

SERVANT

INTERVIEW

**PHIL
CALLAWAY**

MARK MAXWELL

**A HOUSE
OF PRAYER**

ALUMNI IN ACTION

**SHELTER IN
LIFE'S STORMS**

**WHEN GOD
MOVES**

**TURNING
POINTS**

A house of prayer



IN HIS BOOK *FRESH WIND, FRESH FIRE*,

Jim Cymbala describes one of his early messages at the famous Brooklyn Tabernacle. It was a Sunday evening and fifteen people were gathered in a dingy meeting room. Just as he was preparing to close with an invitation, the pew holding five of them collapsed!

That was forty-five years ago. Jim decided then that it was time to turn to the Lord in prayer. In fact, Cymbala determined that the Tuesday evening prayer service would be his primary focus and he would do his best never to miss two in a row. God has answered in ways far beyond all expectations. They now have three services on Sunday in a beautifully renovated theatre that seats 3,200 and they still meet



for prayer on Tuesday evening. But you will spend an hour or longer in the line that wraps around the block in order to get in to any service, including the prayer meeting. What a testimony to the power of prayer!

Here at the college, we are now into our fall chapel series called “A House of Prayer.” We will be looking at a dozen of the great prayers of the Bible, including that of the young Samuel, “*Speak, Lord, your servant is listening,*” that launched his remarkable career.

Jesus put great emphasis on the importance of prayer by his example of continual communion with his Father, by his intercession, and by his angry reaction to the busy-ness (and business) of the people in the temple of Jerusalem. In Mark 11 we read how he blocked the traffic and overturned the tables of the moneychangers, saying, “*Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations?’*”

Prayer is the sacred ground on which God builds his kingdom and the church. So, while worship and teaching can be contributors to a healthy church, Jesus stressed the centrality of prayer as the core

Prayer is the sacred ground on which God builds his kingdom and the church.

function of the House of God. Therefore, that should be our first priority, especially when we are about the work of the King and his kingdom.

A healthy, spiritually-vibrant church needs good preaching, worship music, elders and deacons, outreach programs, missions and Sunday school, right? No!! A healthy, spiritually-vibrant church needs to be spending time in prayer...good worship and great teaching will come from that foundation.

Why, exactly? Prayer provides us with access to the very throne room of heaven. We are told in Revelation 8:4 that “*the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God...*” and that Jesus

himself sits at the right hand of God and “*is interceding for us*” (Romans 8:34).

Prayer invokes the power of the Almighty, often taking the form of miracles. When we call on him in prayer, he begins to coordinate schedules and align resources. His ways are not our ways, (thank goodness), so we can expect some surprising changes to our plans. And he will answer in ways that far exceed our greatest expectations. How can we be sure of this? Because he has promised to answer and because prayer to build his kingdom is at the centre of his will. Our own best work is just a waste unless we invoke the power and love of the Lord, because “*unless the Lord builds the house, they labour in vain that build it*” (Psalm 127:1).

Let’s determine, in our homes and in our places of work or ministry, to set time to hear the voice of God, to bow in worship, and to lay our needs and concerns before him. If there is one thing I know, it is what a hectic schedule looks like. But I also know that if we are overrun with busy-ness, then we truly MUST find time for prayer so that God can coordinate events, solve problems, let us know his will, and indeed, enable us to get everything done that needs to be done.

James Paterson, a good friend in Ontario, makes “prayer machines”—interactive art that illustrates his perspective on the impact of prayer (jdpaterson.com). A small wheel with a handle on it animates the entire piece of art, putting it in motion through wheels, pulleys and belts. What an illustration of the great truth that our often unseen, seemingly-

insignificant prayers reach into the heavenly throne room and call the Almighty to action.

And that’s when mountains move. |S|



Mark Maxwell is president of Prairie. He welcomes your comments. Send them to mark.maxwell@prairie.edu

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LETTERS

Congratulations on Issue 100! From the first issue to the 100th, I have been inspired, touched and enlightened in so many ways. Thank you for your faithfulness in continuing to produce my favourite Christian magazine! May God continue to bless the ministry of *SERVANT* magazine as well as Prairie Bible Institute.

Joanne Robideau, Kelowna, BC

Mark Maxwell's article "My Growing Theology" sparked with the prism effect of a fine cut diamond. Such genuine insights come only by God's Holy Spirit. As Mark pointed out, God's heart aches for close loving companionship with each of us. Our painful trials and persecutions are meant to direct our hearts into the love of God (II Thess. 3:5) and allow us opportunities and privileges to be partakers with Christ in his sufferings. Job was not prepared for Satan's blows—or was he? As a righteous and praying man, even through losses, discouragement and grief, he still maintained his integrity and kept from sin. This opened the door to an intense communication from God and Job experienced a profound revelation of God himself.

Lynda Osborne, Three Hills, AB

Congratulations to Prairie for another great edition: the very healthy, *honest* 100th issue of *SERVANT* magazine. The editorial content and visual layout once again provide ministry and helpful information about the college in a very practical and God-honouring way. The thoughtful articles about Wilma Derksen, Wayne Nelson and "Families at the Crossroads" all stand out for their honest Christian understanding and human life sharing. Thank you for writing so freely about real life struggles.

Noel Buchanan, Victoria, Australia

CORRECTION

Issue 100, page 4: "Author William Gladwell" should read "Author Malcolm Gladwell."



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| INNERVIEW

PHIL CALLAWAY

sharing the joy

"Like apples of gold in settings of silver is a word spoken at the right time" says Proverbs 25:11. SERVANT editor Pat Massey recently looked back with author Phil Callaway over a career built on words "fitly spoken." Words all shared with a smile and a deep desire to spread the joy of Jesus in a hurting world. Along with a full speaking schedule these days, Phil is the voice of Laugh Again, a five-minute radio spot produced by the Good News Broadcasting Corporation and aired on radio outlets around the world every week day.

SERVANT: WHEN DID YOU FIRST BECOME AWARE OF THE IMPACT YOUR WORDS COULD HAVE?

PHIL: Two of my third grade friends came over after school one day. They took me to a row of trees near our house and told me they were there to beat me up. I'd been slandering one of them and he squealed on me. I had a big mouth and a small body. Bad combination. I launched into my first comedy routine on the spot and made them laugh until they changed their minds. I wish I had a tape of that sketch. It must have been okay.

TAKE US BACK TO THE BEGINNING. HOW DID YOUR PRESENT MINISTRY TAKE SHAPE?

In the early '90s I began writing a column in *Servant*. An editor in Oregon took Bob Hawkins Jr, the president of Harvest House Publishers, out for lunch and read him one of my articles. He couldn't stop laughing. "See if he'd write us a book," he said. When they asked, I thought, "No way. I can't." My wife said, "Sure you can." So we compiled my *Servant* articles

"God used Balaam's donkey," said my wife. "He can use you."

into a book. Max Lucado liked it and John McPerson drew the cartoons. It was a hit and the first of a few dozen more to come.

People asked me to speak and I said, "I can't." My wife said, "God used Balaam's donkey. He can use you." She was right. God often uses vastly underqualified people to do his work. We know we're toast without him and if good things happen, we know who gets the credit.

DID YOU EVER IMAGINE YOU'D BE DOING WHAT YOU'RE DOING TODAY?

No. You have these inklings when you look back, I suppose. My earliest memories involve my mother being very ill with deep depression. No one called it that then. You were just sick. Dad told me later that I would go into her room and do whatever it took to make her laugh. So I guess I found out early that laughter is good medicine. It also gave me a very soft spot for those who, like King David, battle in deep places.

WHAT DID YOUR PARENTS THINK OF YOUR SENSE OF HUMOR?

They loved to laugh. I once told my mom, "I wanna grow up and be a comedian." She said, "Well, you can't do both." She was right. But no one encouraged me more than my parents. Dad was very funny. Mom often said, "Keep it clean, Son." They grew up in the Depression and were well-acquainted with despair. You developed a sense of humor or else. Dad sometimes played a vinyl recording of Billy Sunday who said, "If you have no

joy, there's a leak in your Christianity somewhere." I always liked that.

If you have no joy, there's a leak in your Christianity somewhere.

WHAT IS THE KEY TO A JOY-FILLED LIFE?

Looking back with thanksgiving, looking around with grace, and looking forward with hope. Each of these is a conscious decision to focus on what God has done, what he's doing now, and what he will yet do. Some of the youngest people I know are elderly people who live this way despite chronic aches and pains. Gratitude is the secret to the joy-filled life.

HOW DO HUMOR AND MINISTRY GO TOGETHER?

I think it's possible to be successful in ministry without a good sense of humor, but I wouldn't want to try it. Maybe you can be a Christian who doesn't laugh, but I wouldn't want to meet one. I've never seen humor and ministry at odds. Quite the opposite, in fact. Psalm 126 tells what happened when God freed his people: "Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, 'The Lord has done great things for them.'" Our joy should be visible and contagious. Nietzsche rejected his minister father's faith partly because of "joyless Christians." Bertrand Russell's daughter

was a follower of Christ. She tells how her dad's whole life was a search for God. But when she tried to convince him she had found what he was longing for, one of his excuses was that he had known too many Christians who "sucked the joy from life." You can laugh without having joy, but you can't have joy without laughing.

ARE YOU EVER CRITICIZED FOR USING HUMOR?

Only about every day. I understand. Maybe when people think of humor they think of comedy clubs. That's not what I'm about. One man told me there's no record of Jesus laughing; what business do I have making people laugh? Apparently this person hadn't spent much time camping with twelve guys like Jesus did. Our Savior was undoubtedly a joy to be with. But like any gift, humor can be misused. I need wisdom.

ARE THERE THINGS YOU DON'T JOKE ABOUT?

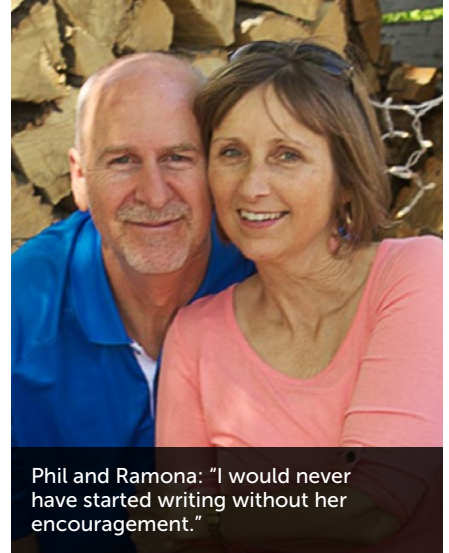
Absolutely. I never take lightly the suffering of others. And when people are on the front lines of the world's tragedies, we have no right to criticize or make jokes about it. We have no idea what they are experiencing. I also find it hard to take seriously any Christian entertainer who mocks his wife. Ramona is the best thing that's happened to me outside of my relationship with Jesus. Honoring her is one reason we've been happy a very long time.

HOW MUCH HAS YOUR WIFE INFLUENCED WHAT YOU DO?

I would never have started writing without her encouragement. And the stories that have endeared me to people were stories of family, of Ramona's battle with epilepsy, and her family's struggle with Huntington's. I think hardship takes the edge off your humor. It softened me. I asked my wife if I should write about it. "If it can help one person," she told me, "go ahead." She's my direct opposite. I can't drag her onto a stage for any amount of anything. But she prays. And I know God hears her.

SOME PEOPLE SEE YOU AS JUST AN ENTERTAINER. WHAT HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED THAT TELLS YOU IT GOES MUCH DEEPER THAN THAT?

Changed lives. A whole family writing to say they'd come to faith through a book I wrote. I shook my head for three days. God can use anyone. I once spoke at a women's conference at a swanky hotel. On the Sunday morning a guy came in and sat at the back. He had played in the bar band until two, tried to sleep in but couldn't, so he wandered around and heard women laughing. Later he told me, "My parents have prayed for years that I'd come to Jesus. That happened this morning." All because he had heard laughter from Christians. I think it's a powerful magnet to the Kingdom of God.



Phil and Ramona: "I would never have started writing without her encouragement."

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO OUR READERS ABOUT THE EFFECT THEIR WORDS CAN HAVE?

One high school teacher told me I would never amount to anything. Another one, Al Bienert, said, "You have a gift." He actually wanted me in his class. We make a choice every day. We can use our words to destroy or to build up. That could very well determine our legacy.

YOU'VE OFTEN ASKED THE PEOPLE YOU'VE INTERVIEWED HOW THEY WOULD LIKE TO BE REMEMBERED. WHAT ABOUT YOU?

I was 33 when I wrote down what I'd like on my tombstone: "He found God's grace too amazing to keep to himself." I'd like to take what's been given to me and spread it around as long as I can. ❏



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NEWS & VIEWS

CONSERVATIVE DOCTRINE GROWS CHURCHES

Contrary to stereotypes, a new study presented in the *Review of Religious Research* has revealed that doctrinally conservative churches that reach out aggressively often grow. Churches that soften biblical teachings and de-emphasize evangelism often shrink. Owen Strachan of The Gospel Coalition comments that it turns out people actually want to be called to believe in something, belong to somewhere, and commit to Someone.



ARE SMARTPHONES DESTROYING A GENERATION?

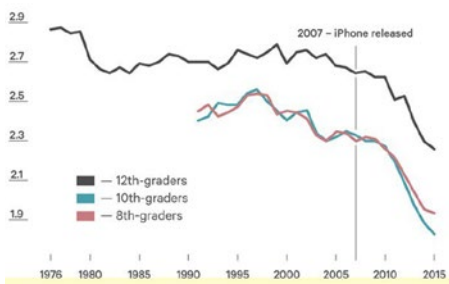
It appears that the constant presence of the internet, particularly social media, is changing the behavior of today's teens. According to research by psychologist and author Jean M. Twenge, where the characteristics that define a generation move up and down gradually, around 2012 the line graphs showing teen behaviors and emotional states became steep mountains and sheer cliffs. That was exactly the moment when the proportion of Americans who owned a smartphone surpassed 50 percent.

Every aspect of teenagers' lives has radically changed, from the nature of their social interactions to their mental health. Once-coveted teen independence has lost its allure. Since their social life is lived on their phone, they are less likely to

get together with friends, date or get a driver's license. Depression, loneliness, poor sleep, feeling left out and cyberbullying are common. It would appear that the devices we've placed in young people's hands are having a profound effect on their lives and making them seriously unhappy. Perhaps the best advice for a happy adolescence based on this survey is: put down the phone, turn off the laptop, and do something—anything—that does not involve a screen.

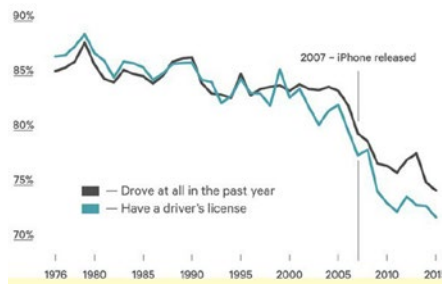
NOT HANGING OUT WITH FRIENDS

Times per week teenagers go out without their parents



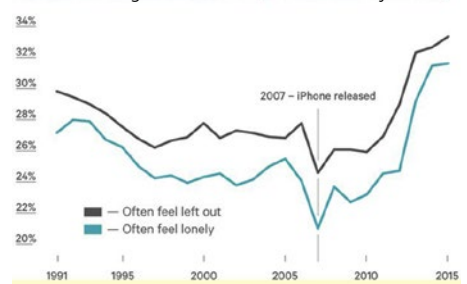
IN NO RUSH TO DRIVE

Percentage of 12th-graders who drive



MORE LIKELY TO FEEL LONELY

Percentage of 8th-, 10th- and 12th-graders who agree or mostly agree with the statement "I often feel left out of things" or "A lot of times I feel lonely"



Honey bees will tap about 2 million flowers and fly 50,000 miles to make one pound of honey.

Canadian Honey Council



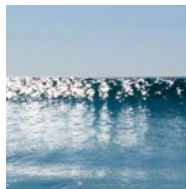
The hexagon is the most efficient shape in the world.

Slate Magazine



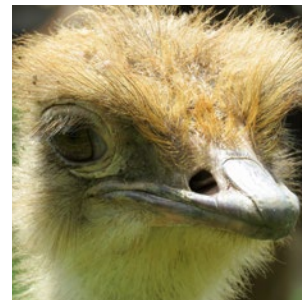
An edible, 106-year-old fruitcake was discovered in the hut used by British explorer Robert Scott during his final, fateful 1911 expedition.

Antarctic Heritage Trust Fund



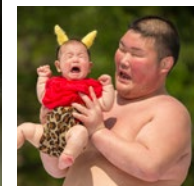
In the open ocean, a tsunami can travel up to 500 miles per hour, as fast as a commercial jet.

National Geographic News



An ostrich's eye is bigger than its brain.

Veterinary Hub



It is considered good luck in Japan when a sumo wrestler makes your baby cry.

Daily Mail

MEDITATION

"If my activism, however well-motivated, drives out love, then I have misunderstood Jesus' gospel...the issue is not whether I agree with someone but rather how I treat someone with whom I profoundly disagree. We Christians are called to use the 'weapons of grace' which means treating even our opponents with love and respect."

PHILIP
YANCEY



QUOTEWORTHY

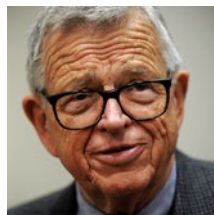


N.T.
WRIGHT

"Our task, as image-bearing, God-loving, Christ-shaped, Spirit-filled Christians... is to announce redemption to a world that has discovered its fallenness, to announce healing to a world that has discovered its brokenness, to proclaim love and trust to a world that knows only exploitation, fear and suspicion."

BETH
MOORE

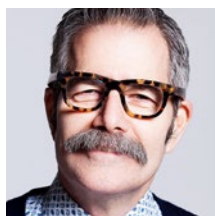
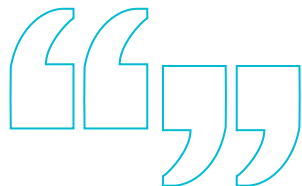
"If Jesus gives us a task or assigns us to a difficult season, every ounce of our experience is meant for our instruction and completion if only we'll let him finish the work."



CHARLES
COLSON

(1931 - 2012)

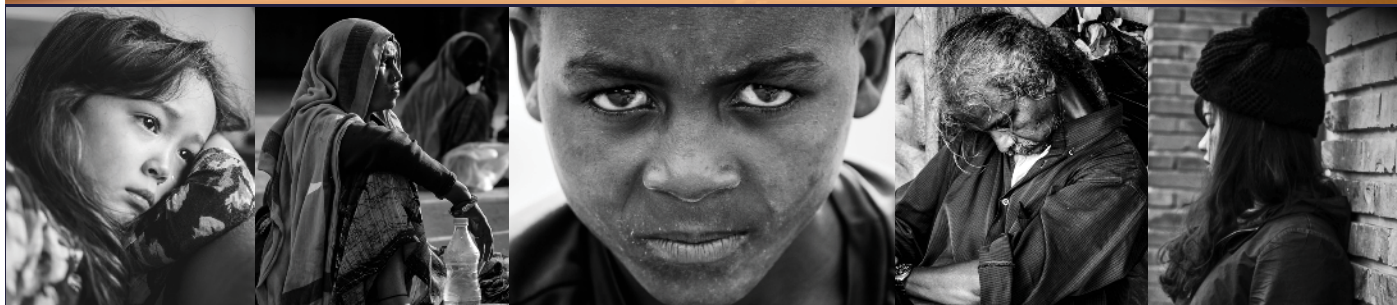
"One of the most wonderful things about being a Christian is that I don't ever get up in the morning and wonder...if what I do matters. I live every day to the fullest because I can live it through Christ and I know... I'm going to do something to advance the Kingdom of God. Does that make you fulfilled? You bet it does!"



PAUL
TRIPP

"You will have 'God-forgetful' days, but God will never forget you for a moment. No, his face shines on you and will never ever turn away."

FOR SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN



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Meant to be

Although my family is originally from South Africa, we moved to Canada and settled in Bonnyville, Alberta, northeast of Edmonton, where my mother could work as a medical doctor.

Our upbringing was strict and my father made sure that we followed the rules, which included showing up at church every Sunday. It wasn't something I appreciated at the time, but that's where I grew as a person and a believer and now I can see that God was revealing himself to me little by little as the years went by.

Apparently my mother believed that I was meant for a career in music because she enrolled me in piano lessons and wouldn't let me drop out until I became proficient. I didn't enjoy it then, but I'm grateful now because it led to playing other instruments, getting involved in church music, playing drums, leading worship and eventually finding a way to serve that is compatible with how God created me.

My former youth pastor had challenged me to dedicate a year to exploring the Bible, so I accepted the challenge and the search began. Friends were coming to Prairie and I realized that here I could study the Bible *and music* at the same time. Brian Doerksen was initially the deciding factor for me, but I'm continuing to study at Prairie College because of the

people, the community and the growth I've experienced here.

Being at Prairie has influenced my spiritual journey significantly. As a child, I learned about God but never really experienced him. Having a Christian family didn't make me a Christian; there was still a personal choice to be made. In the spring of my first year, I decided for myself to follow Christ. Now I have full assurance that Jesus is my Saviour and Lord and he is working in me and molding me every day.

During Christmas break of my first year, a fellow student asked if I could



to know each other better, prayed and listened to the advice of good friends, it became obvious that our relationship was meant to be. On May 27, 2017, we were married, one more example of why our school is jokingly called "Prairie bridal college." I am really blessed to have such

Friends were coming to Prairie and I realized that here I could study the Bible *and music* at the same time.



give her a ride back to school after the holidays. Priscilla and I started spending more time together and as we got

a beautiful, amazing woman of God as my wife!

The Worship Arts program has impacted me more than I thought it would. My plan was to get a job in music ministry right away, but it wasn't God's time for me. With Brian's encouragement, I've discovered that I enjoy song writing and now I'll have the ability to write music for my church wherever I end up.

My third year is a mix of worship ministry and pastoral studies so that when I finish my degree I'll be ready to be a worship pastor, something for which I have felt a deep calling from God. Priscilla and I would love to venture further afield, maybe to New Zealand, but wherever God takes us, we're excited to be able to serve him together. ❏

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THREE CHALLENGES— THREE OPPORTUNITIES.

THANK YOU for your generous donations to the 2016/17 Matching Challenge for our Education Fund. As a result, we were able to award \$509,000 in scholarships and bursaries to Prairie students. This was a 25% increase from the previous year.

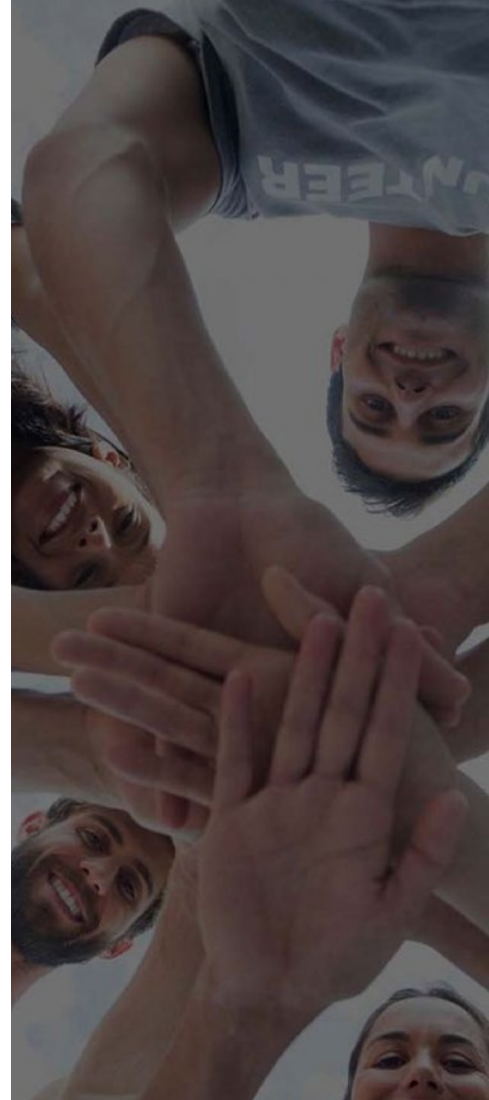
DOUBLE YOUR INVESTMENT

For 2017-18 we are excited to announce not one, but *three new matching challenges* from very gracious supporters of the school. One has designated **\$250,000** for the Education Fund and **\$200,000** for Campus Renewal. 50% of this has already been pledged—*will you help us reach the finish line?* Major projects for this coming year include a new roof for Founders Hall, new IT and Residence Security systems, demolition of the vacant Imbach building, and housing for the Explore directors at Frontier Lodge.

Another **\$30,000 US** matching challenge will fund continuing development of online education at Prairie while a third challenge of **\$100,000** will go to campus upgrades. This is a great opportunity to *double the value of your donation and make an eternal investment in young lives!*

PLEASE SEE THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE TO DONATE TO THE FUND OF YOUR CHOICE.

Want more detail on Prairie projects? Tim MacKenzie would be happy to answer questions. Contact him at tim.mackenzie@prairie.edu, direct line **403-443-3034** or Toll Free **1-800-661-2425**.



WE APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT OF THIS MINISTRY AND ARE PLEASED TO OFFER YOU **ONE** OF THE FOLLOWING...



GRATEFUL

Brian Doerksen

Following a season when inspiration failed, Brian Doerksen offers his first personal album in seven years.

On the other side of that dark winter now, he has one thing to declare: gratitude. Gratitude for the time of lament that drove him to the ancient Psalms,

gratitude for both those who love faithfully and for those who hurt and help us grow, for the gift of music, and for the ancient words that pray for us when we have no words. "I hope this album encourages you," says Brian, "on your journey through the spring-times of rebirth and the winters that will follow."

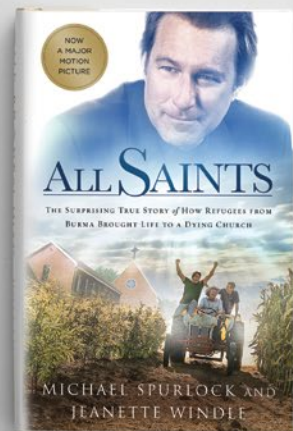
To request one of these products, orders must be postmarked no later than January 31, 2018. Offer limited to North American addresses. Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery.

ALL SAINTS

Michael Spurlock
& Jeanette Windle

Read "the rest of the story" in this heartwarming book by Father Michael and Prairie alumna Jeanette Windle. *All Saints* recounts the work of God among the Karen people, survivors of persecution and suffering, and how he brought them into the world of a church that had given up. The most unlikely became the answer to desperate prayers,

demonstrating that God does, indeed, care and is very much alive and going about his business. Learn how a community of believers rallied to reach out to those in need and received far more than they dared imagine.





MICHAEL SPURLOCK & JEANETTE WINDLE

WOULD THIS BE HIS LAST TIME TO PREACH GOD'S WORD IN THIS SANCTUARY? FATHER MICHAEL SPURLOCK TOOK HIS PLACE IN THE PROCESSION WENDING DOWN THE CENTER AISLE. ALL SAINTS EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN SMYRNA, TENNESSEE, HAD CAPTURED MICHAEL'S HEART AT FIRST GLIMPSE.

Located atop a green hillock, it commanded a glorious view of fertile countryside, thick with trees and threaded by a creek. This was his church, his congregation, and he realized just how much he wanted to stay. But the emptiness of the pews was a reminder of the stark reality. Perhaps there were forty in attendance this morning instead of twenty-five, but not nearly enough to maintain a church infrastructure, or pay a vicar's salary, especially with an \$85,000 mortgage.

Just months before Michael's arrival, All Saints had undergone a major split. Most of the congregation had left and logic dictated closing down the church, selling the property, then beginning again elsewhere. But both Michael and his bishop were reluctant to see any church close its doors.

"Just go down and be a good priest to them," his bishop had advised. That Michael could do. The church was locked and empty when he arrived, but when he'd stood on that green knoll, looking out over the fields that made up twenty-two acres of church property, when he'd peeked through the arched glass window into the simple sanctuary, he'd felt a deep peace and happiness. God was indeed calling him to this place and with God's help, he would seek to bring healing to his congrega-

tion and find some way to keep the doors open.

Nine months later, no such way had come to light. There had been modest growth, but the church needed to triple in attendance and giving just to break even. By late fall, the church council had reluctantly agreed that putting the property up for sale was their only option. Each Sunday they wondered whether or

“
**THE EMPTINESS OF
THE PEWS WAS A
REMINDER OF THE
STARK REALITY.**
”

not they would still be there the next month. But one delay after another allowed Michael to celebrate his first Christmas as vicar at All Saints and then Easter as well.

Now an interested party was prepared to make an offer. If the bishop's council accepted, the congregation's last days worshiping in their building would come soon. Michael refused to consider that this might be the end. A church was not its building, after all, but its people. They'd started once as a small group studying the Bible in a storefront. If necessary, they could start again.

We will need a purpose greater than building maintenance. It was not the first time the concern had crossed Michael's mind. *We can't ask people to attend just so we can meet our debt or pay my salary. We need to discern the mission to which God has called us here in Smyrna.*

The procession had now reached the front of the sanctuary, the last notes of the opening hymn fading away. Turning to the congregation, Michael noticed the visitors immediately. They were definitely not locals. Their bronze features and black hair caused him to wonder whether they were of Native American or Southeast Asian descent. He was back in his office after the service when a knock came at the door and his wife Aimee poked her head in.

"You have some guests here who'd like to speak to you. This is John and Daisy Kunoo and their son, Ye Win. They are Karen immigrants and they have a question about our church."

"Korean?" Michael repeated.

"No, not Korean," said Aimee. "Karen. From Myanmar. What they used to call Burma. And they're Christians. Ye Win speaks English, so I'll let him explain."

It would be months before Michael learned the Karen story in its entirety but he was able to follow the younger man's strong accent enough

to grasp the most important issues. These three visitors were strangers in a strange land. And they were his brothers and sisters in Christ.

“How can I help you?” Michael asked.

The younger man again answered for the group.

“We are searching for a church that we might attend. In our own country, we were Anglican, and we were told that Anglican churches in the United States are called Episcopalian. We want to know if your church believes in Jesus.”

“Absolutely, we believe in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior,” Michael stated firmly. “We believe that he died for our sins and rose again. We believe in the Bible as the Word of God. You are welcome to attend All Saints. Is this all of your family?”

Ye Win shook his head. “It is not only our family that is seeking a church. It is our entire community—perhaps seventy or more.”

By the following Sunday, All Saints’ original Anglo congregation could not ignore the changes to their quiet, calm, and empty country church. Some were appalled at being suddenly outnumbered by Southeast Asian immigrants and their restless offspring. But Father Michael was excited about how God had answered their prayers. *My church is full! Whatever else, it is full!*

Not all the Karen refugees were educated professionals like the Kunoos. Most had spent the last generation in the jungle or refugee camps. Few had more than a minimal education, and even fewer spoke any English. They had been rural farmers before the Burmese military had burned their villages and driven them from their land. Unfortunately, this had not proved a marketable job skill in Smyrna.

Ye Win had found housing for them at a nearby development just two miles from the church. He’d also scraped up several dozen unskilled menial jobs at a chicken processing plant as well as at a Nashville industrial complex. But a lack of reliable transportation was jeopardizing these jobs. And with benefits running out, sufficient food for large and growing families was becoming an issue, along with such basics as clothing and household furnishings.

By Pentecost Sunday that year time had run out. A firm offer had been made and the buying committee arrived to inspect their proposed purchase. By the time the group left, Michael was hurt and depressed.

He headed out the back door of the church and stood at the top of the knoll looking down to where yellow daffodils dotted bright green fields that had once produced rich food crops. Lifting his face heavenward, he began spilling out his heart in prayer.

God, why did you bring me here? Why did you send the Karen here if we’re just going to have to leave? Show me your plan. Just tell me plain and simple what to do next!

Then he stopped dead in his tracks as God began to speak: *I have given you farmland and sixty-five farmers. What don’t you understand, Michael?*

MICHAEL STOPPED DEAD IN HIS TRACKS AS GOD BEGAN TO SPEAK.

He looked around at the lush, green acres rolling away from his feet. It was so obvious. *Of course! God gave us this land to start a farm. The food will feed the Karen. But there’s far more land here than they will need. The surplus can be sold to offset expenses, even pay our mortgage!*

The bishop’s reply was hardly what he expected. “Michael, isn’t it just like God to show up at the eleventh hour!”

That Sunday Father Spurlock shared with the congregation the story of his experience with God, his idea for the farm, and the positive reactions he’d received. But he did not feel he could ask for permission to halt the sale and embark on this project without the parish’s consent and enthusiasm.

Stunned silence erupted into spontaneous applause. Tears began to flow. Neighbor turned to neighbor and began excited conversations. That moment would mark the turning point for All Saints. The church had survived loss and grief, upheaval and change. Now it was time to really begin getting back to health and life and growth.

Just five weeks from the day Michael had heard from God, three acres of seed had been sown and he knew that this was God’s plan, not his. *Kurios*, the Greek word for “God,” became the name of All Saints’ farming project.

After that first planting season, Michael could make a sizeable list of mistakes he especially had made. But despite his ignorance of farming, God had blessed their efforts. By August, the first harvest was feeding those Karen attending All

Saints and many others who didn’t, as well as supplying Smyrna’s Food Bank and the Salvation Army’s food drive. An Asian businessman who owned a chain of sushi counters and grocery stores purchased all the cucumbers. Volunteers sold the surplus at a farm market. God had provided for all expenses through grants and gifts. The harvest had fed hundreds of people and netted at least a few thousand dollars.

But beyond all that, the months of working side by side had bonded the two disparate parts of the congregation into a community. All Saints found itself no longer defined by a bitter church split, but as the church that had been given new life and purpose through God’s farm and God’s farmers from halfway around the world.

Over the years, news crews came to see what was happening with that odd little church saved by a group of refugees. After a Los Angeles film producer read an article on the miracle of Kurios Farm, he approached Michael about turning the story into a movie and in October of 2016, a film cast joined together with the real-life congregation for the filming of the movie *All Saints*.

Jesus Christ often told farming stories to convey spiritual truth and here in the rich floodplain of All Saints’ bottomland, God chose to teach his people a lesson of death and resurrection. Quoting John Chrysostom, Father Michael often said that a man can count the number of seeds contained in an apple, but can’t count the number of apples contained in even one seed if it would just fall into the ground and die.

The world had thought Jesus dead and done as he hung on the cross. But in those very moments of agony Jesus was in truth stretching out his hands and drawing the whole world to himself that they might receive life and redemption. Faced with seemingly unsurmountable losses, that small surviving group at All Saints saw no alternative to loss and defeat. Then God sent a beautiful group of strangers into their midst, and when they obeyed God’s call to reach out in the love of Christ, resurrection came.

To request your copy of **All Saints** please see the enclosed envelope.

Taken from **All Saints** by Michael Spurlock and Jeanette Windle. Bethany House, a division of Baker Publishing Group. Copyright © 2017. Used by permission.



Growing up in Colombia's equatorial zones, I've always loved storms. Monsoon rain thundering on roof tiles. The jungle canopy tossing furiously like surging waves on some wild, green sea. That fresh scent of raindrops exploding against hot dirt. Mud-brown floodwaters lapping at the concrete edging of our elevated verandah.

Though small and helpless against nature's fury, I remember no fear, only joyous delight in a power far greater than myself. Somewhere up there in the thunder and lightning, God was playing with his creation.

I realize now that my delight in the storms came from my own position of safety. My home was built like a fortress, the brick-and-concrete walls, barred shutters and heavy doors that kept our expat family safe from thieves, riots, or guerrilla insurgents impervious to the worst tropical deluge.

In later years, I encountered storms less friendly. I well remember my first Miami hurricane. Storm shutters up and power out, my husband and I huddled with our children in the dark as a 120-mile-per-hour wind tore at our roof until it seemed one more huff-and-puff would blow our house down.

STORMS

JEANETTE WINDLE

And yet there was that delightful moment when the gale subsided and we gathered courage to step outside into the storm. Broken palms, ripped-off roofs and blown-down fences were everywhere. But the rain no longer blew straight sideways. The air was warm with the pungent earthiness of crushed plant matter. The eye of the storm had settled over us.

Since those halcyon childhood downpours, I've learned more than I wished about storms. I've met political and economic storms, gale winds of war. Storms of loneliness and separation. Storms of personal failure and temptation, of grief, pain and betrayal. Storms that shake those I love. One of the most difficult tempests of my life is also one of my greatest stories of God's grace and love.

I met my husband Marty while we were both students at Prairie Bible College in Canada. As an MK in a strange country thousands of miles from my family, I was grateful for the safety of caring faculty and staff, for the example of humility and servanthood that I saw lived out before me. God knew there would be uncertain weather ahead, though, and the difficult experiences of those years laid a foundation for persistence,

*"WE HUDDLED
IN THE DARK AS
120-MILE-PER-HOUR
WINDS TORE AT OUR ROOF."*

endurance and flexibility that was invaluable when we were later faced with challenges and less than idyllic living conditions in global ministry.

We had been missionaries for a number of years in the Andean highlands of Bolivia, South America, when we and our three school-age sons began praying that God would allow us to adopt a baby girl. Two-month old Tanya Elizabeth came to us in the fall of 1990 and we were

"I THOUGHT I WAS A SURVIVOR. BUT THIS TIME THE BOTTOM DROPPED OUT."

all overjoyed. Christmas Day that year was wonderful. But that same night Tanya never woke us for her usual feeding and we slept on, waking in the early morning darkness to find her cold and still. Sudden Infant Death Syndrome had taken our precious little girl.

As a daughter of missionaries in the guerrilla zones of Colombia and Venezuela, I had encountered bandits, riots, political and physical threat. As an adult, I'd endured a knife at my oldest son's throat, muggings, robberies, personal assault, more riots and unrest. But I had always come through and recognized God's control in every situation. I was a survivor.

But with the loss of Tanya, the bottom dropped out. We could never have another child of our own and the local welfare administration informed us that our missionary salary could never compete with what had become a booming black market for international adoptions.

Months went by and I could not push the memory of my beautiful baby girl from my mind. Pretty dresses, dolls and hair ribbons in the market broke my heart. Like Job, I never questioned that God was in control and had allowed this in my life,

so I bowed my head and submitted. But the deep pain remained.

The night before American Thanksgiving in 1991, our middle son who was five at the time, called me into his bedroom. Because of Bolivian laws regarding the age of adoptive parents, the time for processing, and our upcoming furlough back to the US, the next day was absolutely the last day that we could adopt a child in Bolivia. I had put away my last

hope that we might ever have a daughter.

Leaning out of his upper bunk, Josh asked anxiously, "Mom, does God really answer prayer?"

"Why do you ask?" I replied.

"Because we have prayed and prayed for a baby sister and we still don't have one."

What could I say? I knew the "correct" answers but didn't even know if I believed them anymore. God may have known what he was doing with the world, but I was still hurting. A scripture that I clung to at the time was Lamentations 3:19-23. *"I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall. I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me. Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness"* (NIV). That was the hope I could hold on to in life's storms—the love, compassion, and faithfulness of our Lord.

The next morning I was back home from taking my sons to a birthday party when the phone rang. It was the social worker who had processed our first adoption.

"Do you still want a daughter?" she asked. "A baby girl was abandoned on the

farm where my brother works. You can take her home right now and I will do your court paperwork so she doesn't get sold to the highest bidder."

When the boys came home from the party, their baby sister Ellie was sitting in a stroller in the living room.

Was God obligated to answer my prayer? No. There have been times when I've had to simply endure, grieve, and wade through loss. But that moment when the phone rang was like God reaching down from heaven to say, "Jeanette, here's a little something to say that I love you and I always will."

Trouble has come into my life often enough since then, and it will in the future. But through it all, I have been able to point back to that moment and say, "He did that because he loved me, and he won't let me down now."

In the years that have followed, I have found myself more often than ever before in storm-tossed corners of our planet. Guatemala. El Salvador. Sri Lanka. Brazil. Kenya. Afghanistan. "Aren't you afraid of what could happen?" I'm often asked.

Have I learned to fear the storms? Only when I lose sight of whose child I am. I belong to the Almighty Creator of the universe whose weather antics delighted me as a girl, whom Scripture describes as riding on the wings of the wind, making storm clouds his footstool, thunder and lightning his playthings. He is King of Kings—and my heavenly Father who loves me passionately. And he loves and cares for those I love far beyond what I ever could. Whatever tempest shakes my world brings no cause for fear but joyous dancing. Why? Because at the eye of every storm is my Father's almighty hand where I am lovingly and safely cradled. Our safety is not in the absence of the storm, but in the presence of our God.

The jungles and small towns of South America that were home to 1981 Prairie grad and author Jeanette (Archer) Windle for most of her life have provided the intricately detailed settings for much of her work. In 1985, she and her husband moved to Bolivia where Marty became the director of an interdenominational Christian ministry and Jeanette began writing for women and children. Her first major adult suspense novel was set against the background of the counter-narcotics war in Bolivia that she was witnessing firsthand. Further award-winning stories of international intrigue would follow. In 2006 the Windles moved to Lancaster, PA, when Marty became president of BCM International. Jeanette is editor of BCM World magazine and speaks and travels extensively in the US and internationally as a consulting editor and mentor to authors world-wide.

After following the story of the Karen people of Myanmar (now Burma) for many years, their suffering, their courage and their faith, Jeanette was excited to be asked to write the story of how, through tragedy and loss, in ways too implausible for any fiction plot, a group of refugees and a Tennessee church came together in a community of faith that continues to impact lives to this day. Jeanette's passion in all of her books is to share her conviction that for all the turmoil and conflict in our world, this universe does make sense and has both a purpose and a loving Creator.



A way prepared

This was not the answer to prayer that I expected. It was May of 2017 and I had just been through a dead-end job application process in Oregon.

Working as an adjunct professor at two universities had left me wanting so much to fully *belong* somewhere, but there I was, on hold between “student” and “faculty” status. We had pinned all our hopes on that position and felt that God was in it, but when the answer was “no,” we were confused. *What was God up to?*

Then, within days of our disappointment, I saw an opening for an Old Testament professor at Prairie College. The search, however, had an impossibly brief time frame: they wanted the new candidate in place in just a month! I couldn’t imagine moving our family—to Canada, no less—on such short notice. On the other hand, the door had closed in Oregon, so I applied.

The whole process was full of surprises. My husband and I arrived in Three Hills for our campus interview with a long list of concerns. One by one, they vanished. The town was charming. The community was warm and friendly. The houses were affordable. The landscape was beautiful. The schools for our kids were strong. On our last morning here, we got another surprise: *we learned that I am*

Many threads throughout my life led to Prairie

already a Canadian citizen because my father was born in BC. Imagine finding out at age 40 that you have citizenship in another country! When we left to fly home to the US, Danny and I both had a clear sense that God had been working well in advance to prepare us for this opportunity.

Many threads throughout my life led to Prairie, not just my dual citizenship, but our years at Multnomah Bible College,

our missionary service with SIM in the Philippines, our long-standing desire to live near the campus where I teach so we can invest as a family, and, not least, my life-long love for the Scriptures.

I remember gathering my friends around me at recess in Grade Two to start reading through the entire Bible together. The club only lasted a day or two, but I kept at it, eventually reaching my goal. From childhood, I’ve been fascinated with the Old Testament and have spent the past seven years with Moses at Sinai, exploring the book of Exodus.

First, in my MA program at Gordon-Conwell, I investigated echoes of Exodus 19:5-6 in I Peter 2:9-10. How could Peter apply Jewish covenantal titles (“royal priesthood, holy nation, treasured possession”) to Gentile believers? My study uncovered two keys: the first in Malachi

3:17, where the prophet looks ahead to a *future* day when the LORD would reselect his treasured possession. Then, in Acts 10 and 11, Peter experiences fresh revelation from God regarding the Gentiles. Acts 15:13-18 explains that Gentiles who believe in Jesus *bear God’s name* and thus are full covenant members.

Then, during my doctoral work at Wheaton College, I focused on the com-



Dr. Imes: “From childhood I’ve been fascinated with the Old Testament.”

mand not to “take” the LORD’s name in vain (Ex. 20:7). The Hebrew reads more naturally, “You shall not *bear* the name of the LORD your God in vain.” God’s covenant people bear his name and represent him among the nations. The command is not targeting swearing or oaths, as many assume, but rather any behavior inappropriate for followers of Yahweh.

Most people find the laws of Sinai boring, but true riches await patient exploration! As I teach the Old Testament here at Prairie, I see the best of all worlds come together: students join this community in the most formative years of their lives to be immersed in the study of Scripture, while at the same time gaining skills to live out their vocation in the world.

God still leads his people as he did in the days of Moses and I am a living example. How beautiful it is to trust a God who knows the desires of my heart and prepares the way before me. ❧

Carmen Joy Imes is Associate Professor in Old Testament and Program Coordinator for Biblical Studies at Prairie College.

Dog gone

MY MOTHER SANG ME NURSERY RHYMES

—to prepare me for the perils of life, I suppose. Nursery rhymes in which Little Bo Peep lost her sheep, blind mice lost their tails, and Humpty Dumpty lost his balance and was never quite able to pull himself together again. I listened as the weasel went pop, cradles went crash, and an old man went to bed and bumped his head and couldn't get up in the morning.

Mom also sang a sad little song that depressed the life out of me: *I lost my kitty, my poor little kitty. I wandered the fields all 'round. I looked in the cradle and under the table, but nowhere could kitty be found. So I took my hook, and went to the brook to see if my kitty was there. But there I found that she had been drowned, and so I gave up in despair.*

They prayed again. So did we. But the dog had been missing for two days now.

I longed for a happier ending. Something like: *So I took my hook and went down to the brook, to see if she'd gotten that far. I say unattested that she'd been arrested, and charged for driving my car.*

I love happy endings, don't you?

My son Jeff and his wife Raelyn sure do. They live on a farm surrounded by cats and horses and piglets that sometimes get loose and make life exciting. When they decided to add Golden Retrievers to the mix, my wife and I shook our heads and smiled. Soon enough, Abby, the friendliest dog you ever want to let near your face, was extremely pregnant. She looked the same width from the side as from the front.

All was well. Until someone left a door open and Abby escaped. Jeff and Raelyn looked in the cradle and under

the table but nowhere could Abby be found. They scoured the yard, the field, the woods. My granddaughter Sophia did her best to pick up the scent. She's two. "Abby, where you go?" she asked aloud. "Come Abby." But no Abby. About to give up, her parents remembered that God loves all creatures

great and small. And so they prayed.

It was early March. A cold front arrived. The temperature dipped to -20 and the wind howled. Papa dog Henry

howled. Still no Abby. They prayed again. So did we. But the dog had been missing for two days now.

And then one morning, Henry simply closed his jaws on Raelyn's coat sleeve, pulled her to the door, and took off running. Raelyn followed. And found papa Henry standing by an old tree stump, wagging his tail like proud papa dogs do in the movies. Beneath that stump was a small hole in the ground. From that hole came the unmistakable sound of whimpering.

Jeff arrived. He pulled a very cold Abby from that tight little den in the ground. Raelyn took the dog inside to warm her up and Jeff put his arm down the hole and began pulling out puppies. He brought them into the house two at



Sophia and her eleven "happy endings." We long to know that Someone finds us worth looking for.

a time. Four puppies. Six puppies. Very cold puppies. He gently plunked the last five into a big bucket and brought them to his very wide-eyed wife. Eleven puppies. All warm and whining and looking for mama.

Ever since I was a child, I loved few things more than a story of the lost being found. Maybe the seeds were sown with that nursery rhyme about a poor little kitty. Or maybe there's a longing within each of us to know that Someone found us worth looking for. That Someone called our name and didn't stop searching until we were back in the kennel.

Jesus told stories of lost sheep and lost coins and lost boys. He said he came to seek and to save that which was lost. This weekend, I will visit Sophia. And we will stand beside that tree stump along with two or three or eleven puppies. We'll point and laugh. And later, I'll rock her to sleep while telling her the story of how Jesus found me.

Then perhaps I'll sing her a nursery rhyme or two—I'll make up happy endings. ❄️

Phil Callaway is an author and host of Laugh Again Radio. He has six grandchildren. They wear nametags. Visit Phil at laughagain.org

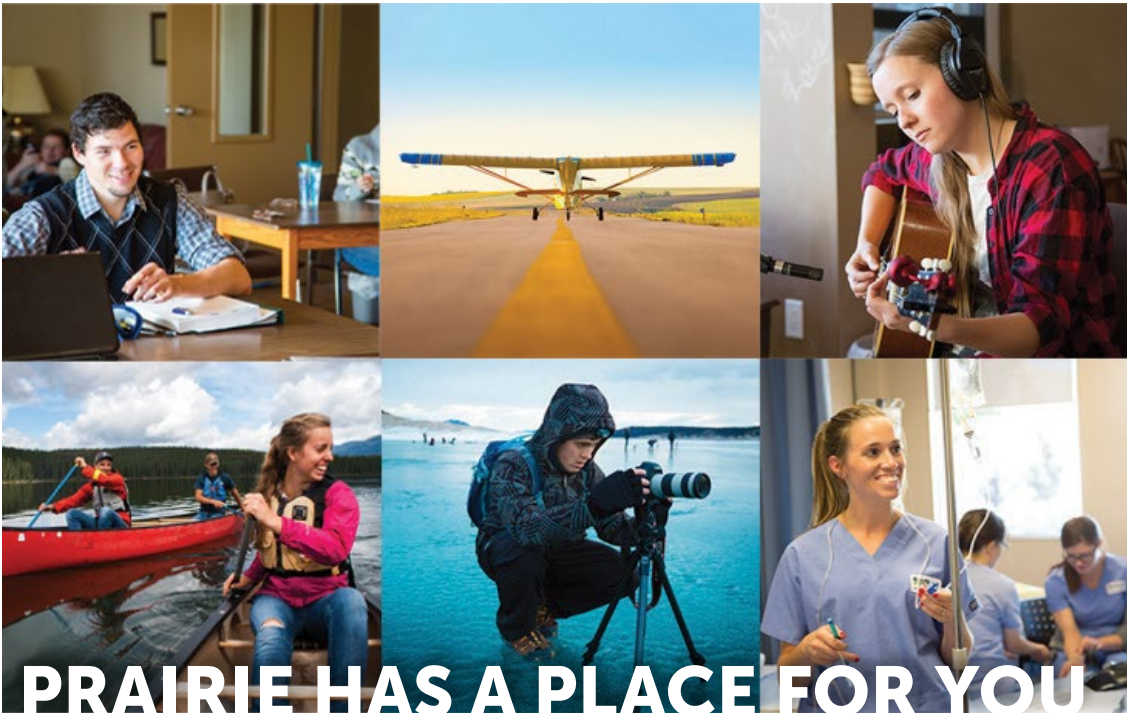




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