

HERITAGE HORIZONS

NORTH AMERICAN BAPTIST HERITAGE COMMISSION

Celebrating a Rich Past . . . Inspiring a Promising Future

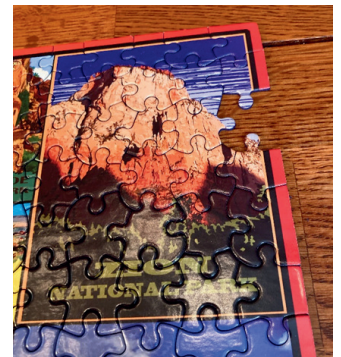
Dissectologists

by Randy Tschetter

Evenings in the winter months of January and February can be long and dreary. To compensate, my wife and I often become dissectologists, or puzzlers – terms used to describe people who enjoy putting jigsaw puzzles together. The word “dissectologist” refers to the original jigsaw puzzles, dissected maps used to teach geography.¹ From personal experience, I have learned that the task of arranging and connecting 1,000 seemingly random puzzle pieces in such a way that they create a coherent picture can be both challenging and rewarding.


Several years ago, I discovered my brand new 1,000-piece puzzle only had 999 pieces. For sure, the picture of Zion National Park was impressive, but it was incomplete. I am reminded that in many ways the story of the North American Baptist Conference is similar to a jigsaw puzzle.

Thousands of individuals – pastors; denominational leaders; missionary nurses, doctors, and teachers; seminary professors; church secretaries and treasurers; nursery workers; pianists, organists, choir directors, and soloists; maintenance workers and janitors; Sunday school teachers and youth workers; generous givers; prayer-warriors; ushers and greeters; church potluck cooks; and many others – each making their contribution. Everyone and every act of worship and service is an important piece of the puzzle, but the picture is always incomplete when any of us are missing in action.



Each November 11, the United States celebrates Veteran’s Day and Canada observes Remembrance Day. This is a day to honor and remember the countless individuals and the

¹ Wordfoolery, “The Puzzling History of the Dissectologists,” Grace Tierney,
<https://wordfoolery.wordpress.com/2024/01/29/the-puzzling-history-of-the-dissectologists>.

sacrifices of those who have served and are serving their countries. In a sense, the ministry of the NAB Archives is an ongoing Veteran's Day in which we remember and honor those faithful women and men (puzzle pieces) who have served and continue to serve God through the NAB. 

A Few Often Overlooked NAB "Veterans"

From its earliest beginnings, the North American Baptist story has involved missions.

By the early 1880s and extending into the early twentieth century, many German immigrants were making their way westward and northward across the United States and Canada. Many NAB churches were established on the prairies and in small villages by people who were often just struggling to survive in a new country and in the face of difficult financial and weather conditions. However, at a time when it would have been easy to focus on local church needs – finding a pastor, writing organizational documents, building houses of worship, etc. – there was among the immigrants what Martin Leuschner called a “missionary zeal,” a desire to share the Gospel with people in and from other cultures.

In 1882, Emma Rauschenbusch, daughter of NAB / Sioux Falls Seminary founder August Rauschenbusch and sister to NAB pastor and seminary professor Walter Rauschenbusch, accepted a call from the American Baptists to serve as a missionary in



Emma Rauschenbusch India. Later, she and her husband, John Clough, served among a group called the Dalits – the “untouchable” outcasts who represent the lowest stratum of the castes in the Indian subcontinent.²

August Steffens felt a call to missionary service while he was a student at the NAB seminary in Rochester, New York. Following graduation in 1891, he was ordained, commissioned, and sent off to Cameroon as the first Baptist missionary from North



August Steffens America. Two years later, in 1893, he died from malaria.

NAB missions in the mid-twentieth century also included outreach to the First Nations people of Canada. August and Helen Grymaloski began their ministry “among the Indians of northern Alberta, where Helen’s knowledge of the Cree language helped the couple understand the Indians better and

² Wikipedia, *The Free Encyclopedia*, s.v. “Dalit,” <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dalit>.



August and Helen Grymaloski

witness to them in a more effective way.”³ In 1959, after training at Christian Training Institute, they were appointed to serve among the Muscowpetung Nation in Saskatchewan.



Reinhard and Mildred Neuman

In 1948, Reinhard Neuman was appointed to missionary work among the First Nations of Alberta and Saskatchewan. Along with his wife, Mildred, they served with great dedication and enthusiasm for some fifteen years. In later years, after having served in three NAB pastorates, the

Neumans also volunteered as house-parents for missionary children in Jos, Nigeria.



Helen Loshe

Among the many NAB missionaries who have served the Spanish American residents in the San Luis Valley area of Colorado is Helen Loshe. Illiteracy, unemployment, alcoholism, and superstition have made this a difficult field. Due to the lack of leadership among the people of the area, Helen found herself teaching Sunday School, preaching at church worship services, leading children’s and women’s ministries, teaching piano lessons, and doing visitation. The daughter of NAB pastor Otto Loshe from the Dakotas, Helen’s ministry had a significant impact in the lives of the hundreds of people she served. 📖

The Heritage Commission is a partner ministry of the North American Baptist Conference. An advisory committee is in place to offer support and direction to the director and staff.

Support the Heritage Commission

Canada Giving



US Giving



³ *Now We Are 82*, NAB Conference, 1962, p. 52.

Keeping the Stories Alive

The mission of the Heritage Commission is to collect, preserve, display, and share the documents and artifacts that tell the stories of God's people at work in and through the NAB Conference – a story that covers some 185 years. Many of our efforts these days involves digitizing photos and documents. In the past few months, we were able to hire a firm to digitize seventy-five rolls of microfilm containing all the issues of *Der Sendbote*. Darlene is currently scanning copies of Moments With God – the devotional booklets were written by NAB pastors and laypeople.

In a recent presentation at an association gathering, I mentioned things I wanted them to remember when they returned home.

1. Remember, we are all in the legacy-building business. Often times, it is those who work behind the scenes who have the greatest impact.
2. Remember that history (our stories) are important and need to be recorded.
3. Remember to send stories of significant events in your church to the NAB Archives.
4. Remember that Archival staff (Randy and Darlene) are available to assist individuals and churches in their search for historical documents and stories.
5. Remember to check us out at our webpage: nabconference.org/nab-heritage-commission.
6. Remember that in-person visits to the Archives are always welcome.



2100 S Summit Ave.
Sioux Falls, SD 57105
605-274-2731

NORTH AMERICAN BAPTIST CONFERENCE

**HERITAGE
COMMISSION**

nabconference.org/nab-heritage-commission
nabarchives@nabconf.org
nabarchives@kairos.org



Randy Tschetter
Director



Darlene Frueh
Administrative
Assistant



NORTH AMERICAN BAPTIST CONFERENCE

A Missionary Tribute

by Randy Tschetter

The NAB has a long history of sending missionaries to foreign-to-us mission fields. In this edition of *Heritage Horizons*, we pay tribute to the Rev. Dr. Oryn G. Meinerts.

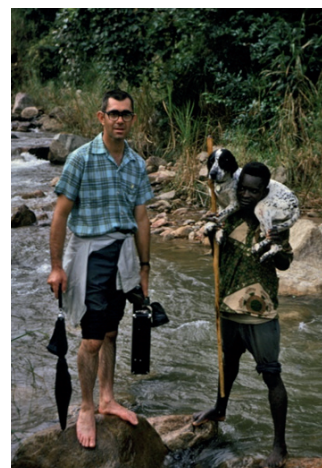


Oryn was born in a snowstorm near Emery, South Dakota, in 1937. He attended school through 8th grade and then seemed content to stay home and herd cattle along the roadside. A year later, with the encouragement of a school superintendent, he returned to finish high school before heading off to college and then to North American Baptist Seminary in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

In 1964, Oryn was commissioned as a missionary to Cameroon by the North American Baptist Conference. He served faithfully as a teacher and principal of a high school, interim senior church pastor, and field director for twenty-seven years. During his tenure, the Cameroon Baptist Convention grew from 12,000 to 80,000 members. In 1985, he was granted a doctor of Missiology degree from Trinity Evangelical Divinity Seminary, and in 2001, he was decorated with a medal by the Republic of Cameroon: Knight of the Cameroon Order of Merit – the highest civilian honor granted by the Cameroonian government.

While in Cameroon, Oryn met Patricia (Pat) Heller, a nurse midwife. They were married on August 10, 1968, and they subsequently served together as a team for some thirty years. Upon their return to the United States, Oryn accepted a position as the pastor to Seniors at Tabernacle Baptist Church in George, Iowa. On May 22, 2024, Oryn joined with the saints who have said, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness.” (2 Timothy 4:7–8a NIV).

Several of Oryn’s Cameroonian friends and colleagues were present at his memorial, where he was eulogized as a father, pastor, teacher, mentor, hard worker, man of integrity, and servant leader. The pastor shared a letter from Rev. Dr. Nditemeh Charlemagne, current Executive President of the Cameroon Baptist Convention, who wrote: “Oryn taught us that it was possible to be a white American missionary



and at the same time be or become an African. He didn’t look down on us, he ate our local food, dressed like us, made himself one of us. [. . .] He saw us as equal image bearers of our creator who deserved human dignity and worth.” 