



PLANTING A GARDEN

When College Heights Baptist Church was planted fifty years ago in Prince George, British Columbia, they started out as a simple Bible study. They soon grew to meeting at a local school and before long were erecting their own building. Once they had their building, the intent was always to plant again once it started to get full.

Over the years, they would bring up the conversation about church planting, praying about it and even seeking out consultation from within the church planting world. But, according to Pastor Curtis Reimer, “It seemed very time we were making progress, a door would close.” Whether it was a change in the pastoral team, a conflict in the church



PASTOR CURTIS REIMER
COLLEGE HEIGHTS BAPTIST CHURCH

that needed to be resolved, or a struggle to find someone to lead a new church plant, the pieces never seemed to fit into the places they needed to. All this time, the leadership team were, as Pastor Curtis put it, “cultivating the congregation” to think about what kind of impact they could have in their community.

Throughout the history of the North American Baptist Conference, NAB churches have sought to impact their communities for the sake of the Gospel. Often this has meant starting new communities of believers, new churches to proclaim the Kingdom of God in our midst. As April Wahl writes elsewhere in this issue, our God is “an incredibly compassionate Father who loves his kids and wants them to enjoy not just the playground but each other. And he wants us to invite others to come and play.” When you give to the Ministry Resource Fund, you are, in part, helping to support that kind of invitation to multiplication. Your gift allows us to resource new pastors, support sending churches, and train leaders in what it looks like to impact our communities for the Gospel.

After so many false starts and closed doors, it wasn’t until two years ago that the dream of being a church that planted other churches started

to become a reality.

In 2022, Pastor Curtis met with Micah Brookhart, a pastor and adjunct professor in Alberta, who was in town for the weekend to visit family and friends, Curtis being one of them. Micah described Curtis as “a pastor/mentor/friend,” so when the conversation turned to the idea of planting a church in Prince George, Micah listened.

As Micah described it, “Instantly, a heaviness for the city and for friends and strangers who do not know Jesus washed over me.”

Leaving the diner that day, Micah and Curtis both committed to praying about this potential new endeavor. After months of prayer, and continued affirmations from God, Pastor Curtis brought the idea to the College Heights Elder Board, while Micah shared it with his family, his spiritual director, and other key mentors. As the affirmations continued, it was time to start following where the Spirit was leading.

“Once we started to get more serious about it,” Pastor Curtis said, “we had a series of town halls for people to come out and hear from us and pray for us.” It was during one of those

intended all those decades ago. He said, “We believe that we’re in a time of flourishing and welcoming so many new people into our church family. The time feels right to us to take this step of faith.”

However, the preparation work was not yet complete. Initial support came from Bob Krahn, the soon-to-be retiring executive minister for the British Columbia Baptist Association; the NAB was also brought in for additional assistance. The Elder Board began training to understand what it meant to be a sending church. One key part was connecting College Heights to other church planters and sending churches through the NAB Multipliers Cohort. Pastor Curtis said, “Having that gathering, whether virtual or in person, has been significant in the exchange of ideas and being supported.”

For Micah, not only was the Multipliers Cohort beneficial, so was the NAB Fit Assessment he attended in February 2024. He described it as “extremely helpful in affirmation and encouragement of my call to be a church planter” that also gave him “guidance for personal growth and development areas.”

The 50th anniversary celebration of College Heights took place this past May. It was not just a celebration of the ways God has used the church for the past five decades, it was also a look ahead to what God is already stirring up in their midst. This new church plant, Garden City Church, won’t launch until September, but it has already gathered together a diverse team, a mix of established believers, brand new believers, and those who have not yet chosen to follow Jesus. Micah said, “It has been beautiful to see more Kingdom outposts of the Gospel multiplied throughout a city that desperately needs to know Jesus.”

And for College Heights? This is just the beginning. Pastor Curtis said, “We’re planting more seeds for multiplication. We’re going to keep asking the Lord what multiplication can look like, even as we assess how to best care for our current congregation as it grows.”

For both College Heights Baptist Church and Garden City Church, crucial to this journey was the support they received from those who have already been down the same road. Whether it was training through missional initiatives helping to ignite ideas, or the Multipliers Cohort providing a community in which to exchange ideas, or Fit Assessment guiding through the discernment process, throughout this journey the NAB has supported, resourced, and cared for both the sending and planting churches.



PASTOR MICAH AND REBECCA BROOKHART
GARDEN CITY CHURCH



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