

Editorial

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In my early twenties, I spent two years living in England. It was long enough for me to start saying things like “bin,” “boot,” and “hoover” so as to not draw even more attention to my distinctly North American way of speaking. It was long enough to turn acquaintances into dear friends and learn what is and is not socially acceptable according to British standards. Most importantly, though, it was long enough for me to attend a few churches, which provided me with a glimpse of the spiritual context in England.

In my mid-twenties, I met a wonderful man who hailed from Seattle, Washington. Being from just north of the border myself, our long-distance dating relationship was not all that long geographically-speaking, but it was long-distance enough that we were in separate countries. Whenever I visited him I became a foreigner for a time, noting everything that was unfamiliar. We are married now and live here in Canada, but part of our family (and therefore our lives) remains in the United States. This means that, with the passing of time, my picture of American culture, context, and Christianity is becoming more clear.

While my increasing knowledge of these two countries has increased my love for them, it has also increased my awareness that they are different from the country we call home—Canada. This is by no means a revolutionary thought, I know, but it is an important one for us to keep in mind as we inaugurate this journal. For the questions will inevitably be begged: Why a journal? And why *this* journal? Allow me to address both of these individually.

Those of us doing ministry in the true north can testify that Christianity in Canada falls in a unique place along the spectrum of a Post-Christian context: somewhat behind the United Kingdom and somewhat ahead of the United States. It follows, then, that we should easily be able to find uniquely Canadian content, addressing us

(pastors, leaders, congregants) where we are. Reality tells us otherwise, however. What we have instead is an abundance of British and American content, some of which is helpful and some of which is not. When seeking out resources to share with our congregations or students, or to inspire us in our writing of sermons, blog posts, or Bible studies, we find ourselves poring over articles and listening through podcasts, seeking to catch the bits that are relevant and discard those that are not. While we undoubtedly overflow with gratitude for the ministry of our brothers and sisters abroad and the insights they provide, we find ourselves longing for something a little closer to home—both geographically and spiritually. We crave the insight of our fellow Canadians. Simply stated, we have noticed the gap of material written *from* a Canadian context *to* a Canadian audience, and we aim to help fill this gap.

But why *this* journal? The front cover states that we are a publication of the Northview Leadership Institute. Northview Community Church, located in Abbotsford, British Columbia, is the church where myself and my journal colleagues do ministry. By God's providence, Northview exists to make disciples of Jesus through the multiplication of healthy local churches. The primary means of doing this is by developing leaders that we can send out to serve in, plant, or replant churches across Canada. While part of our job is to equip these leaders-to-be to shepherd a flock well, another aspect is to encourage them to think well, and deeply, about the things of God. For, as A.W. Tozer once wisely wrote, "What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us."¹ And what we think about God, His Word, and His Church, will come to bear on every aspect of ministry. In essence, then, the idea for this journal came about because we want to provide a platform for our pastoral interns to share the results of their deep thought and careful research. We also dream of a future where we receive submissions for this journal from Christian thinkers across Canada, so that we can

¹ A.W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1971), 7.

learn from the contributions of people not associated with our particular local church.

So, tying this latter motivation with the former, what we have is the first issue of a journal that seeks to give voice to Canadian church leaders, young and old. Not just for the sake of putting words on a page, but for the distinctly Christian purpose of bringing glory to God, “[our] Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen” (Rom. 1:25).² In every article, we point to the One who has given us the minds to think and the words to write, and who has placed us in this context at this time. Flowing from that, it is our great desire to edify those doing ministry in this diverse and beautiful country, spurring others on to think well and deeply about God. On a practical note, we aim to be consistent in our delivery of the promise that all articles are scholarly in nature, applicable, for the church, and written in language that is sophisticated yet accessible.

With this mission in mind, we set out on our journey and invite you to follow along. May the Lord lead us where we ought to go.

“For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen” (Rom. 11:36).

² Unless otherwise stated, all scriptural passages are from the ESV translation.