further, I hope you will join me and the rest of the NAB family at next summer's Triennial for the culmination of this stage of our missional/formational journey, reimagining hospitality.

To the Glory of God, for the sake of the world,



**Stu Streeter**

Vice President of Ministry Advancement & Church Multiplication

# Cultivating a Heart of Hospitality



**By Jean Ewing**  
Women's Connection Leadership Team

The boxes were unpacked, the boys' rooms were somewhat settled, and the dishes were in the cupboards. Everything was beginning to feel like home in Madison, South Dakota – our first place of ministry after leaving seminary. As I sat in the expansive living room, resting, I looked around while feeling the familiar anxiety rising in me. These new friends were going to have expectations! No doubt we would need to have groups of people in the parsonage for dinner or Bible study, and we would be asked to welcome people to spend a night (or more) in our spacious four-bedroom parsonage. With two rambunctious boys

and a baby on the way, I tried to imagine what all of this was going to look like, and my heart resisted the pressure of opening our home.

I should have known that God was already way ahead of me, preparing a way to calm my heart and at the same time reveal the misconceptions I had about hospitality. Within a day, there was a knock on the back door, a young woman with two small girls. She had a plate of chocolate chip cookies and introduced herself as Joy. We became quick friends – our children enjoyed playing together, and our conversation was easy. We

discovered that we were both teachers, and she and Roger were also not originally from Madison. Over coffee one day, the conversation turned to my fears of opening our home to friends and strangers. Joy suggested we spend some time looking at hospitality. I'll never forget her words: "Hospitality is more about our hearts and less about our homes." We searched the scriptures and found that we are to "practice hospitality!" In fact, God commands that we do!

"Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice

hospitality." (Romans 12:13 NIV)

"Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing so some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it." (Hebrews 13:2 NIV)

"Show hospitality to one another without grumbling." (1 Peter 4:9 ESV)

Building on the instructions to practice hospitality, 1 Peter 4:9 reminded me that my attitude is of utmost importance – I am to practice without complaining! This verse challenged me to search my heart to discern my attitude and whether I was approaching this opportunity to minister enthusiastically (Colossians 3:23).

My misconceptions were readily revealed to me! I was more concerned about what people thought about my home, my meal, or my kids' behavior than about how I showed love, care, and concern for them. Joy and I discovered that the purpose of hospitality is to minister to those around us – believers and unbelievers, friends and strangers. It is about God and how He uses us and our possessions to serve those we come in contact with. Hospitality is about investing in the lives of others and learning how we can best serve those around us.

With that in mind, I approached the opening of my home differently. It was our opportunity to welcome others not only into our presence but also into the Lord's presence. It was inviting them into our lives for meaningful connection.

Shauna Niequist shares in *Bread and Wine: A Love Letter to Life around the Table*, "The heart of hospitality is about creating space for someone to feel seen and heard and loved. It's about declaring your table a safe zone, a place of warmth and nourishment."

We are called to create and cultivate hospitality with glad and sincere hearts.



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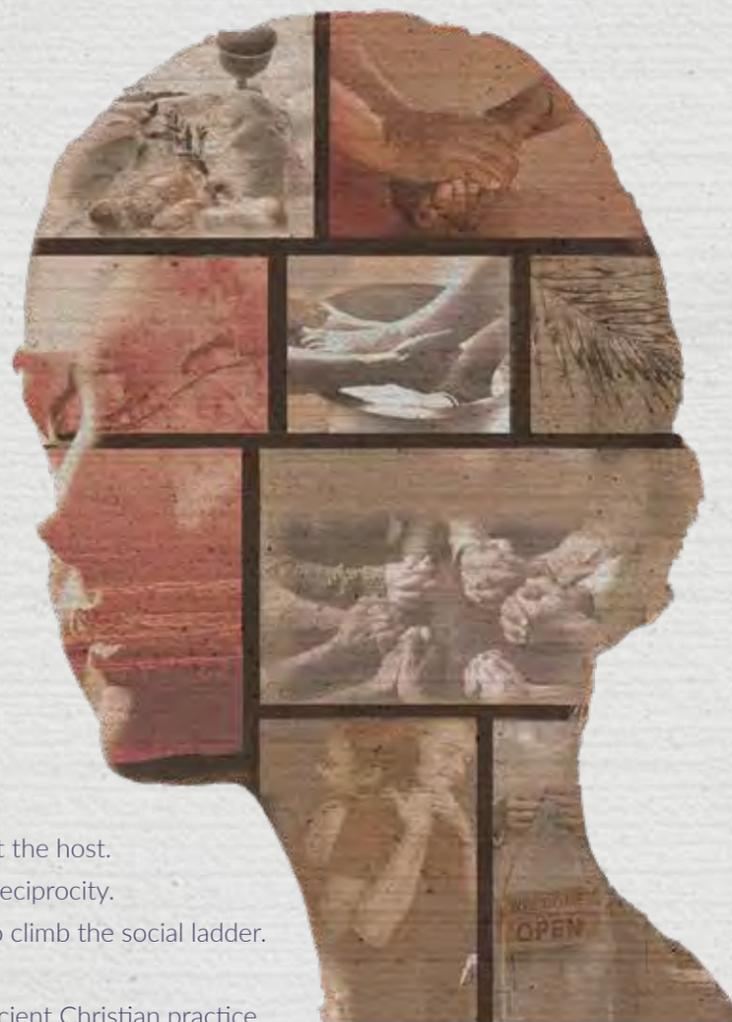
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# Reimagine Hospitality

## TRIENNIAL 2021

SAINT PAUL, MN

PLAN TO JOIN US  
July 8-11, 2021



Hospitality is learning to be a grateful guest, not just the host. It is giving to the most vulnerable, with no hope of reciprocity. It's being a true friend to the lowly, never seeking to climb the social ladder.

These were commonplace understandings in the ancient Christian practice of hospitality that we find central to the life and teachings of Jesus and His earliest followers. But in this quickly changing world this kind of life often seems alien to even the most devout followers of Jesus.

The best of all possible lives for us as a conference of churches on a missional/formational journey awaits on the other side of reimagining hospitality. For this reason, Triennial 2021 will have this as its theme. We hope to reimagine hospitality with you.

LEARN MORE AND REGISTER ONLINE [www.nabconference.org/triennial](http://www.nabconference.org/triennial)  
OR REGISTER BY PHONE (916) 797-6222 EXT. 243

## Speaker Efrem Smith



A well-known author, speaker, and pastor, Efrem Smith has long been an outspoken advocate for racial righteousness, urban ministry, and serving the marginalized in our communities – issues that lie at the heart of Christian hospitality. He is the former president and CEO of World Impact, a ministry that empowers urban leaders and partners with local churches to reach their cities for the Gospel. The founding pastor of a multiethnic church in Minneapolis, he is currently the co-lead campus pastor at Bayside Midtown in Sacramento, California. His most recent book is *Killing Us Softly: Reborn in the Upside-Down Image of God*, a reflection on the countercultural Kingdom of God in our midst and what it means to die to self.

## Speaker Julie Canlis



Julie Canlis teaches at Whitworth University, a private Christian university in Spokane, Washington. She is the author of two books, *Calvin's Ladder: A Spiritual Theology of Ascent and Ascension*, which won a Templeton Prize and a Christianity Today Award of Merit, and her newest release, *A Theology of the Ordinary*, a brief theological meditation on ordinary life as the only place where faith can be lived. Canlis earned a doctorate from St. Andrews while she and her husband, Matt, ministered in the Church of Scotland for thirteen years. She currently resides in central Washington.

Check out page 19 for a look at *Godspeed*, Matt and Julie's joint endeavor.

## Speaker James Choung



James Choung currently serves as the vice president of Strategy and Innovation at InterVarsity Christian Fellowship USA. He has spent the past twenty years involved in college campus ministry of some kind. He has also served on the pastoral staff of churches ranging in size from megachurch to house church and in locations as varied as Boston, Massachusetts; Seoul, South Korea; and the Los Angeles, California, area. Choung is the author of four books, the most recent of which is *Longing for Revival*, written with Ryan Pfeiffer. As a dynamic and thoughtful speaker, Choung's passion for evangelism and love for God's Word come through when he teaches. You can find out more about James Choung at his website, [www.jameschoung.net](http://www.jameschoung.net).

## Pre-Conference

### PRE-CONFERENCE EVENT - THE BONFIRE

A growing community within the NAB of people participating with God's work in the world to establish missionaries across the street and around the world.



## Special Events

TAYLOR DESSERT  
RECEPTION

SIOUX FALLS  
SEMINARY  
BREAKFAST

WOMEN'S  
LUNCHEON

STUDENT  
MINISTRY  
PROGRAMMING

REGIONAL  
LUNCHEON

ELEVATING  
YOUNG LEADERS  
GATHERING

## Breakouts

Presentations will highlight missionaries, both globally and locally, from our NAB family, as well as church leaders who are pursuing authentic transformation in their missional endeavors.

# Six Reasons Kairos is Thriving



**By Greg Henson**  
President, Sioux Falls Seminary



**By David Williams**  
President, Taylor Seminary

In March 2020, we shared some exciting news about how Taylor and Sioux Falls Seminaries were stepping boldly into the future of theological education by coming together to create a first-of-its-kind, bi-national system of theological education. Through a formal union, we expressed a vision to leverage the Kairos Project to provide affordable, accessible, relevant, and faithful journeys of discipleship that can lead to certificates and degrees at the bachelor, master, and doctoral levels. Now, only six months after that announcement, we are excited to share six reasons why Kairos is thriving:

**1 Deeper NAB Collaboration:** From the beginning, our vision has focused on developing a global system of theological education that is affordable, accessible, and relevant while remaining faithful to the unshakeable truth of God's Word and the journey of transformation that comes

from following Jesus. Our connection to the NAB strongly supports this vision, and Kairos has fostered deeper connections with students, regions, and churches within the NAB family. For example, NAB initiatives like Blue Ocean, The Bonfire, and Ethos can be fully integrated into a student's journey through Kairos. Through a commitment to developing followers of Christ who flourish in their vocational context, Kairos has created new opportunities for collaboration within the NAB.

Since 2014, the number of NAB students enrolled in Kairos has more than tripled. There are also now twenty-three NAB mentors working with students around the world. It is exciting to watch this all unfold!

**2 NAB Missionaries:** Besides the dramatic rise in the number of NAB students and mentors engaged in Kairos, there's also an increase in global collaboration with the conference family. Geoff Hartt, an NAB pastor in Oregon and the director of Hispanics for Christ, helps lead the Spanish-language initiatives within Kairos. He and his team are developing Kairos connections in California, Florida, Paraguay, Colombia, Mexico, and Argentina. Lyndell Campbell-Réquia and Brandon Jones, NAB missionaries, recently launched Kairos in Brazil and are already receiving a lot of interest in various degree programs. NAB missionaries in Japan have started to get involved in Kairos, too. All of these connections are building on a vision first expressed through a partnership between the NAB International Office, the Cameroon Baptist Convention, and our seminaries.

**3 Extended Network:** Our March 2020 union now includes Evangelical Seminary and Biblical Life Institute School of Ministry, two schools that also share a passion for developing followers of Jesus who flourish in their kingdom calling.<sup>1</sup> As a result, Kairos is now one of the largest seminary systems in North America and one of the largest systems of competency-based theological education in the world.

<sup>1</sup> <https://sfseminary.edu/story-center/the-future-of-kairos-begins-today/>

**4 New Programs:** In April, we launched a revolutionary bachelor of arts degree through Kairos.<sup>2</sup> It can be completed from anywhere in the world, is a fraction of the cost of a traditional bachelor's degree, and is rooted in discipleship. Already, students in multiple countries have started the program.

Deeper Collaboration

New Missionaries

Extended Network

New Programs

Global Partnerships

Decreased Educational Debt

We also announced a master of arts in marriage and family therapy that is the only nationally accredited faith-based degree of its kind that can be completed fully at a distance.<sup>3</sup> Students from across North America are expressing interest in the program, and a record number of individuals enrolled this fall.

The union with Evangelical Seminary brought an innovative doctor of theology program. Enrollment in this program alone has more than doubled the number of doctoral students engaged in Kairos.

*Continued on page 25*

<sup>2</sup> <https://sfseminary.edu/story-center/a-new-approach-to-undergraduate-education/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://sfseminary.edu/story-center/new-online-integrative-marriage-and-family-therapy-program/>



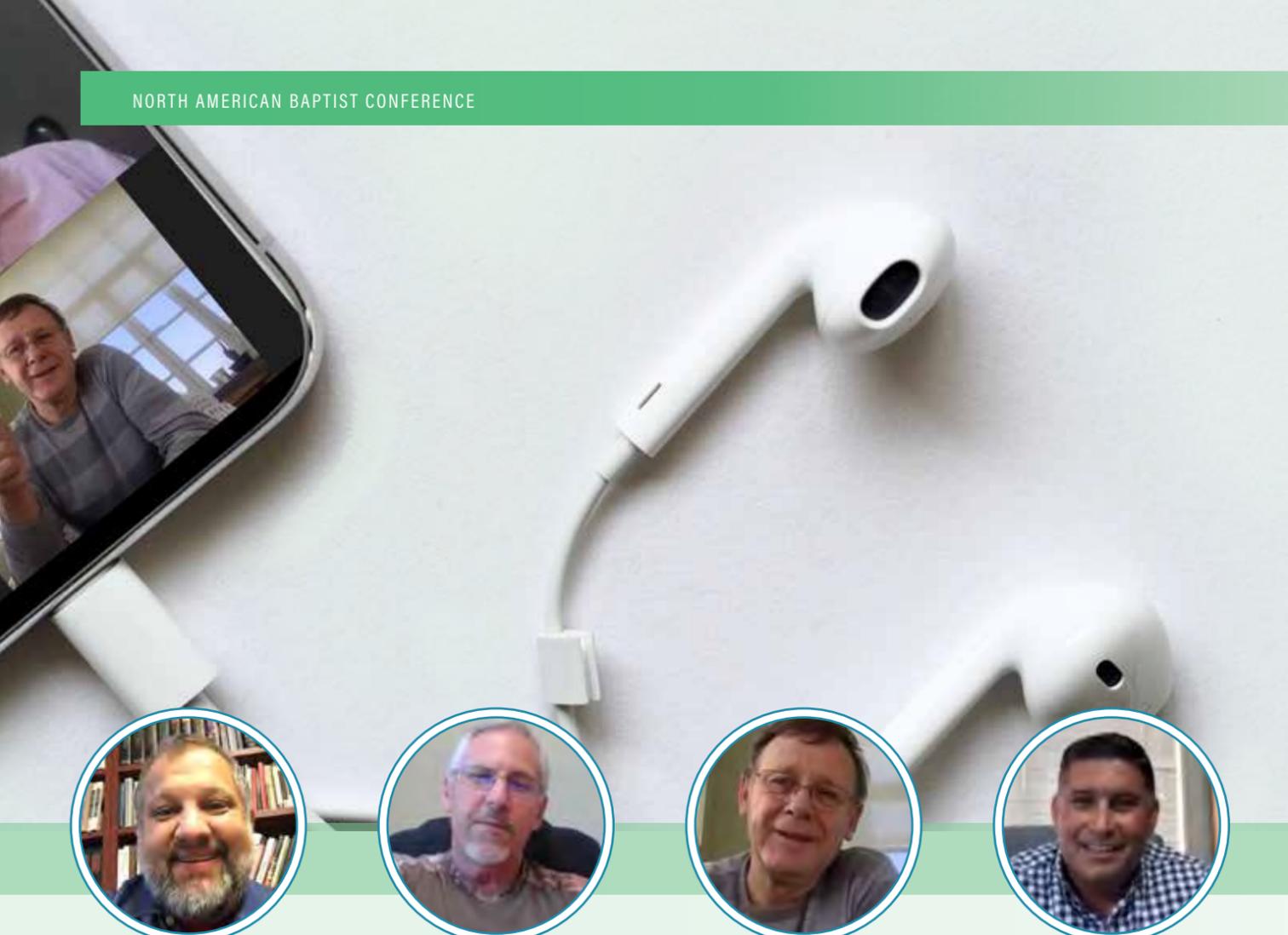
www.sfseminary.edu

 www.facebook.com/SiouxFallsSeminary



www.taylor-edu.ca

 www.facebook.com/TaylorUpdates



By Kerry Bender

Vice President of International Missions

## Learning from Latin American Hospitality: A Conversation

During the little more than two years I've been the VP of International Missions, I feel as though I have learned a lot more than I have offered. In particular, I have a growing sense of the immense importance of seeing international missions less through the lens of a monologue – what we have to offer – and more through the lens of a dialogue – what can we learn and discover together through global Christianity. For me one of the primary areas that this is true is the area of hospitality and what we can learn from the Majority World, in particular from our brothers and sisters in South America.

In order to dig into this, I recently had the privilege of sitting down with a number of members of Hispanics for Christ, an integral part of the NAB international mission strategy. This conversation included Geoff Hartt, the executive director; Eduardo Buldain, the Argentinian field coordinator; and Sorin Crivceag, a

coordinator in Salem, Oregon. I want to thank all three of them for sharing their thoughts and insights as we talked about hospitality from a Latino or Hispanic perspective.

 **Kerry:** Geoff, you've traveled pretty extensively throughout North and South America in your work. What do you think is the difference in hospitality in how it is practiced but also how it is thought about theologically in North America and South America?

 **Geoff:** First of all, I would say that my knowledge is experiential – how I experienced hospitality in Latin America. I would say that my experience has made me realize that when it comes to hospitality we in North America talk about it but they practice it, so the difference is we have a lot of conversations about hospitality, read a lot of books

about hospitality, but when I travel in Latin America, I experience hospitality. All the pastors I've worked with in twenty years in Latin America, I am pretty sure that I have stayed in all of their homes. It is extremely personal and intimate. They make all the meals; we eat together; sometimes we even prepare the meals together. That's the big difference. When I travel in North America, however, the churches put me up in a hotel. I'm put away. If I come to do a missions conference, I might see the pastor a little bit at the conference and that's kind of it. It is not the same experience of intimacy.

The hospitality that is practiced by the Hispanic pastors and church leaders that I work with in turn has an impact on the people in their churches. So while I can't remember ever having a conversation about hospitality in South America, I have experienced the rich theological practice of hospitality – not simply a duty but a Christian character trait of the pastors and people of South America.

 **Kerry:** Geoff, that's fascinating. It does seem that in North America we often talk about theological concepts that we too often don't practice – valuing orthodoxy but at times forgetting orthopraxy.

Sorin, I'm wondering if you could speak into this. You bring such an interesting perspective to this conversation. You are Romanian, living in North America but fluent in Spanish and working with a Hispanic ministry with one of our NAB churches, West Hills Community Church in Salem, Oregon, but your wife is from Argentina and you studied at Word of Life in Argentina and did ministry in Argentina and Chile for seven years. So you have this Eastern European lens, and you have this Hispanic lens, and you have this North American lens. I'm wondering as you look through specifically the Hispanic and the North American lens, what do you see? What can we learn?

 **Sorin:** When we talk about North America, there is so much potential to practice hospitality; people are qualified and there are so many resources here. With that structure, however, there is very little room for flexibility and availability. Those of us in North America need to learn to be more available – create space in our schedules so that there can be flexibility for hospitality. We see can see that flexibility and availability in the Hispanic cul-

ture, and there are three reasons for this I think.

For Hispanics in South America or wherever they are, hospitality means a willingness to be the host – to welcome people. This can be as simple or extravagant as sharing a cup of coffee or getting ricos tacos, “great tacos!” But whether it is simple or if it is amazing, there is a deep sense of the importance of being the host for the other. It isn't about the food; it's about the relationship. My family was invited recently to the home of family friends, and they prepared a feast for kings and queens. But something happened. The host was making fish, but he burned all the fish but one fish. I got the only perfect fish – not intentionally, but by accident. Everyone else's fish was overcooked, but it did not affect the hospitality at all. This would ruin the event for the host in most North American contexts. But not for Hispanics. It's not about the food; it's about the relationship. So everyone was happy, everyone was in relationship, even if the fish was burned! This is hospitality; it is not dependent on the quality of the food but about loving people. It's about being available to one another and giving of ourselves as host, but also as thankful guests.

That is the second point. Hispanics recognize not only the importance of being host but also of being the guest. If someone invites you, you have to be willing to be a guest. This is a way how we connect. Hospitality is a practical way to live together – simple stuff, fancy stuff, it doesn't matter, and in learning to be the guest, we learn what it means to see ourselves as the one in need, the other, or the stranger.

Finally, I would say what Hispanic culture can teach the church in North America is willingness to be the stranger. We need to be a stranger who goes to meet other strangers. This is what we are called to do by Christ. We are called to be a stranger that goes to another stranger to ask questions and to open a conversation. When we allow ourselves to be the stranger, people will connect with that. Latinos make themselves available and vulnerable to not only meet a stranger but to see themselves as the stranger.

 **Kerry:** This concept of “coming as a stranger” is fascinating. This is different than seeing ourselves as the one that has everything to offer the “other” or to see everyone else as the “stranger.” There is a power structure implied in this

that is different than when we see ourselves not only as a guest but also as stranger.

Eduardo, not only are you a church planter but you also train church planters in Argentina and in other countries. You mentioned that you used to take students out from the school to minister and evangelize. When doing this, how did they experience hospitality as the guest or even as the stranger?



**Eduardo:** We would take students out to towns and villages, usually about fifty to seventy-five miles. We would take the bus, and we would put two to three people in one small town or neighborhood, and we would go five or six miles more and put another team there. At the beginning, we could return home at night, but after three or five months, they began relationships and they opened their houses. At the beginning, the students sometimes would lunch under a tree, but soon someone would come up to them and say, “No, you must come to my house.” They were not believers, but that is how the church began.

We have a lot of stories like this. One February, Paco Damian, the field coordinator for Hispanics for Christ in Querétaro, Mexico, took a team from Word of Life to share the Gospel to Marqués, a suburb of Querétaro. There was a team of two young ladies going out to share the Gospel. In one or two hours, one of the girls on the team said, “I have to go to the bathroom.” So they went to a store and asked the guy, “Can we use the bathroom?” The guy said yes, and while the one girl went to the bathroom the other girl started talking to the man about the Gospel. And the man began to cry. He said, “I asked God, ‘Please, I need to talk to someone about you!’” That was February, and in May I went to visit this guy, and this man, he took me to share the Gospel with his wife. And they said, “Stay with us. Have dinner with us.” And the church in Marqués began with this guy. It began with someone asking to use the toilet, by being a guest and receiving hospitality from this man through the use of a bathroom.

I also travel a lot throughout Latin America. I visit pastors, stay at homes; here, if a family has a house with two bedrooms and a guest comes, we move family members out of the room and give it to a guest, and the entire family sleeps in one room or in the kitch-

en. How this works is not the same in every culture in Latin America, but there is a spirit of hospitality throughout each of these subcultures.



**Geoff:** Sorin, remember when we were in the Yucatán? They build their houses with hooks in the walls so they can hang hammocks throughout their house – every room. They’ve designed their entire house to be able to turn it into a dormitory. The living room, the bedrooms, the back porch, every room in the house can be turned into a bedroom by design.



**Kerry:** Eduardo, you work with a good number of North Americans that come and engage in ministry with you in South America. As you have worked with North Americans in your context, what is that you wish we would understand better about hospitality? In other words, what prophetic word would you want to speak into North American Christianity?



**Eduardo:** It is hard for someone like me who does not live in North America to speak into that culture. I can tell you what I believe the Bible says, but how to put this into practice is hard because it is different people.

Sometimes when North Americans go outside of their country, like missionaries, they practice hospitality, but when they return to their culture, they become cold again to the stranger. I think the church in North America needs to learn to open their houses, to open their schedules, and to open their lives to others. In North America, I am hosted in hotels. This is very practical. They host me in hotel because they are “thinking about me” or my needs. But this is not personal. We teach people when they come to minister in Argentina if someone invites you in, you need to go in. And when it is dirty and when it is poor, but they invite you, you need to go in.

I think the church in North America needs to learn this – not just to practice when they are missionaries in other countries but in their own homes, their own culture, with the strangers that live around them. Jesus teaches us that when we are the host we invite the people who cannot or will not invite us to their house. It is hard to invite, even for us, dirty people, stinky people; this is not easy. But Jesus says open your door.

And this is hospitality for the church, not inviting people just like you but the stranger, the one in need. How can I bless someone with my friendship? The Bible teaches us that we need to do more and more. Paul teaches this and he was dependent upon the hospitality of others.



**Kerry:** Geoff, I wonder if you could speak into this concept of the professionalization of hospitality in the West, and in particular North America. How can we apply biblical hospitality in a North American context that has so professionalized hospitality?



**Geoff:** Boy, that is a tough question, but I think it is about sowing seeds in our culture, changing our mindset about our homes and our lives. If someone is coming over to our house, we have to have everything right – the forks, the plates, the food. This is a cultural hang-up; I’m not sure how we get over that immediately, but we need to recognize it as a barrier. In Hispanic culture, we are just hanging out in the kitchen as they are looking around for what they have that they can prepare and serve. It is more participatory. There is more freedom to just be themselves and invite you in to participate with them in life without pretense. If they eat fish and rice every day, then we are invited to that table with them. But in North America, we too often have that barrier that we need to perform, that we need to provide something perfect. So I think it begins by being more relaxed, not over-professionalizing it in our own homes.



**Kerry:** There is also this aspect of hospitality in the New Testament, as Jesus and His disciples went out and they didn’t take an extra cloak or food. Hospitality was necessary to stay alive; it was necessary to be received as a guest. Like Geoff was saying, food is a necessity, so offering rice and fish is offering a necessary substance to life in that culture, but here in North America, we have entire television channels dedicated to food. Food isn’t seen as a necessity; rather, it becomes luxurious. So how do we translate this concept of hospitality that in other parts of the world is offering a necessity for survival into a culture that has so much excess? Or how do we do hospitality in a world where we are not dependent on hospitality anymore?



**Eduardo:** We don’t need to be forced by necessity to accept hospitality. Jesus did not

need food; He made the food even for 5,000 people. But many times He was in a house where they were attending Him. There has to be an attitude of giving and receiving hospitality even if there is not a need. We need to lower ourselves to have a need, to be the guest, even when we don’t have an actual need.

Many times I visit people very poor, much poorer than I am. But when I visit them, they give me food, bread, homemade pizzas. When I consider my position and their position, I think, “I should be bringing them food!” But I could never say no. Sometimes we need to be open to be the guest so that others can be the host. It puts us into relationship, grows the relationship. As pastors and Christian leaders, we need to be open to be the guest, to be ministered to; this is so important for our congregations to see that this is for everyone.



**Geoff:** Jesus had to humble Himself to accept food. He is the creator, the provider of food, but maybe that is the lesson that hospitality is inextricably linked with humility. We are not very good at humility in North America; maybe that is our problem with hospitality.



**Kerry:** I think too often in North America we use hospitality to show how much we have rather than seeing it as an opportunity to realize how much we need each other. My brother, who teaches theology, once told me that the opposite of pride is not humility but hospitality. Humility is too often just thinking about ourselves; it’s pride working in reverse. But when it is linked to hospitality, it’s focus is on the other and our need to be host, guest, and possibly most importantly stranger as Sorin spoke about.

I suppose each of us have mentioned it in one way or another, but we haven’t come up with a whole bunch of solutions how to implement hospitality more fully in a North American context. It seems to start with the realization that it is a way of life, the way of Jesus – a way of life where we see ourselves not simply as host but also as guest and as stranger; this is the story of the incarnation. I think if we carry that concept, that willingness to be humble ourselves and to see ourselves as the stranger approaching other strangers, we might be able to begin the process to reimagine hospitality in our lives and our churches.

# Hospitality

## MAKING ROOM



By **Kent Carlson**

Vice President of Leadership Formation

I walked into the meeting room of a youth retreat where I was speaking and immediately saw this young fifteen-year-old sitting all by herself trying to hide in the middle of a crowded room. She stayed by herself for the entire retreat, terrified at the thought of being known. Always responding with one-word answers. Never giving eye contact. Sitting in the back. As I got to know her and her parents over the next few months, I learned about her struggles with cutting, bulimia, and suicide attempts. She sent out a never-ending stream of non-verbal messages that said, “Stay away.” And people obliged. It would have taken a lot of courage, a lot of persistent love, to climb over the walls she had erected. But what she needed, what she longed for, what would have brought some healing to her life, was a group of people who made room for her, a group of people who existed for the purpose of creating space for someone like her.

Most of us can relate to this young woman in some way. Most of us have had seasons in our lives where we have felt alone, isolated, discouraged, depressed, hopeless. Maybe we’re in one of those seasons of life now. This world is filled with people who do not presently have a place where they are known and where they are loved because no one has yet made room for them. This idea of making room is at the core of the ancient Christian practice of hospitality. Hospitality is a way of being in this world where we are making room for our neighbor, especially those who are the most vulnerable, the most marginalized.





The ancient Christian tradition of hospitality is rooted in the eternal nature of the Triune God. From eternity past, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit have loved and enjoyed each other. Their relationship, rooted in this mutual love and enjoyment, is a source of great and never-ending satisfaction to them. They lack nothing. It is the nature of this eternal, loving community to give and to give away. There is no jealousy. There is no stinginess. There is no scarcity, only abundance. A never-ending supply of goodness and love. Room for everybody and everything. Contrary to other Ancient Near East creation stories, in the Hebrew creation story the eternal God creates the universe and then, out of His eternal abundance and security, He gives away to the crown of His creation, human beings, the privilege of stewarding this creation. He makes an extravagant amount of room for us in His creation. In the Great Commission from Matthew 28, we are told that our mission is to invite people into this eternal community of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, where there is room for everybody. A deep, scriptural reflection on the character and nature of the Triune God demonstrates that He is always for the sake of others. He is always on the side of the most vulnerable. His heart is always bent toward those who are lost and outside and have no place. There is always room.

In the western world, the concept and practice of hospitality has largely become unmoored from the ancient and biblical practice. Hospitality has often become more associated with dinner parties and a well-kept home, where much food, drink, and fun is experienced (which is all exceedingly wonderful, but not at the center of Christian hospitality). Consequently, it has seemed odd to many people why leaders in the Church

## CHRISTIAN HOSPITALITY, PRACTICED BY THE EARLY CHURCH, WAS GIVEN WITHOUT ANY CONSIDERATION OF RECEIVING ANYTHING IN RETURN.

are required to demonstrate hospitality (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8). What does entertaining people in your home have to do with leadership in the church? In the Ancient Near East, hospitality was necessary for survival. When anyone would travel from one village to the next, there was no Motel 6 or Ramada Inn. People were dependent upon the hospitality of others, and reciprocity and leveraging of social status became some of the dominant values. Often hospitality would be provided with the understanding that the recipient would be in debt to the one who provided the hospitality

and hospitality must now be given in return. Also, people would seek to provide hospitality to those who were above them in social status to improve their own social standing. But Jesus and His followers changed all that.

Christian hospitality, practiced by the early church, was given without any consideration of receiving anything in return. And the recipients of this hospitality were often the most vulnerable, the most marginalized in society (Matthew 25:40). Christian hospitality became a practice and tradition where people's homes, schedules, finances, hearts, minds, and lives were organized to ensure that there was always room for others, especially those who were most vulnerable and marginalized. The most common New Testament word for hospitality is *philoxenia*, which means, literally, "lover of strangers." This was an expression of the Old Testament's emphasis on caring for the foreigners and strangers in their midst. Contrary to an individualistic protection of our own personal privacy and space, and the loving of others based upon our own convenience and schedule, the tradition of hospitality was an expression of the words of Jesus, who taught us that to find our lives, we must lose them (Mark 8:35). Christian hospitality then lays open our personal and communal lives to our neighbor and anyone who is in need. As a person, and as a community of faith, there will always be room for others. The Christian tradition of hospitality is acutely aware of the experience of the

other. Hospitality is oriented around making others feel at home. The desire is to always create a space where others are welcomed and made to feel a part of things, not separate.

Hospitality is a way of being in this world where we are increasingly attentive to the needs of others before our own agendas and desires. Rather than being an expression of control, where we believe we have what others need, hospitality is a way of being with others where we are aware of the sacredness of each human being. We are in the presence of each other, with a deep awareness that we all need each other. Here the lines between giving and receiving become blurred. We all give and we all receive. Hospitality is a sacramental practice where we encounter and are transformed by the presence of Christ in our midst (Matthew 25:40). Hospitality is lived out in love and attentiveness for others regardless if we are host or guest. It is an expression of who we actually are becoming.

For many people, after a gradual awareness of what the ancient tradition of hospitality really means and what it requires of us, there is often an authentic reaction pushing back. "But that is not who I actually am. I am not a hospitable person." This is a healthy and important reaction. Perhaps even a necessary one. There is not much in society at large, or even, sadly, in our

Christian sub-culture, that nurtures hospitality or even creates a vision for it. In truth, in our North American Christian culture, we have been nurtured primarily as consumers, and churches have often devolved into purveyors of religious goods and services. The pursuit of personal and communal hospitality is the pursuit of spiritual formation into the likeness of Christ, and it is an arduous, life-long journey. It is the narrow

## HOSPITALITY IS A WAY OF BEING IN THIS WORLD WHERE WE ARE INCREASINGLY ATTENTIVE TO THE NEEDS OF OTHERS BEFORE OUR OWN AGENDAS AND DESIRES.

way (Matthew 7:14). But it is also the best of all possible lives, and ultimately this yoke is easy and this burden is light (Matthew 11:30; 1 John 5:3). The process of becoming a hospitable person and community is not the process of screwing up our willpower and trying by direct effort to become something we know perfectly well we are not. We are talking here about actual transformation. Not trying, not pretending, but actually becoming a different and beautiful community together. In other words, we are able to be hospitable people, and our church is able to be a hospitable church, because that is who we are becoming. It is something real. We begin to travel this road by placing ourselves in the presence of others, especially those with whom we have little in common, and seek to be intensely present as we set aside our personal agenda and encounter the living Christ among us. This is a road of honesty, deep reflection, self-awareness, repentance, discipline, attentiveness, and mutual submission. But it is the path of life. And our world is hungry for it.

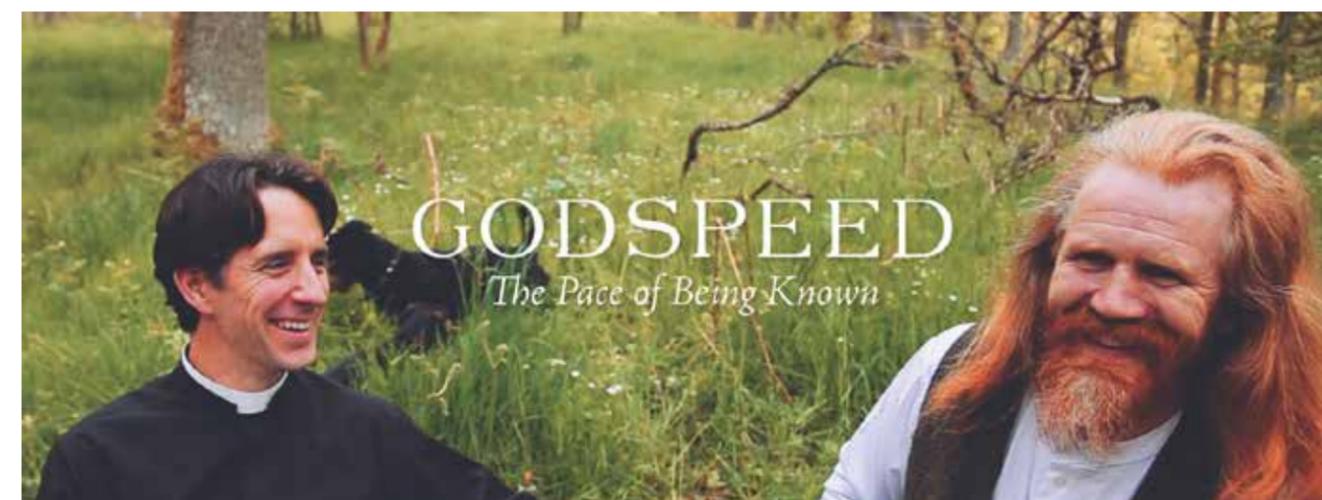
## Movie Review: *Babette's Feast*



*Babette's Feast* is a 1987 earthy yet extravagant movie about food, religion, and hospitality. Set in mid-nineteenth century Denmark, the movie follows the story of two elderly spinster sisters who take in a French refugee to be their cook. The two sisters, Martine and Philippa, are the daughters of the former town pastor who had

died years ago, and they care for the aging congregation with a dutiful piety reminiscent of Martha from Luke 10:38–42. Like Martha, however, their dutiful piety does not produce joy in them or the community they serve. It is a service marked by duty rather than the joy of Christian hospitality. However, their new cook, Babette, begins to transform not only their meals but their lives and their community. Each of the fourteen years she serves in this capacity she purchases a lottery ticket from Paris in the hopes of returning to her once more extravagant lifestyle that remains a mystery to

the two sisters she serves. To her surprise and delight, Babette wins the lottery and receives 10,000 francs. The two sisters are convinced she will return to Paris, but Babette asks if she can cook a true Parisian feast for them and their small community. Soon exotic foods begin to show up, to the bewilderment of the townspeople. (There is a beautiful scene of astonished austere Danes watching a giant tortoise being brought into town!) The meal is extravagant and beautiful and draws the lives of the participants into intimate reality with their pasts and present. The meal, however, is also costly and requires everything of the one who provides it. The closing dialogue between the two sisters and Babette is too beautiful to be merely reduced to words on a page and, like a great meal, should be experienced and not read about. For the casual observer, the movie is about the ascetic lives of the religious, love never realized, and the extravagant nature of a single meal, but below the surface is a movie about redemption of time lost, Christian hospitality that goes beyond dutiful service, and a meal that reminds the participants of the extravagant nature of one willing to sacrifice themselves for a joy that is set before them.

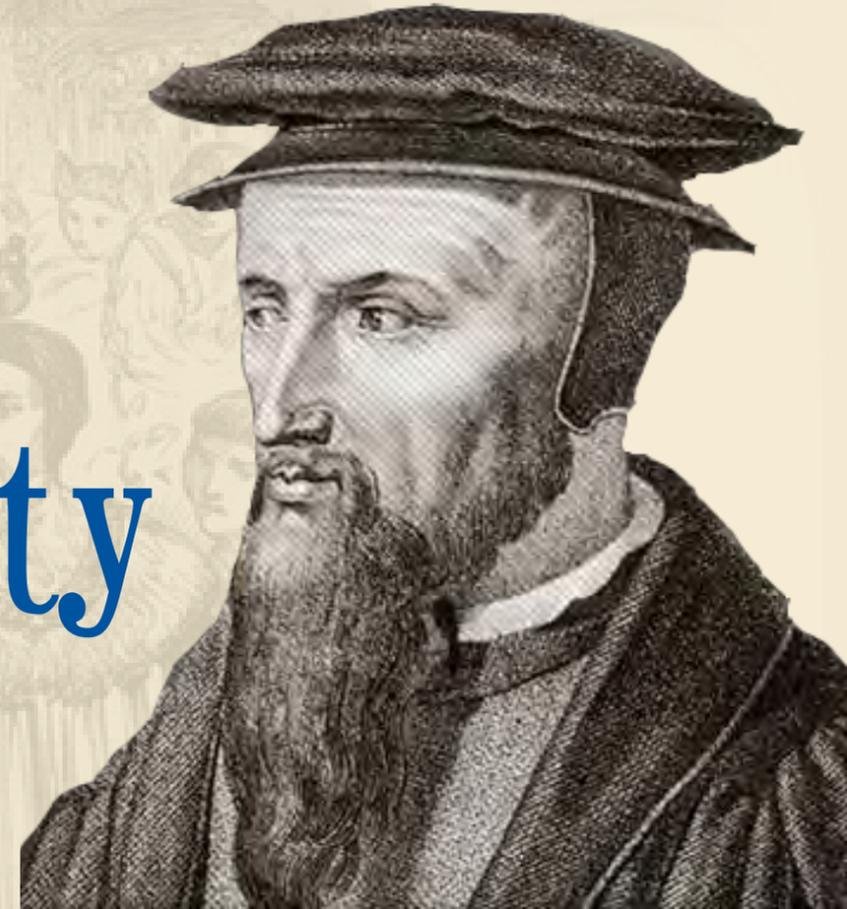


## GodSpeed: The Pace of Being Known

Follow the story of American pastor Matt Canlis, whose desire to change the world grinds to a halt in a Scottish parish. Join Eugene Peterson, N. T. Wright, and Granny Wallace on a pilgrimage to being known in your own backyard. Matt will be leading a breakout session at our 2021 Triennial Conference.

Visit [www.livegodspeed.org](http://www.livegodspeed.org) to watch the short film.

# John Calvin's Radical Hospitality



By **Philip E. Thompson, Ph.D.**  
Professor of Systematic Theology and Christian Heritage  
Sioux Falls Seminary

There are challenges in the way many Christians in the western world, particularly Protestants, perhaps most particularly Evangelicals, think about hospitality. We know it is biblically enjoined of God's people without distinction or exception. God's people are told throughout both Testaments of Scripture to show hospitality. Hospitality is to characterize life within the community (1 Peter 4:9). It is to characterize God's people's engagement with the world. The prophet Isaiah spoke of hospitality to those who are oppressed as integral to the LORD'S approved fast. In so doing we receive God (Matthew 25). Hebrews 13:2 tells us not to forget to show hospitality, reminding us that we never know who we might receive (Genesis 18). Yet we tend to think of it in association with what we might call communities of heroic witness – L'Arche, Jubilee Partners, the Catholic Worker movement, the Open Door Community. However, it is essential to the mission of the whole church. We at times need to be reminded of this. One who understood well the essential quality of hospitality, and who can give us encour-

aging reminders of its radical quality, was John Calvin. The name of John Calvin, perhaps the most prominent leader of the reform of the church in sixteenth century Switzerland, brings to mind many associations. For some people the associations are quite positive; for others they are quite negative. Few regard him neutrally. Almost never, it seems, is his name associated with the Christian practice of hospitality when there is discussion of his ideas. This is unfortunate, because he provides important insights for us into the depths of hospitality's witness, insights that can help us be more faithfully the people of God.

John Calvin was French, and yet he was forced to live most of his life as an exile. He was thus keenly aware of a common humanity that transcends all boundaries and divisions of human construction. As ethicist Christine Pohl observes, the status of being an alien challenges conventional boundaries and relationships.<sup>1</sup> Calvin thus understood hospitality to be more than a command. For him hospitality was embodied grace, a

**“the greatest stranger is our neighbor, because God has bound all men together, for the purpose of assisting each other.”**

sign of humanity healed from sin-caused division, united because all are created in the image of God. This is reflected clearly in his words:

*We should not regard what a man is and what he deserves: but we should go higher – that it is God who has placed us in the world for such a purpose that we be united and joined together. He has impressed his image in us and given us a common nature, which should incite us to providing one for the other. The man who wishes to exempt himself from providing for his neighbors should deface himself and declare that he no longer wishes to be a man, for as long as we are human creatures we must contemplate as in a mirror our face in those*

*who are poor, despised, exhausted, who groan under their burdens.*<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, even “the greatest stranger is our neighbor, because God has bound all men together, for the purpose of assisting each other.”<sup>3</sup> These words are gifts the church needs always to receive.

<sup>1</sup> Christine D. Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 105.

<sup>2</sup> John H. Leith, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life* (Westminster: John Knox, 1989), 186. Leith is quoting Calvin's *Corpus Reformatorum: Joannis Calvini Opera Quae Supersunt Omnia*, edited by Johann-Wilhelm Baum.

<sup>3</sup> Pohl, *Making Room*, 76. Pohl is quoting Calvin here.

# MAKING ROOM AT THE TABLE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE



By **Katie Johnson**  
EYELET Team Member

To be hospitable is to intentionally make room at the table so others may join, feel comfortable, and be heard.

I am a 21-year-old Christian woman, and I was born and raised in the church I currently attend. My dad is the pastor; that's right, I'm the pastor's daughter. Two years ago I began working as the youth leader. While serving in this position, God inspired and encouraged me to expand my ministry by connecting with other youth leaders in the area, which ended up being more difficult than expected. Thankfully, my dad was invited by a youth pastor down the street to join a meeting with three other local pastors and he brought me along.

At the meeting, I was the only person in their twenties and the only woman; naturally, I was intimidated by being at the big boy table for the first time. I sensed a tangible presence of uncomfortability. It seemed like the older pastors did not know how to approach me. They didn't look me in the eye, and it felt like I had to force my thoughts onto them. Afterward, my dad introduced me to the youth leader and explained that he and I shared hopes of connecting local churches.

The youth leader looked at my dad and began asking him questions about our youth group. Frustrated, I moved closer to the pastor and answered his questions.

After this first encounter, I was a little nervous to work with this group of pastors. I continued joining the meetings, and honestly, they were awkward. On several occasions, the men were laughing and chatting, but as soon as I walked into the room the tone shifted. The dynamic became more cordial when another woman was invited into the meetings. On the surface, it seemed my age and gender separated the pastors and I, and partially it did. More accurately though, it was my views and experiences that separated us. My experiences with social media, sexuality and gender ideals, sociocultural and political issues, being a female leader, and being a young adult actively leading in church differed greatly from the average 52-year-old male pastor. This disconnect grew as I shared my views and opinions and was often met with opposition and agitation. When I wasn't directly shut down, I felt like I was under a microscope being analyzed instead of actually being an equal and respected part of the conversation.

After sharing my experiences with other Jesus followers my age, I realized I am not the only one who feels disconnected from their faith community and its leadership. Many people I know don't feel heard; they feel shut down by tradition, or they are too scared to ask their questions. They want to leave their community of faith.

**WE MUST COME ALONGSIDE PEOPLE AND DIG INTO THE BIBLE TOGETHER, ULTIMATELY GUIDING AND GRANTING FREEDOM OF THOUGHT AND DIVERSITY IN OPINION.**

Okay, that was heavy, but I want you to please read the next few lines carefully. There is hope.

The church has a lot to offer, and I have noticed that a lot of people my age yearn to be involved in a strong community. Many long to ask questions about religion and wrestle through their belief (or

lack of) with someone. Thus, we must be interested in and even encourage intimidating questions. We must come alongside people and dig into the Bible together, ultimately guiding and granting freedom of thought and diversity in opinion. We must invite young people into leadership so other young adults feel like the church is a place for them,

not just their grandparents. Most importantly, we need to actively listen and speak carefully. Proverbs 15:1 says it all, "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger" (ESV). We need to welcome the "young perspective" so we don't turn away the modern-day doubting Thomas, the denying Peter, and the curious about Christ.

EYELET

✉ Kent Carlson, *Vice President of Leadership Formation*  
kcarlson@nabconf.org

# NAB HOSPITALITY THROUGH THE YEARS



**By Randy Tschetter**

Director, NAB Heritage Commission

More than a modern business model or even a theme for the upcoming Triennial, hospitality is a biblical imperative based on the very character of the Triune God and practiced by many individuals throughout Scripture. Abraham provided shelter and food for three strangers (Genesis 18). Aquila and Priscilla opened their home to provide rest for traveling missionaries and a meeting place for worshipers in Rome and Corinth (Acts 18; Romans 16; 1 Corinthians 16). Isaiah called the people of Judah to “defend the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widows” (Isaiah 1:17 NIV). The king in Jesus’s parable said, “Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me” (Matthew 25:40).

The NAB is primarily a denomination of immigrants – originally referred to as the German Baptists. North American hospitality in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries paved the way for several waves of German immigrants in search of religious freedom and economic opportunity, which led to the creation of many NAB churches. One of the most recent waves of European immigration took place following WWII. Although the war had ended, many people were still



living in poverty and facing difficult living conditions. In 1950, NAB pastor William Sturhahn “accepted the responsibilities of leading the immigration and settlement of German refugees to Canada.”<sup>1</sup>

Under the leadership of Pastor Sturhahn, Emmanuel Baptist Church in Morris, Manitoba, set an example of a congregation who early on welcomed these new families in Canada. “Every Sunday (1947–50),” Sturhahn writes, “we welcomed and greeted new immigrants into the fellowship.”<sup>2</sup> Those who came included mothers and children who had lost husbands

and fathers in Russia. The first couple sponsored personally by Sturhahn was Paul and Olga Retzlaff. Paul worked in Winnipeg for a time but then moved to Vancouver, where he established the Vancouver Fancy Sausage Co., a nationally recognized company. Others who came found employment as farm laborers, nurses, teachers, painters, and carpenters, while some followed God’s call to medical practice, pastoral ministries, and foreign missions. Thousands found significant places of service within local NAB churches.

More than a denominational program, hospitality has long been a way of life for North American Baptists.

All it takes is glance through *Heroes of the Faith: Volume II* to get a sense of how much hospitality has been a part of the NAB. “Throughout their entire ministry, Irene and Jacob (Gunst) enthusiastically opened the doors of their home to so many others, showing God’s love and exhibiting abundant hospitality.”<sup>3</sup>

Pastor Edward Kopf, who served churches in North and South Dakota, was known as “The Friendly Bus Driver,” and at a farewell gathering, a Catholic priest remarked that Ed “was not just the pastor of the Baptist Church, but of the whole town.”<sup>4</sup> A few may still remember “Mother Rose” Storz – the matron at Rochester Seminary who supplied students “with an abundance of well-prepared food” and was “always ready with a word of good cheer” for students who were homesick.<sup>5</sup>

I’ve seen this kind of biblical hospitality firsthand. Congregations of primarily Sudanese and Guatemalan believers worship regularly in the facilities of Trinity Baptist Church in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. The combined services with all three congregations are a highlight of the churches’ activities. Throughout the more than 150-year history of the NAB, churches and individuals in big and small acts have carried on the biblical mandate of hospitality.

<sup>1</sup>William Sturhahn, *They Came from East and West – A History of Immigration to Canada* (Winnipeg: Hignell Printing, 1976).

<sup>2</sup>Sturhahn, *East and West*, 15.

<sup>3</sup>Clarence and Dorene Walth, eds., *Heroes of the Faith: Volume II* (Grand Rapids: HeuleGordon, Inc., 2006), 68.

<sup>4</sup>Walth, *Heroes*, 90.

<sup>5</sup>*Baptist Herald*, May 15, 1943, p. 5.



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## Six Reasons Kairos is Thriving

Continued from page 9

**5** Global Partnerships: Kairos is expanding in wonderful ways as global partnerships grow. In addition to the NAB mission fields, Kairos has partners in Spain, Togo, Colombia, Argentina, Singapore, Tasmania, Poland, and more and includes connections to Converge Worldwide, Forge Canada, Cru, and others.

**6** Decreased Educational Debt: Kairos Project students continue to accumulate less debt while in seminary. When the Kairos Project first launched in the fall of 2014, its student body of nearly 150 students were collectively borrowing over \$1 million in student loans - an average of over \$3,000 per student. This past year, the nearly 450 Kairos students borrowed less than \$40,000 - an average of roughly \$90 per student. In short, educational debt incurred by students has dropped by over 96 percent.

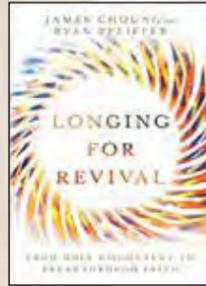
As we look to the future, we are excited about what God has in store. Already more schools and partners are reaching out to us and asking how they might participate in the Kairos network. We continue to see growing numbers of students enrolling in programs throughout Canada, the United States, and around the world. We are thankful for God’s provision and for our NAB family as we work to make theological education more affordable, accessible, relevant, and faithful.

Six Reasons Kairos is Thriving

# BOOK RESOURCES

## LONGING FOR REVIVAL

By James Choung and Ryan Pfeiffer

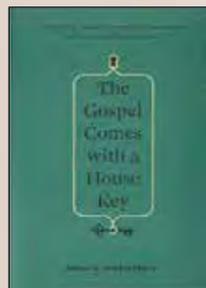


Our desire as Christians to become as hospitable as Jesus was is rooted in a desire to cooperate in God's restoration of all things, to see revival. In this book, Choung – one of our Triennial speakers – and Pfeiffer explore the realities that

revival begins with God but is lived out through us being the people of God.

## THE GOSPEL COMES WITH A HOUSE KEY: PRACTICING RADICALLY ORDINARY HOSPITALITY IN OUR POST-CHRISTIAN WORLD

By Rosario Butterfield

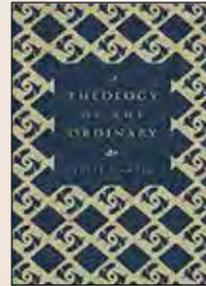


What did God use to draw a radical, committed unbeliever to himself? Did God take her to an evangelistic rally? Or, since she had her doctorate in literature, did he use something in print? No, God used an invitation to dinner in a modest home

from a humble couple who lived out the Gospel daily, simply, and authentically.

## A THEOLOGY OF THE ORDINARY

By Julie Canlis

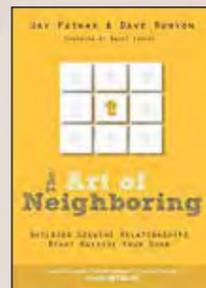


After returning to America from seventeen years abroad, Julie Canlis – a speaker at the 2021 Triennial – was struck by the emphasis within Christian circles on being “extraordinary” for God. But what about the goodness (and challenge) of living our

“normal” lives for God? This is a brief theological meditation on ordinary life as the only place where faith can be lived.

## THE ART OF NEIGHBORING: BUILDING GENUINE RELATIONSHIPS RIGHT OUTSIDE YOUR DOOR

By Jay Pathak and Dave Runyon



What would happen if every follower of Jesus took seriously Jesus's words to love God with their heart, soul, and mind and to love their neighbor as themselves?



### TRIENNIAL SCHOLARSHIP

Once again, Church Investors Fund is blessed to offer a scholarship to qualifying pastors and churches.

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### CHURCH APPRECIATION

Smaller churches are often an example of what hospitality in the community is all about. Join us as we appreciate our churches with under 200 in weekly attendance during the Friday morning session.



### VISIT OUR BOOTH

Also, come visit our booth and learn more about our Church Resource Center that we look to launch at Triennial.

Also, pick up the latest NAB Church Directory, along with a little keepsake for yourself.



### BREAK-OUT SESSIONS

#### Personal Finance and Retirement:

Come and explore with us as we look at how God calls us to serve Him with our finances and how to best prepare for retirement.

#### Church Finance and Saving:

In this session we will look at finance and saving from a churches perspective.



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