A MINISTRY OF PRAIRIE COLLEGE

SERVANT

Thriving TOGETHER



1933



1941



1976



1992



2026

Issue 121 | Fall 2026

ALUMNI IN ACTION

A man's faithful service to God and others

MARK MAXWELL

Building a Stronger Team

CARMEN JOY IMES

Why Gathering Still Matters

OFF THE TOP
MARK L. MAXWELL

Building a Stronger Team



Previously, in this column, we have discussed the characteristics we look for in teammates at Prairie College. Specifically, we seek people who:

I. have good **Character** (good work ethic and humble),
II. are **Competent** (strong contenders in their field of expertise),
III. have good **Chemistry** (play nice in the sandbox), and
IV. are **Called** (love our work, love our teammates, and love our students).

But how do we enable these outstanding performers to thrive along side each other?

For most of my career, I have wondered if there is a better organizational model than the widely accepted "Organizational Chart" that resembles a pyramid, where, in the natural order of the universe (smile), the important people are at the top and the rest are in the middle or at the bottom. Perhaps this is not how God views our organizations, nor does it reflect the community ethic of "one another's" that inspired the flourishing Christian community in the New Testament.

Perhaps a better model would be to picture our teams as a lattice network, on a level field, in which every person intersects with every other as peers on a shared mission.

In a lattice network, everyone has a unique role to play, a gift to contribute, a talent or ability to bring to the team that complements and completes the rest of the team. Each person has a time to take the lead, but most of the time follows others on the team. We think of this as "on-demand leadership" or "pop-up leadership," meaning when it is time for someone to lead the rest of us, we look to that person to take the lead and the rest of us form up behind them to help them succeed in their area of special contribution. Herein lies the organizational framework for the "one another's": love one another, serve one another, honour one another, submit to one another…

The outcome of this is that the President/CEO seldom assumes the lead, but rather spends most of the time working for and supporting others as they lead. Why? Because each of the others is better in their area than the CEO. So, what does the CEO do? Make sure the right people are on the team, in the right places, each one taking the lead when they should. The CEO's role is then to **clear the way** by removing obstacles, **give coaching** as needed, **provide capital** with funding or connections that open doors, and **give credit** for progress made under that person.

We are at our best when we support them… together, we thrive as individuals and as an organization.

This is not "delegation" to someone on the team. It is empowerment of another person in an area where they are more capable. In fact, I would like to suggest that we, as Christian leaders, remove the word "delegation" from our vocabulary…it smacks of ego and arrogance ("I can delegate that…"). Instead, we should be asking the question: Who would be best at leading that effort or initiative? And then committing ourselves to supporting him or her in the work they are tackling for our mission.

We have operated with this model at Prairie since 2010. We have enjoyed healthier community on campus and stronger overall performance as a college. We have become more nimble and innovative, making swift adjustments when needed, and adapting to various events to take advantage of opportunities.

One of the greatest joys in my role is bragging about the amazing people on our team—each person contributing to our overall effort, each person making us better because of their specific work, seeing each person thrive in their area, leading the rest of us to better performance.

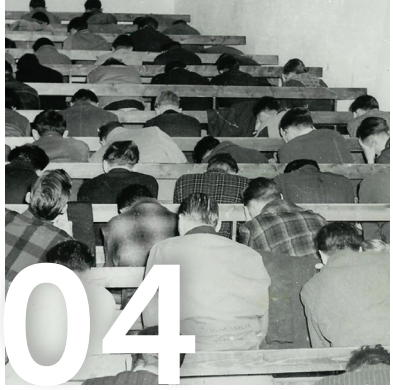
Let me tell you about Denis, who looks after our buildings when no one is watching, making them shine for tomorrow's traffic, or Megan, who brings life to the Torah and knows every student by name, or Mike, who is the sherpa for students who are traveling around the globe, or Brooklynn, or Kristen, or Nathan… Each of these people is a leader on our team. We are at our best when we support them.

With their hard work and good leadership, they earn our support every day. In the same way, we, as leaders, earn their support by clearing the road in front of them and helping them in their work. And, together, we thrive as individuals and as an organization.

Mark L. Maxwell: *President of Prairie College*

@marklmaxwell

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Reflecting on past simplicity reminds us of God's enduring faithfulness.



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PRESIDENT
MARK L. MAXWELL

EDITOR
KENDI NIMMONS

CONTRIBUTORS
PHIL CALLAWAY
NICOLLE IOANIDIS
REV. DR. JAMES ENNS
DR. DAVID DURANCE
STEPHEN J. RENDALL

DESIGNER
CRYSTAL GILLESPIE

HOW TO REACH US

Prairie Bible Institute/Prairie College
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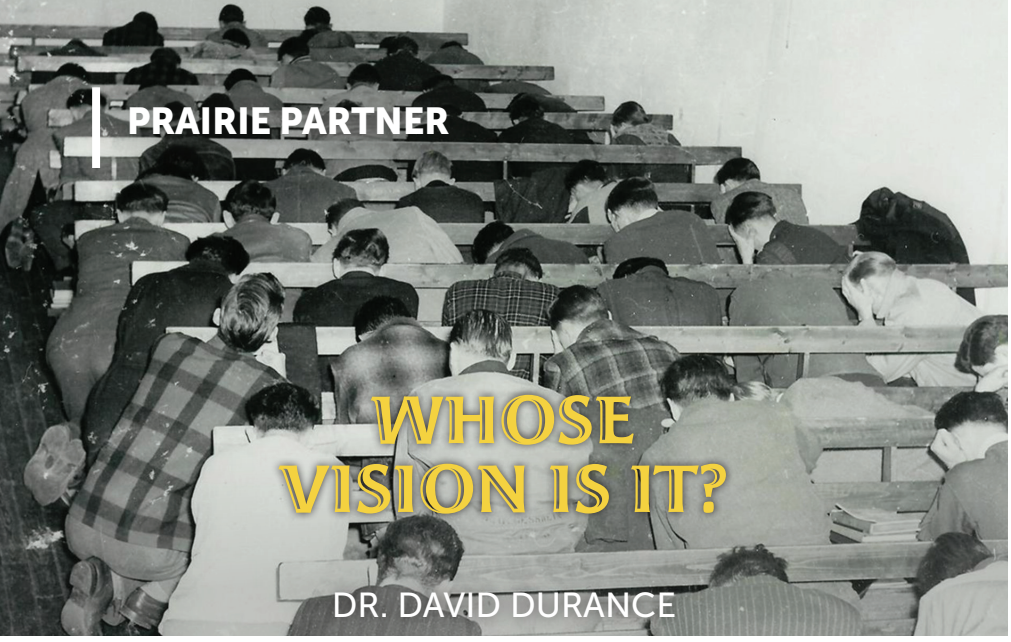
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PRAIRIE PARTNER

WHOSE VISION IS IT?

DR. DAVID DURANCE

On a recent trip through East Africa, I stopped in Kampala, Uganda, to connect with our local team. My flight landed late in the evening and I arrived exhausted, confident that even a one-star hotel would be all I needed for a good night's rest. When the hotel staff told me they were overbooked and therefore unable to honour my reservation, I was not too concerned because there was a "place-around-the-back" for occasions like this, so they told me. And indeed there was: it turned out to be a tent with a nearby outhouse (see picture), which I unexpectedly needed to visit in the middle of the night. The urban noises, heat, and welcoming night creatures provided a memorable setting for a short rest.

I welcomed the sun with enthusiasm as it arose in all its splendor over my windowless room, glad to leave my accommodations to memory. The day that followed was amazing. The restless sleep adventure was forgotten as I watched and listened to God's work in Uganda under the direction of new, enthusiastic, gifted team members.



Leadership is full of unmet expectations. Years earlier God helped me see that much of what I thought about leadership was either wrong or of secondary importance. The first course I took in my doctoral program was on steward leadership, and the first book I was assigned to read was Scott Rodin's *The Steward Leader*. In God's providential wisdom, the first course and first assignment I had were formative for all the years of leadership that followed at TeachBeyond.

I remember opening the book reluctantly. Within a few hours, I could not put it down. What captured me was a simple but profound idea: God was not asking me to own, run, or be responsible for TeachBeyond. He was not asking me to carry the organization on my shoulders or to guarantee its future. He was asking me to steward His vision. HIS vision.

That realization changed everything. Perhaps shockingly, for the first time, I understood that leadership is not fundamentally about carrying the weight for others and "acting as an owner," as so many leadership books and seminars had taught me. It is about stewardship. The mission belongs to God. The vision belongs to God. The future belongs to God. My responsibility is simply to be faithful with what He has entrusted to me.

The relief was immediate. The responsibility remained, but the burden of ownership was lifted. More importantly, it reshaped my understanding of what it means for a leader to follow Jesus. I was no longer carrying God's work—I was joining it. In the years since, I have come to see that this truth applies to every stage in the life of a vision. A vision must first be sought. Then it is birthed. And then, ultimately, it must be stewarded. At every stage, the decisive question remains: To whom does this vision belong?

SEEKING A VISION

A few weeks ago, I shared a collection of photographs from TeachBeyond's early history with our national leaders from around the world. One showed a small mud house standing alone on the Canadian prairies. Another showed some of our founders as young students attending Prairie Bible Institute (1940s)! For readers of this magazine, those images may feel familiar. Our story grew from the same soil as yours.

But one image stayed with me more than any other. It showed Prairie students on their knees in prayer (pictured). That photograph captures something essential about how TeachBeyond began. Before there was an organization, a mission statement, funding, or anything else of consequence, there was prayer. Before there was a strategy, there was dependence. Before there was a vision, there were people seeking God.

It is a lesson leaders must continually relearn. I think most leaders are wired to act. When God places opportunities before us, it is natural to move quickly toward them, and often urgent action is both necessary and good. I was recently telling one of our National Directors how important it was to respond quickly to a specific opportunity. My comment went something like this: "You need to understand: people's eternal souls are at stake!" This is the right instinct, and of course we must act. But our founders remind us that seeking

THE VISION DID NOT BEGIN IN A BOARDROOM: IT BEGAN ON THEIR KNEES.

comes before building. The vision did not begin in a boardroom: it began on their knees.

This is where faithful stewardship starts.

BIRTHING A VISION

Our mission went through tough times and needed a "rebirth" in 2009. As Janz Team was in the process of being renamed TeachBeyond and a new vision was emerging, only a handful of people understood where God seemed to be leading us. I certainly was not one of them.

HUMAN IDEAS TEND TO LOOK FOR PROOF BEFORE COMMITMENT. GOD-GIVEN VISIONS OFTEN REQUIRE COMMITMENT BEFORE PROOF.

In 2012, I sat in a meeting in Central Asia hearing leaders describe this emerging vision for TeachBeyond's future. As I listened, I remember thinking that much of what they described really did not exist anywhere in the TeachBeyond world. There were scattered examples, but very little evidence that such a vision was already becoming reality.

And yet the conversation affected me deeply. These leaders were not speaking with confidence in a strategic plan. They were speaking with conviction that God had placed something before us. Human ideas tend to look for proof before commitment. God-given visions often require commitment before proof.

I watched people respond that week as we traveled. They were not being persuaded by organizational ambition. They were being drawn into something they sensed had originated with God. Over the years, I have come to believe this is how vision is born. When people have genuinely spent time seeking God, they develop a conviction that cannot be manufactured. It is rarely loud or forceful, but it carries a quiet confidence that draws others into the journey.

So, what does this mean for leaders? We cannot manufacture this kind of commitment through clever communication, good AI prompts, or polished plans. Our task is to seek God honestly, share what we sense He is doing, and trust Him to confirm it in the hearts of others.

STEWARDING A VISION

Now seven years into my role as President, I continue to be amazed by God's faithfulness. TeachBeyond now serves in more than ninety countries, up from fifty-five in 2019 and nine in 2009. New initiatives continue to emerge. New leaders are stepping forward. Opportunities appear in places we never anticipated. Much of what we are experiencing cannot be explained by any sort of human effort.

This raises another question. What does stewardship look like when a vision becomes tangible?

Last week, I sat around a table with over eighty TeachBeyond leaders from many different countries across the globe. As I listened to their stories of what God was doing, I felt the weight of the mission again. I felt responsibility and concern. How could this be funded, and where would the next group of leaders come from? Most of all, I felt a renewed awareness of a temptation every leader faces: the temptation to believe that God's future for us somehow depends on us finding the resources.

That thought frightens me. The faster an organization grows, the easier it becomes to confuse stewardship with ownership. The more successful we become, the easier it is to believe the story is about us. Before long, we can find ourselves trying to control outcomes we were never meant to carry. In that moment, my mind returned to the lesson God had taught me years earlier. I'm not the owner. I'm the steward.

The mission is not ours. The vision is not ours. The people are not ours. The future is not ours. They belong to God.

Our calling is to steward faithfully what He has entrusted to us for a season, and then to hand it on to those who follow. This last part is often overlooked or undervalued. Stewards do not measure success only by what they build, but by how thoroughly they have equipped others to carry the work forward.

THE PARADOX OF CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP

Here lies the great paradox of Christian leadership. We must care deeply, work diligently, and lead courageously. Stewardship is never passivity. In the parable of the talents, Jesus commends the servants who invested what they were given and condemns the custodian who buried his treasure. At all times, we must remember we are caretakers, not owners. We need to invest aggressively for the Kingdom even while we keep the investment in an open hand, eager to release it to God's new directions and to the new colleagues He raises up.

Embracing all-in commitment and joyful openhandedness simultaneously is not easy. Lean too far one way, and we become anxious, controlling, and exhausted—convinced that everything depends on our effort. Lean too far the other way, and we become careless, using God's sovereignty as an excuse for laziness. Steward leadership is not a timid, compromising middle ground. It is an integrated reality where total commitment coexists with radical trust, much like the inseparable poles of a magnet working together to generate a life-giving field of creative energy.

Whether you are a student preparing for ministry, a graduate serving in a church or classroom, or a leader responsible for an organization, the question is worth asking: What has God entrusted to you? And are you holding it as an owner or as a steward?

Stewardship may be the most important lesson leadership has taught me. The more I understand it, the more freedom I experience. God's vision does not depend on my strength. It never did.



Dr. David Durance is a Canadian-born missionary kid who has served as TeachBeyond President since 2019, leading the global education mission now working in more than ninety countries.

MEET THE STUDENTS



SYDNEY

1st Year – Diploma of Ministry & Practical Nursing

"I'm excited to grow into the person the Lord created me to be, while gaining hands-on experience and discovering what nursing looks like beyond the classroom."

WHAT DREW YOU TO CHOOSE THE NURSING PROGRAM AT PRAIRIE COLLEGE?

I've always been interested in nursing, mainly because I find a lot of fulfillment in helping others and caring for people. I chose Prairie because I wanted to attend a school where my faith could be part of my education and where I could grow both personally and academically.

WHAT IS SOMETHING ABOUT PRAIRIE THAT HAS ALREADY SURPRISED YOU?

I knew coming into this year that the community was going to be welcoming and personal, but I wasn't expecting it to feel quite this close-knit. Everyone has been so friendly, and it's been surprising how quickly you start recognizing people, learning names, and feeling like you're part of the community.

HOW ARE YOU HOPING YOUR TIME AT PRAIRIE WILL SHAPE YOUR FAITH AND RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD?

To give me the courage and boldness to step out in faith and share my beliefs and testimony with those around me. I want to learn how to rely on God through both the exciting and difficult parts of college and become more comfortable living out my faith openly.

FOLLOWING YOUR TIME HERE, WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO DO WITH THE EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCES YOU GAIN FROM THIS PROGRAM?

Once I complete my LPN, I hope to continue my education and pursue my RN. Eventually, I would love to use my nursing career to serve others and be a light wherever God calls me, whether that's locally in Canada or cross-culturally. I'm not exactly sure where that will lead yet, but I'm excited to see where God takes me.



EZRA

1st Year – Bachelor of Education

"Teaching, basketball, faith, and a whole lot of learning—I'm excited to use the passions God has given me to serve others and see where He takes me."

WHAT DREW YOU TO THE EDUCATION PROGRAM AT PRAIRIE?

I was drawn to teaching because the Lord has impressed on my heart that the need for Christian servanthood and leadership in schools has never been higher. I would love to be a part of the solution and use teaching as an opportunity to serve and lead others.

WHAT IS SOMETHING ABOUT PRAIRIE THAT HAS ALREADY SURPRISED YOU?

The food, despite all the rumours, is absolutely delicious.

WHAT ARE YOU HOPING TO LEARN—NOT JUST ACADEMICALLY, BUT PERSONALLY AND SPIRITUALLY—DURING YOUR TIME AT PRAIRIE?

I want to build meaningful relationships and draw others closer to Christ, while also learning how to better integrate humility into my everyday life. I hope my time at Prairie will make me more emboldened in my faith and help me become more grateful for the blessings God has given me.

LOOKING AHEAD, WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO DO WITH THE EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCES YOU GAIN FROM THIS PROGRAM?

I plan to become a school teacher and senior basketball coach, combining two of my passions in a career where I can work with and invest in others.

HOW DO YOU HOPE TO GIVE BACK, SERVE, OR MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE PRAIRIE COMMUNITY DURING YOUR TIME HERE?

I plan to participate in service trips with the sports teams and, more than anything, seek to be an encouraging presence on campus—someone who helps others feel valued, supported, and welcomed.



Welcoming Future Educators



To watch the program's **Launch and Dedication** program, scan this QR code:

We are thrilled to share that our first-ever **Bachelor of Education (K to grade 6) cohort** has officially started classes! After four years of prayer and perseverance, welcoming these students to campus is a truly joyful milestone. **Thank you** to everyone in our community who prayed, supported, and encouraged us along the way!

Choose the INTERCULTURAL MINISTRY program at Prairie College today!

Ever wondered what it's like to travel the world with a group of fellow students for a year? We sent a videographer along to capture every step of our **GlobeTREK team's journey**.

Join the adventure and experience the joy, challenges, heartbreak, and incredible ways God is at work all around the globe!

GlobeTREK

The World's Our Classroom

Check out the **documentary series** here:

INVESTING IN THE NEXT GENERATION OF MISSIONAL PROFESSIONALS

At Prairie College, every space on campus exists for one purpose: **to equip students to know Christ and make Him known**. When students gather over a shared meal, study together between classes, or unite in worship, their faith is deepened and lifelong friendships are formed.


Artist Rendering

Through our campus renewal initiatives, we are expanding the places where these life-changing moments happen. A new **Cafeteria** will offer a welcoming community for fellowship, a glass-enclosed concourse will connect student daily life, and a dedicated **Worship & Arts Auditorium** will give our student body a unified space to gather, worship, and grow together.

Thanks to early donor support toward these key spaces, we are preparing to begin construction in 2027. But this project is about more than buildings–it is about providing today's developing missional professionals with the community and spiritual foundation they need to influence the world for Christ.

Will you partner with us to invest in Prairie students? Your gift directly supports the community where tomorrow's Christian leaders are daily mentored, encouraged, and sent out to serve.


Artist Rendering

NOW YOU KNOW

A cloud weighs around a million tonnes. *sciencefocus.com*

We have more detailed maps of the Moon than the deep seafloor. Out of a total area of more than 335 million square kilometres (around 129.3 million square miles), scientists have explored less than 0.001 percent – roughly the same as Rhode Island, the smallest US state. *sciencefocus.com*

Trees Can Talk to Each Other—trees can communicate using an intricate network of underground fungi nicknamed the "Wood Wide Web". Trees can share their needs and send each other critical nutrients. *goldmanprize.org*

A lightning bolt is five times hotter than the surface of the Sun. The charge carried by a bolt of lightning is so intense that it has a temperature of 30,000°C (54,000°F). *sciencefocus.com*

Canada accounts for around 4% of the global annual organic food revenues. *madeinca.ca*

PATC EXPANSION UPDATE

Construction of the new Prairie Aviation Training Centre (PATC) continues to progress smoothly. We are thankful to God for the dedicated work of Eagle Builders in bringing this project to life. Once complete, this expanded facility will equip future generations of missional aviation professionals with an excellent environment to develop their skills and answer God's call wherever they are needed.





DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI 2026

LARRY & RUTH WINDLE, PBI 1986 | Lifelong Christian Ministry



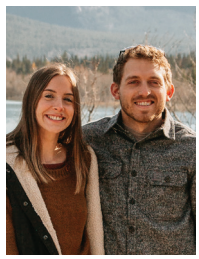
Larry and Ruth Windle are long-time leaders in global ministry and higher education who both graduated from Prairie Bible Institute in 1986. After pastoring in the Northwestern United States, they spent years in Bolivia planting 26 churches and teaching at Hebron Seminary. Since 2003, Larry has served as President of Rio Grande Bible Ministries in Texas, while Ruth serves as the Academic Liaison and Library Director. Together, they share a lifelong passion for training Christian leaders, serving the global church, and living out an early commitment to follow Jesus anywhere, at any cost.



JEFF SUTHERLAND, PBC 2000 | Integration of Christian Faith and Professional Achievement

Jeff Sutherland attended Prairie Bible College as a student in the Explore Outdoor Leadership program—a foundational year that profoundly shaped both his faith and his career. Today, he serves as Vice President of National Leasing and Sales at Qualico Properties, where he applies those early lessons in Christian leadership to navigate business deals and lead people across Canada. Beyond his career, Jeff remains deeply connected to Prairie, serving his third term on the board of Frontier Lodge, and sharing a love for the outdoors with his wife, Amanda, and their family. He is a powerful example of how a faith rooted in hands-on leadership can transform a life and career.

MAC & HANNAH VIDAL, PC 2019 | Early Career Excellence



Mac and Hannah Vidal met as Prairie College students—Mac studying Outdoor Leadership and Hannah studying Digital Media—before graduating in 2019. Today, they live and serve in Nordegg, Alberta, where Mac is the Executive Director of Frontier Lodge and Hannah leads its media department alongside running her own creative design business. Together, they use their leadership, adventure ministry, and artistic gifts to illuminate the beauty of God's creation and inspire people toward a lived, daily relationship with Jesus. Both remain deeply committed to serving their community, investing in young leaders, and pointing others toward the Creator through everything they do.

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PRAIRIE COLLEGE

Spending of funds is confined to board-approved programs and projects. When the goal for the project has been met, the remaining contributions will be used where needed most.

As an Alberta registered charity, we are planning to raise an estimated amount of $100,000 in this Fund-raising campaign. It will cost our organization an estimate of $6,886 to raise this. The money raised will be going to General Ministries or Campaign projects. *For further information, please contact Stacey Bell, (403) 443-5511 ext. 282. Our address is PO Box 4000, 350 5th Ave NE, Three Hills, AB T0M 2N0.*

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INNERVIEW

Why Gathering Still Matters

A CONVERSATION WITH DR. CARMEN JOY IMES

In a culture where church attendance is no longer the default, many believers find themselves asking whether gathering physically with a local congregation still matters. In her book *Becoming God's Family: Why the Church Still Matters*, Old Testament scholar Dr. Carmen Joy Imes makes a compelling canonical case for why the Christian life was never meant to be a solo journey. In this conversation, Rev. Dr. James Enns sits down with Dr. Imes to explore the inspiration behind her work, the core definition of the church, and why finding our place in God's family remains vital today.

JAMES: CARMEN, YOU MENTION AT THE START OF YOUR BOOK WHAT DROVE YOU TO WRITE THIS. COULD YOU TELL US MORE ABOUT HOW THE IDEA CAME TO BE?

Carmen: The idea was actually born while I was teaching at Prairie College when the COVID-19 pandemic hit. As we all disengaged physically and watched church online, I realized we were going to need to make a case for church again once it was over. It is no longer culturally obvious to attend church. I grew up in an environment where going to church was simply what you did—it was never questioned. Today, many people who follow Jesus view church as an optional "extracurricular" activity.

The pandemic exposed our underlying theological assumptions. Questions arose like: Can you do communion over Zoom? What counts as the proper elements? Do Doritos and apple juice work? It forced us to rethink what ingredients are necessary to "have church". I wanted to write a book—a love letter to the church—to woo people back and show why gathering physically matters. I don't shy away from church hurt, abuse, or hypocrisy, but we were designed for community, and we need to work toward a healthier version rather than abandoning ship.

WITHOUT GETTING OVERLY TECHNICAL, HOW DO YOU DEFINE WHAT "CHURCH" IS?

My working definition is that the church is an intergenerational and multicultural family that gathers to worship God, hear His Word preached, work at His mission, and wait for His return.

Those four W's are key: Worship, Word, Work, and Wait. The biggest surprise for me while writing was the realization that so much of what we do is *wait* together. We gather around the presence of God in recognition that we don't have what it takes to fix the world on our own. We are waiting for outside intervention. We can't control when or how God shows up, but showing up is our way of declaring that He is the one who can restore all things.

THAT CONCEPT OF "WAITING" AS A CORE TASK OF THE CHURCH IS STRIKING. HOW DID YOU LAND ON THAT?

It came after I turned in my initial draft. My editor at InterVarsity Press (IVP) asked me to read Dr. Andrew Root's book, *Churches and the Crisis of Decline.* In it, Dr. Root tells a narrative about a declining church trying every trick—rebranding, launch plans—to revitalize itself, none of which worked. At a member's funeral, her grandson asks an elder, "My grandma told me I need to find God. Do you know how to find God?"

That question recalibrated the whole congregation. They realized they couldn't control whether God showed up, but they could gather around this young man and wait for God together. Reading that helped me see where my draft fell short. I was focusing too much on what we do. Dr. Root helped me realize that a huge portion of church life is stepping back from control and waiting for God to act. It changed my view of preaching, too—you can prepare a message, but you can't direct the Holy Spirit to show up at 10:24 AM to move hearts.

IN HIS FOREWORD, ESAU MCCAULLEY NOTES THAT YOUR BOOK ADDRESSES MODERN SKEPTICISM TOWARD THE CHURCH HEAD-ON. LET'S START WITH WHAT THE BOOK IS NOT.

Given the title *Becoming God's Family*, some might assume it's a book about the nuclear family, which it isn't. People are also often surprised to find it's not a step-by-step practical ministry manual or a study focused strictly on the New Testament.

Instead, it is a canonical, biblical theology tracing the community gathered around God's presence from the Old Testament through the New. I weave in personal stories, but it's rooted

> While their pain was real, there is still life to be found in God's family.

in Scripture's overarching narrative. While I am grateful for those doing the necessary work of bringing church failures to light, I also wanted to tell positive stories of intergenerational friendships, transformation, and lives knit together as a family.

YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED A REMARKABLY WIDE VARIETY OF CHURCH TRADITIONS YOURSELF. HOW HAS THAT SHAPED YOUR PERSPECTIVE?

I was baptized as an infant in the Christian Reformed Church, went to a wildly charismatic church in junior high, attended a Foursquare church in high school, went to a dispensational Bible college, joined a Baptist church, and married a Mennonite! We've also attended Quaker, Evangelical Free, and liturgical Baptist churches.

In every single tradition, I have seen the Spirit of God move. Each denomination excels at reflecting a unique part of who God is. Having that wide lens gave me a broader appreciation for what God is doing across the global body of Christ.

READERS PICKING UP A BOOK ON THE CHURCH MIGHT EXPECT YOU TO START WITH JESUS IN THE GOSPELS OR PAUL'S EPISTLES, BUT YOU BEGIN WITH ABRAHAM AND SARAH! WHY TAKE AN OLD TESTAMENT-HEAVY APPROACH?

I've always been a bit miffed by statement-of-faith claims that the church was born at Pentecost. To me, Pentecost is the moment God clarified that the covenant made with Israel at Mount Sinai was expanding to all nations. It's a new phase of the church, not its origin.

If you want to understand your identity and vocation as a Christian, you have to go back to Mount Sinai to see what it looks like when God calls His people into being. When we read the New Testament in isolation through a Western, individualistic lens, we miss how many commands and pronouns are plural. A few years ago, reading Justo González's book on the Lord's Prayer made me realize: it says "*Our* Father," "*our* daily bread," and "forgive *us* our trespasses". It's entirely communal. The Old Testament grounds us in that collective identity—it has always been about *us*, not *me*.

WHY DID THE SPECIFIC METAPHOR OF "FAMILY" RESONATE SO STRONGLY OVER OTHER BIBLICAL METAPHORS?

One fascinating insight comes from Joseph Hellerman's work on first-century relationships. In the Greco-Roman world, the sibling relationship was the closest, most loyal bond—even more primary than marriage, which was often an asymmetrical alliance between families. If a woman's husband and brother both needed help simultaneously, social custom dictated she help her brother first.

So, when New Testament writers use sibling language—calling fellow believers "brothers and sisters"—they are employing the strongest cultural terms available for binding loyalty. Church isn't a loose, voluntary club where you hang out for two hours a week. It means when others are in trouble, I show up to roll up my sleeves and help.

YOUR TREATMENT OF THE POST-EXILIC NARRATIVES IN EZRA AND NEHEMIAH OFFERS A FRESH, CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE. COULD YOU EXPAND ON THAT?

In Ezra and Nehemiah, the community leaders recognize that the people are marrying foreign wives, which is a distortion of and disobedience to God's commands. The reason the Lord commanded against this was that it usually led the people to worship other gods. So, they force men to divorce their foreign wives and cast them out with their children into the wilderness to preserve ethnic purity. But throughout the Old Testament, prohibitions against intermarriage were about guarding against idolatry, not bloodlines. They were about maintaining the purity of worship to the one true God. Think of Rahab or Ruth—foreigners who declared allegiance to Yahweh, were welcomed with open arms, and demonstrate clear exceptions to this rule.

> WE WERE DESIGNED FOR COMMUNITY, AND WE NEED TO WORK TOWARD A HEALTHIER VERSION RATHER THAN ABANDONING SHIP.

Ezra and Nehemiah read the Torah so selectively that they missed God's heart for the vulnerable and the foreign seeker. Malachi, speaking prophetically in the same era and addressing the same problem, offers a completely different solution that keeps families intact, sending them away as whole units if they refuse to worship Yahweh. Similarly, in Isaiah and Zechariah, the nations stream to Jerusalem wanting to help and be taught.

Sadly, many churches use Nehemiah as a model for leadership during building campaigns, but these biblical books actually document human efforts that end in failure—and a bit of a dumpster fire, despite Nehemiah trying so hard to follow the Lord's commands. Ezra and Nehemiah show us what happens when we try to do God's work without God's Spirit.

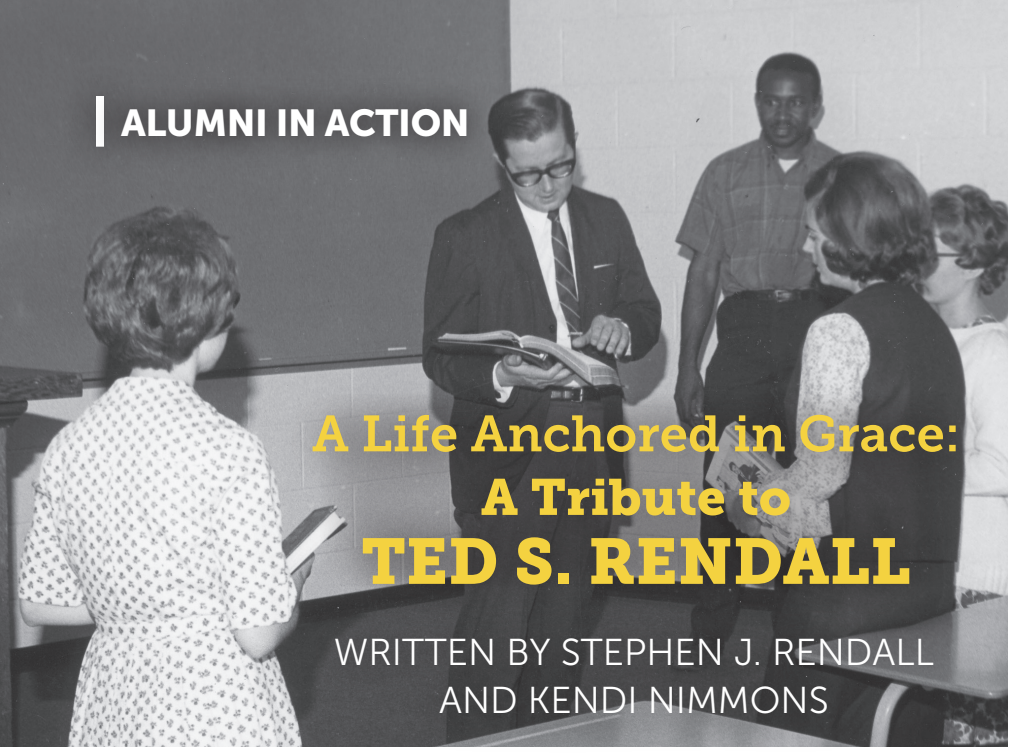
AS ESAU MCCAULLEY NOTED, YOU DON'T STOP AT LAMENT. YOU OFFER REAL HOPE. WHAT WAS THE MOST DIFFICULT CHAPTER FOR YOU TO WRITE?

Chapter 1 was the trickiest because I wanted to validate those who have been deeply wounded by the church without causing them to lose hope. I chose to open with Hagar.

Abraham and Sarah are the patriarch and matriarch of our faith, yet they mistreated this Egyptian enslaved woman. Crucially, God doesn't show up in Abram's tent to validate him; He meets Hagar in the wilderness, speaks to her, gives her a name, and grants her agency. Opening with Hagar was my way of assuring church-skeptical readers that God sees their pain.

One woman on my launch team had left church staff after experiencing severe hurt and hadn't been back. She read the manuscript as a last-ditch effort to be convinced that church was worth trying again, and by the end, she and her husband had returned to a local congregation. They realized that while their pain was real, there is still life to be found in God's family.

Dr. Carmen Joy Imes is an author, speaker, and Associate Professor of Old Testament at Biola University (carmenjoyimes.com), and a friend and former professor at Prairie College. To watch this Innerview, scan the QR code.



A Life Anchored in Grace: A Tribute to TED S. RENDALL

WRITTEN BY STEPHEN J. RENDALL AND KENDI NIMMONS

Surrounded by his loving family in Red Deer, Alberta, Seator "Ted" Rendall entered into the presence of his Lord three weeks shy of his 93rd birthday, closing an extraordinary life.

His intellect, once vibrant and endlessly curious, fell quiet; his body, worn by decades of physical hardship, was finally at rest. Left behind is a legacy that spans continents, decades, and generations of students, congregants, and believers whose lives were shaped by his gentle strength, formidable mind, and unyielding devotion to the Gospel.

From the Streets of Edinburgh to the Canadian Frontier

Born on August 18, 1933, in Leith, Scotland, Seator Rendall was the second child of James and Jane Rendall. Given a family surname he secretly disliked, he became known as "Ted" after his older brother Gavin struggled to pronounce "Seator," calling him "Tatey."

His early life in Scotland was marked by immense personal suffering and resilient faith. At just 10 years old, Ted contracted tuberculosis, spending nearly a year in a seaside sanatorium inside an open-faced hut rotated 360 degrees to catch the salty ocean air. By age 11, his frail body weighed a mere 45 pounds. Scarlet fever, pleurisy, appendicitis, and a severe mastoid surgery followed, leaving a permanent scar from ear to chin. Yet, God was preparing him for a long race.

It was in the heart of post-war Scotland that Ted's calling took root. On March 31, 1946, as a 12-year-old boy attending a Youth For Christ rally at the Carrubbers Close Mission in Edinburgh, Ted heard the Gospel presented by evangelist Chuck Templeton. When the altar call was given, young Ted stepped forward and was led to the Lord by Stratton Shufelt. Two decades later, visiting Prairie Bible Institute (PBI), Shufelt was stunned when a staff member revealed he was that same boy.

Recognizing the boy's potential, mentor Daisy Murray invited Ted to speak at the Carrubbers Close Mission youth gatherings. She soon challenged him: *"Ted, I think you can write your own 'sermon' for next week."* With that, the "Boy Preacher of Edinburgh" was born. He began preaching in open-air meetings and on street corners with the Open Air Mission and the Scottish Evangelistic Association, while spending his spare pennies scouring the used bookstores of Princes Street for classic theological works.

After high school—where he had mastered five years of Latin, Greek, and French—he briefly attended Glasgow's Bible Training Institute and London Bible College. Yearning for deeper theological training but possessing few funds, his eyes were opened to PBI in Three Hills, Alberta, after reading a copy of *The Prairie Overcomer* given to him by friends at Charlotte Chapel.

Selling his cherished ship-motif accordion—which he had taught himself to play—he raised enough money for passage across the Atlantic. In the summer of 1953, carrying just $35 in his pocket, 20-year-old Ted arrived in Three Hills. Tragically, just months later, on October 26, a telegram arrived from Scotland with heartbreaking news: his father, James, was lost at sea. Unable to afford the trip home to grieve with his family, the young student pressed into his new community, anchored by faith and supported by caring mentors like PBI's "Mother" Cunningham.

The Builder and the Scholar: 45 Years at Prairie

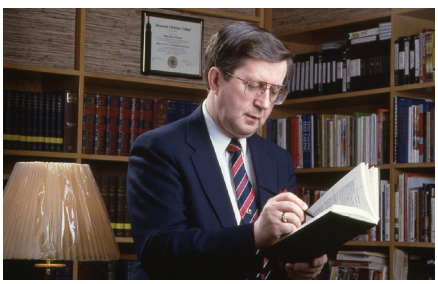
PBI promised that if Ted arrived early, they would provide work to cover his tuition, room, and board—an arrangement that thoroughly appealed to his Scottish pragmatism. True to their word, the school handed him a shovel and assigned him to dig steam tunnels and excavate the foundations for the platform of the new Prairie Tabernacle. In a touch of divine irony, it was on that same platform that Ted would later preach thousands of sermons as Senior Pastor.

Over his 45-year tenure at Prairie, Ted served as a student, tea boy, construction worker, writer, professor, Vice-Principal, Senior Pastor, President, and Chancellor:

- **The Academic & Author:** Joining the staff in 1956 after graduation, he served as a research assistant for PBI Principal L.E. Maxwell, who affectionately called Ted his "Timothy." Ted went on to edit *Young Pilot, The Prairie Overcomer,* and *Servant Magazine*. Over his career, his pen produced 10 books alongside dozens of booklets, thousands of articles, and numerous published hymns, such as the hymn *"To All The Nations."*
- **The Teacher:** For 41 years starting in 1957, Mr. Rendall taught Bible 2 (Jeremiah to Malachi). Known for his legendary memory, he could pinpoint the exact location of a passage in a book across his vast personal library. In class, he was exceptionally gracious, presenting multiple theological views fairly

before quietly adding, *"You can put TSR beside that,"* when sharing his personal convictions. He and his family regularly hosted groups of students at their home every Friday night for homemade desserts.

- **The President (1986–1992):** Elected as President, Mr. Rendall led Prairie through a critical era of modernization while holding fast to its historical biblical foundation. Under his leadership, Prairie constructed two major buildings, transitioned staff from stipends to competitive wages, updated student social policies, launched a graduate school and aviation program, initiated the rigorous journey toward college accreditation, and secured ACSI accreditation for the high school.
- **The Shepherd & Pastor:** Ordained with the Associated Gospel Churches of Canada in 1964, Ted pastored Bethel Fellowship Church for 20 years (1955–1975), where his preaching style flourished—marked by alliteration, vivid original illustrations, topical series, and an endearing brevity (rarely exceeding 30 minutes). In 1975, he succeeded L.E. Maxwell as Senior Pastor of Prairie Tabernacle Congregation, shepherding the flock for 23 years.



Ted's insatiable thirst for books was world-renowned. What began as a modest collection from Princes Street grew into a staggering personal library of nearly 120,000 volumes, many of them rare, non-digitized historical works. Home additions were built specifically to house his books, leading his second wife, Hester, to once jest, *"I don't live in a house, I live in a library."* When Prairie's library was officially renamed in his honour, Director Ron Jordahl remarked jokingly that naming it the T.S. Rendall Library might confuse patrons with his private collection. In his later years, Ted generously gifted his massive collection to the Rio Grande Bible School in Edinburg, Texas.

A Household Governed by Words & Red Pencils

In the Rendall home, language was a shared passion and a way of life. As Steve recalled, *"Words were important in the Rendall house when I was growing up. VERY important!"* Ted's first wife, Norline (Norbo)—an author herself—served as his home secretary, typing manuscripts at 120 words per minute on a manual typewriter, taking shorthand, and checking proofs.

Mealtimes featured grammar debates, with dictionaries kept right at the table and CBC radio shows like *My Word* playing nearby. In the evenings, Ted was the ultimate multi-tasker: grading papers or preparing sermons in his recliner while conversing with family and listening to classical music. Beside his chair sat a tray of red pencils, bought in 12-packs from the campus bookroom. He would dull an entire set underlining key passages and correcting typos before sharpening them all at once—a ritual he insisted was the most efficient use of his time.

Trial, Triumph, and Global Impact

Mr. Rendall's life was not without profound personal heartache. In the mid-1970s, his beloved wife, Norline, whom he had married in 1958, began displaying symptoms of a rare form of Multiple Sclerosis. For nearly two decades, while carrying the weight of PBI's presidency and pastoring a mega-church, Ted faithfully cared for Norline through her intense physical suffering until her passing over Thanksgiving weekend in 1993.

His contributions were widely recognized over the years: Winnipeg Theological Seminary awarded him an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree in 1984, and in 1993 he traveled to Ottawa to receive the Governor General of Canada Medal.

In 1995, joy returned to Ted's life when he married Hester Dougan, a vibrant Irish woman serving with the Faith Mission. Following his formal retirement from Prairie in 1998 as Chancellor Emeritus, Ted and Hester moved to Olive Branch, MS, in 2006. There, he served as Minister, Lecturer, and Curator of the Ted S. Rendall Collection at the Stephen Olford Center in Memphis, TN.



Far from slowing down, his golden years were filled with global ministry. A sought-after speaker, Mr. Rendall traveled to over 30 countries. He held a deep, enduring love for the people of Japan, visiting the nation 18 times to preach and encourage local pastors.

Even as health trials returned—including surviving E. coli, undergoing a quintuple heart bypass, and navigating the painful loss of Hester in 2021—his passion for ministry never wavered. He taught his final classes at Olford Ministries in the fall of 2025 at 92 years of age.

A Faithful Steward Rested

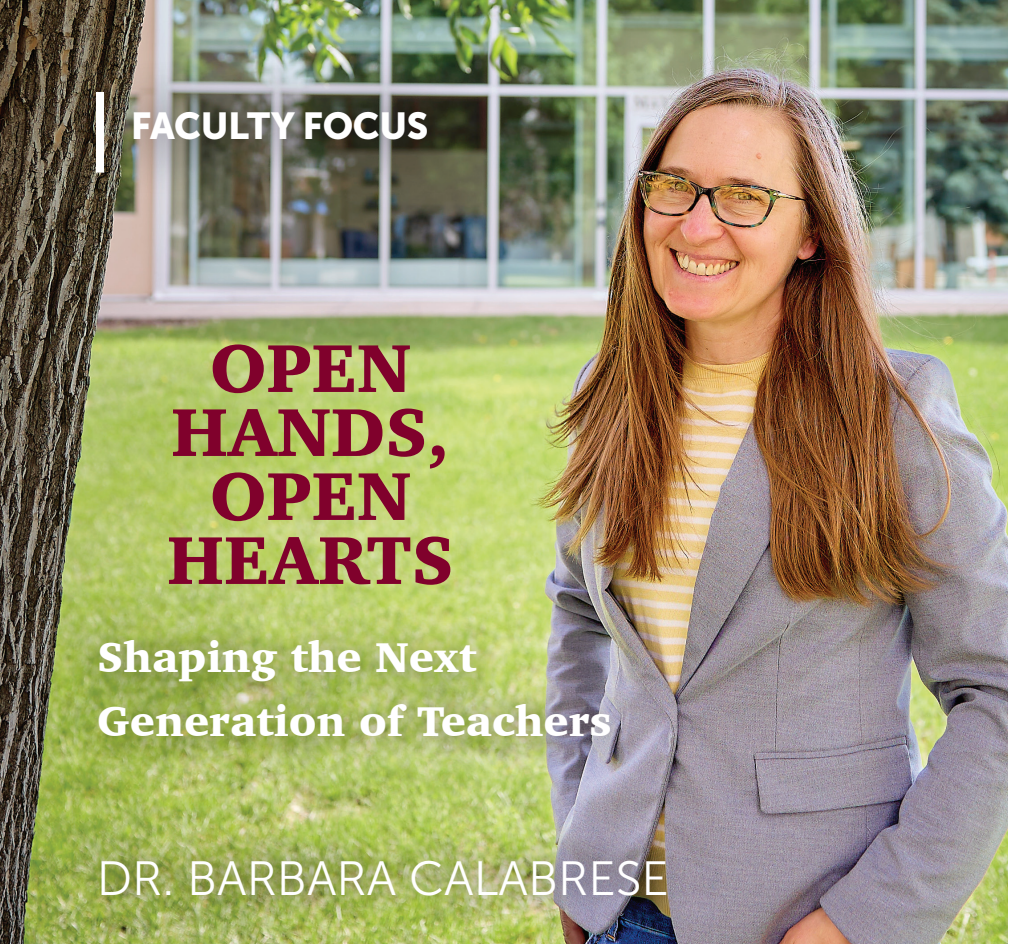
When asked in 1992 what Prairie needed most, Mr. Rendall didn't cite money, recognition, or larger enrollment, but rather:

"Individual and institutional renewal… The Holy Spirit… deepens our commitment to mission, creates a passion for reaching the lost, and equips us with the dynamic to do the task."

That sentence encapsulated the man. He was a scholar who loved the quiet rustle of pages, but his scholarship was always in service of the Gospel. He was an administrator who built structures, but his focus was always on spiritual renewal. He was a father whose hands typed countless articles, preached thousands of sermons, and held endless class discussions, yet still took the time to thread bloodsuckers onto fishing hooks at Pine Lake, play the accordion, and fry fish and chips for Sunday family lunches.

He ran his race with extraordinary endurance, guarded the faith with academic rigor and pastoral grace, and finished his course well.

Rest well, Ted S. Rendall. Your work on earth is done.



OPEN HANDS, OPEN HEARTS

Shaping the Next Generation of Teachers

DR. BARBARA CALABRESE

TELL US BRIEFLY ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR BACKGROUND BEFORE PRAIRIE.

I grew up in southern Alberta and have lived, studied and taught across Canada, the US, Australia, South Korea and Thailand. My husband Adam and I enjoy spending time outdoors—hiking, biking, cross-country skiing and canoeing.

I spent 15 years teaching elementary school (grades 2–5) across private, Christian, mission, and public settings. Recently, I completed a doctorate at Baylor University, researching how multimodal approaches like nature journaling create communication access for communicatively diverse students.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO COME WORK AT PRAIRIE COLLEGE?

As an Albertan teacher, I saw firsthand that "the harvest was plentiful, but the workers were few" (Matthew 9:37). During my graduate studies, God impressed upon me to serve within the education field beyond my own classroom by mentoring and equipping the next generation of Christian educators.

Prairie College's mission to know Christ and make him known aligned perfectly with this vision. With the launch of the Bachelor of Education program, I was excited by the prospect of pioneering something new alongside God—a journey that clearly required a God-sized vision and provision.

HOW HAVE YOU SEEN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION CHANGE THROUGHOUT YOUR CAREER, AND HOW DO YOU PREPARE STUDENTS AT PRAIRIE TO ADAPT TO THOSE CHANGES?

Throughout my career, the field of education, expectations of teachers, and classroom demands were always changing. Being agile and holding curriculum, schedules, and assessments with open hands showed me that the who—the students and community—must come before the what and how.

At Prairie, we foster a strong Christian philosophy of education that shapes character, preparing students to enter classrooms with open hands, ready to see, serve, and steward those in their care.

WHAT IS A FAVORITE CLASSROOM MEMORY OR STUDENT SUCCESS STORY THAT STANDS OUT FROM YOUR TIME TEACHING?

I once taught a grade 3 student named Jasper who had ADHD, struggled with regulation, and could not engage in conventional reading and writing. One day, unsure how else to help him complete a learning task, I simply told him to draw a picture.

He quickly drew a horse, using it as a conversation centerpiece to verbally explain his ideas to complete the assignment. That moment showed me how print was creating a barrier for him. This was the starting point that led to years of reflection on how teachers can remove communicative barriers so all students feel they belong and have a voice. Jasper likely never realized how profoundly he shaped my trajectory as an educator and researcher—moments like that are my most cherished classroom memories.

HOW DO YOU HELP YOUR STUDENTS VIEW TEACHING NOT JUST AS A CAREER, BUT AS A CHRISTIAN MINISTRY AND CALLING?

Teaching is far more than delivering curriculum, managing assessments, or working a job–it is the honour of stewarding students' hearts and minds with patience and grace. Throughout our Bachelor of Education program, students engage in coursework, field experiences, and reflection to wrestle with what it means to teach with a Christian imagination. Through this journey of intentional reflection and practice, students learn to see the classroom not just as a workplace, but as a field for ministry.

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE ON YOUR MIND THAT YOU'D LOVE TO SHARE WITH OUR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS READING *SERVANT* MAGAZINE?

The Bachelor of Education program became a reality because alumni and friends prayed dangerous prayers and dreamed dangerous dreams for Prairie College to train teachers to meet the greatest needs in education. Please continue praying for our program, students, faculty, and for the children whose lives will be transformed by teachers committed to stewarding God's call.

No Phone, No Pony, No Problem



"I miss the days when we pulled maps from the glove box and traveled like pirates."

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When younger friends discover that I grew up without an iPhone, an e-scooter, or a pony, they ask, "How did you live? What did you do?"

Well, just about everything.

We lived outdoors, weather permitting. Rode bikes. Strapped metal roller skates onto our shoes, played cops and robbers, and joined free-range games of hide-and-seek involving fifty children. We stayed out until dark, when mothers began calling our names.

When winter came, we played hockey. For shin pads, some fastened catalogues to their legs with sealer rings. This worked beautifully until someone whacked you from behind.

Speaking of suffering, women who wanted poofy hairstyles slept with rollers in their hair. Bobby pins held them in place and jabbed their scalps whenever they moved. I believe bobby pins were invented by Stalin and imported from Russia.

On Saturdays, Dad pulled into a gas station where an attendant washed the windshield, checked the oil, and pumped gas for thirty cents a gallon. Today, thirty cents buys enough gas to start the lawn mower. Providing it starts on the first pull.

Road trips included inventing games, counting cars, and lying in the back window gazing upward as clouds whizzed by. We navigated using paper maps, which took a week and a half to refold if ever we reached our destination.

The idea that children would one day watch movies in cars was as unthinkable as carrying a library in your pocket; it was the stuff of science fiction.

The soundtrack of my youth included the clack-clack of typewriters, the pop of flashbulbs, and the clink of glass bottles. We played jacks and pick-up sticks on the sidewalk while drinking Tang. Men tipped their hats. It was the age of rabbit ears, Polaroid cameras, walkie-talkies, and thick Yellow Pages that doubled as booster seats.

We organized our own baseball games. They lasted forty or fifty innings. Or until our mothers called us home.

And television went off the air at eleven. Imagine that. The TV looked at you and said, "That's enough, Son. Go to bed."

I'd be fibbing if I said I never miss those days. I miss Mom's sandwiches wrapped in wax paper. I miss winter mornings when the milkman left bottles on our doorstep. The frozen cream rose above the neck, lifting the paper cap like it was tipping its hat, saying, "You're up first. Pour all the cream on your cereal."

We look back to laugh and reminisce, and to remember God's faithful ways.

I sometimes think about those days with fondness. But nostalgia is a tricky thing. At its worst, it leaves us staring backward, convinced everything wonderful has already happened. At its best, it reminds us of God's faithfulness and gives us courage for whatever comes next.

The psalmist wrote, "I remember the days of old. I ponder all your great works and think about what you have done." We look back to laugh and reminisce, and to remember God's faithful ways.

For the first time in decades, churches across Canada report that young people are turning to Christianity. The Bible Society describes a "Quiet Revival" in the UK. Chaos and instability have our youth considering age-old questions about where we came from and where to find hope.

There's not enough time left to complain that music is too loud, phones are too smart, and gasoline should still cost eight cents a gallon. Instead, let's encourage our young people, pray for them, and celebrate what God is doing among them. After all, we worship the great I Am—not the great I Was.

And when younger friends ask how we survived without an iPhone, tell them we had something better. A mother whose voice traveled six blocks. With no Wi-Fi. No batteries. No monthly fees. And trust me, ignoring the call was not an option.

Phil Callaway is a Prairie alumnus, an author and host of Laugh Again radio. He once owned steel-tipped lawn darts and an Atomic Energy Lab that contained actual radioactive material. Visit his new podcast at www.youtube.com/@LaughAgainTV.

@philcallaway

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