

MISSIONAL INITIATIVES



NORTH AMERICAN BAPTIST CONFERENCE

Monthly Newsletter: October 2022

Starting this month, we are excited about sending out a monthly newsletter to share some of the happenings that are occurring in the area of Missional Initiatives within the NAB. Each month you will find an article from one of our team members on a particular topic, a story of missional living, and resources to equip and encourage you.

We are thankful to be able to serve the NAB Conference of churches and we hope this monthly newsletter will be an encouragement to you in the communities where you serve.

Missional Leadership: Old and New

By Cam Roxburgh: Team Lead

I am grateful for the leadership opportunities I have had, and for the lessons I am learning.

Two weeks ago I was in Chicago with 80 leaders from the North American Baptists as we heard Scot McKnight frame the Christian Life around loving God and Neighbour, the gospel as being simply about King Jesus, and leadership as modelling life in Christ and creating space for others to be drawn to Jesus. We have learned a lot since our days of Summits and 21 rules for this and that. The church may in fact not rise and fall on a CEO model of leadership after all.

Lesson #1 - Leadership is more about who we are becoming than the competencies we have mastered.

Last week I was in Colorado Springs with the Forge Country Leaders. Forge, in its early stages was an edgy group that deconstructed the church and focused leadership around the question of "what works?" But now, 15 years later, the group has grown and matured and is focused around some of the original intent. It now asks questions like Who is God? How/where is He at work in the world? How is He inviting us to join in on mission with Him? Now our task is to join with God in local neighbourhoods whatever country we are serving in.

Lesson #2 - Leadership does not ask "what works" but rather "who is God" and "where is He at work in the world."

This week I will work alongside The Missional Network in offering a new cohort we called The Leader's Table. The objective of this cohort is to help leaders continue to focus not on the competencies of leadership, but on practices that lead to discernment. We have come to

believe that God is indeed at work in the world and that a leader's job is more like a gardener who helps tend to the soil, or a midwife who is helping to bring life into the world.

Lesson #3 - Leadership is better described with metaphors of gardener and midwife than it is with CEO.

In spite of the liminality we are facing as God's people in this season of history (post this and that), we must recall that there are some things that do not change. He will never leave us or forsake us. His presence and power are always available. His mercies are new every morning. The victory has been won in and through King Jesus who is the Christ. He is building His church and the gates of hell will not prevail. When we seek Him, we will find Him.

Lesson #4 - Leadership is learning to increasingly place all of our hope and confidence in Him.

JOINING IN OR BRINGING IN?

By Karen Wilk: Neighbourhood Life

In a recent online gathering, we had an inspiring and challenging conversation prompted by one participant's reflections on some recent events in her neighbourhood. There had been a big community Festival in their neighbourhood (of primarily high-rises) hosted by their local City councillor which included lots of fun activities such as face painting, jugglers, food trucks and an outdoor family movie at dusk. There had been an incredible turnout and Sue* had appreciated the opportunity to be with so many neighbours, some of whom she had not seen for a long while (covid times), and others she had never met. Sue was also impressed with how many neighbours were involved in the event as volunteers and how very well done the whole thing was.

In contrast, a few weeks later, a Christian youth organization came ('parachuted in,' as one participant named it) to do their annual event 'for the community'. They brought in everything, including lots of attractions like free food, bouncy castles and big prizes such as BBQs. They also had Christian music and a speaker. But, despite all the freebies, as in previous years, very few residents participated. And as a resident, Sue resonated with her neighbours' discomfort and sense of intrusion as these 'outsiders came in to do their thing.'

She wondered, "Why wouldn't they just join in, participate with, volunteer alongside neighbours at the community event that's already happening? They could have even had their own booth there if they wanted to, they could have helped out, and got to know people. It just really didn't make sense to me. I felt the awkwardness and resentment of my neighbours." Similar experiences and observations were shared, and more questions were pondered: What if God was present and at work in the community event? What would happen if more followers

of Jesus paid attention to, discovered and joined in with what the Spirit was already doing in their neighbourhoods?

These are 'joining God in the neighbourhood' questions, how are you exploring them?

*Name changed

Resources

In upcoming newsletters you will see us highlight various trainings, books, and podcasts that we, as a team, are finding helpful as we live out this missional life together.

For this month, we wanted to introduce the new Missional Initiatives Team one more time so that you know who they are and the resources that they are making available to leaders and churches.

Cam Roxburgh: Team Lead

Cam has pastored for 30 years, and continues to serve on the Executive Team of the NAB. You'll find Cam facilitating many of our trainings like Blue Ocean and the Discovery Project.

Sara-May Cardy: Admin & Communications

Sara-May is the Pastor of Groups & Missional Life at Greenfield Community Church. On the MI team she organizes our communications and supports the rest of the team. [Contact Sara-May for more info on the things we offer: scardy@nabconf.org]

Merv Budd: Equipping Evangelist

Merv has served at North Burlington Baptist Church since 2001. He has a passion for equipping leaders in the area of evangelism and is working on completing DPT in the area of evangelism.

Deb Judas: Director of Formation

Deb is a pastor and has been involved with pastoring and church planting for many years. She provides coaching, teaching and soul care for pastors and next generation leaders.

Luke Miller: MI Teaching Team

Luke is the lead pastor at Sunrise Community Church. He loves to teach and travel and the privilege it affords to seeing others grow in their faith.

Matt Styles: MI Teaching Team

Matt has served as a lead pastor for the past 12 years in both rural and city churches in South Dakota in addition to other teams within the NAB.

Karen Wilk: Neighbourhood Life

Karen currently leads a "neighbourhood church" in Edmonton. She is a certified coach who serves multiple Missional Leadership teams and is passionate about equipping leaders.