



2023 Annual Impact Report

ccln. | CANADIAN CHURCH
LEADERS NETWORK

**To all the pastors, churches & partners who
trusted us in 2023, thank you. We are in awe of
what the Lord has done.**

Partnering with Jesus to
respond to the pastoral
crisis in Canada.

Thousands of pastors are:

Disconnected

Discouraged

Disoriented

So our mission is to:

**Foster deep
relationships**

Seed hope & courage

**Provide a pathway
& vision for faithful,
fruitful ministry**

OUR VISION

Strengthening pastors for the renewal of the Church in Canada

Because we believe:



Distinctly Canadian

We speak uniquely from and to the Canadian context.



Eccumenical

We speak to and bring together pastors across denominational lines.



Hopeful

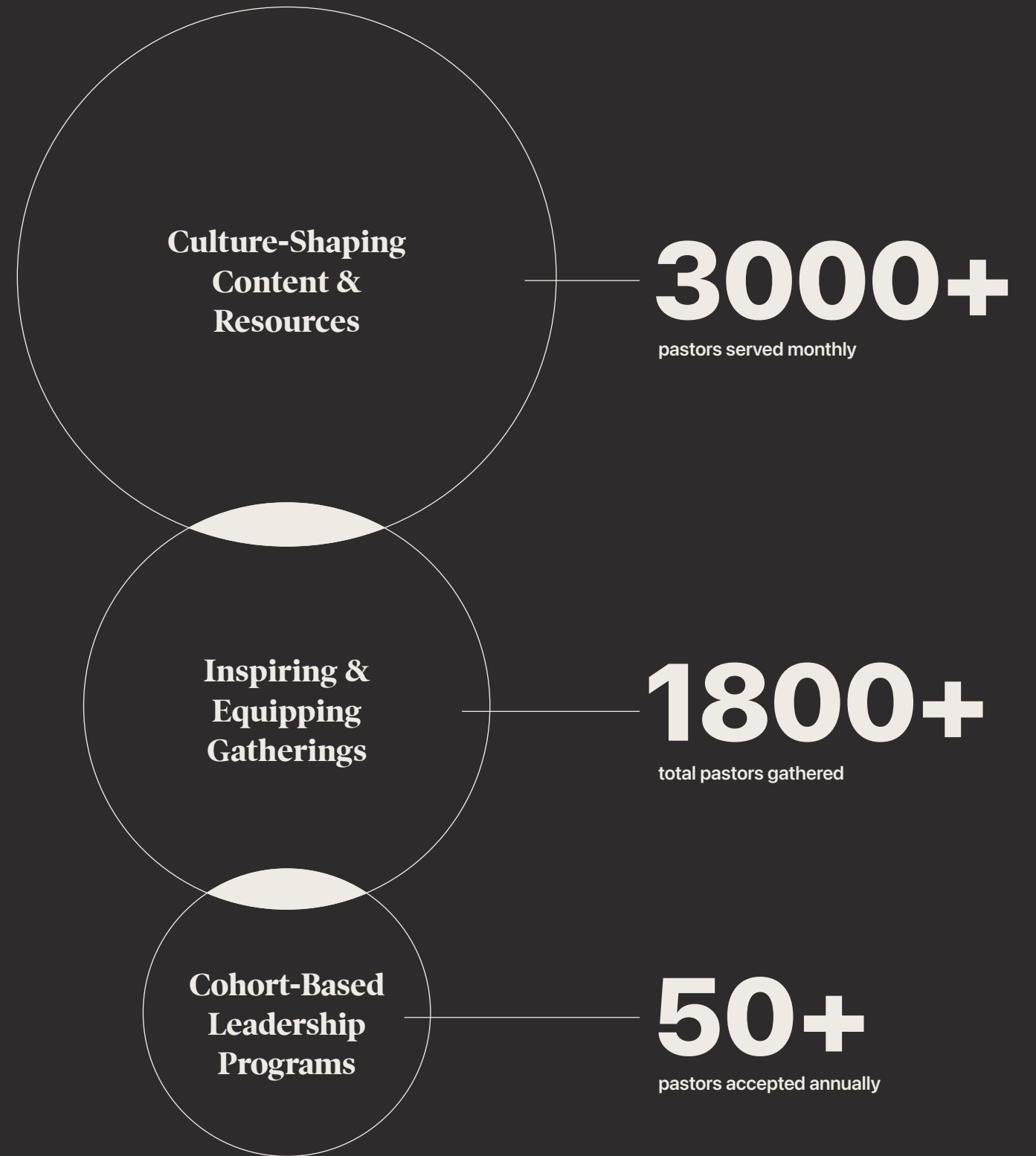
We are full of hope for what God is doing and seek to share it with pastors in all we do.



Heart-Focused

We move beyond methods and techniques to invest in the character of pastors.

We do this through:





A Note from Jason

I am writing this note with a smile on my face.

I am smiling because I love CCLN's mission to strengthen Canadian pastors.

I am smiling because the preparation of the following pages (which I can't wait for you to read) has allowed our team to recount that, this year, in God's kindness, we were able to invest in more pastors in deeper ways than we imagined.

And, I am also smiling as I think of you holding this note. You represent the friends and partners that make it possible for us to serve pastors – a community of people who love Canada, the local church, and long to see God move in our nation. We get to do what we do every day because of people like you who invest in our work, and for that, we are very grateful.

We started CCLN in 2020 with a conviction to play our part in seeing the next generation of Canadian pastors filled with hope, connected in community, and equipped to lead in our time. As we step into our fourth year as a ministry, we are only more convicted, hope-filled, and passionate about this work. We feel deeply humbled by the growing trust from pastors and supporters across Canada.

In the following pages, we want to celebrate some highlights from 2023 and express what is in our hearts for the year ahead. Of special note for me are the faces, quotes and stories of pastors we were able to serve representing the whole Canadian landscape. I hope that through reading their words, you're filled with hope for what God is up to amongst pastors in our nation.

Thank you for taking the time to read these pages. As you do, please pray for our work. Pray that we would have increased capacity to invest in more pastors in significant ways and join us as we pray for the renewal of the Church in Canada.

With love,

Jason Ballard
Executive Director



Investing Upstream in Young Pastors for Canada's Future

Emerging Leaders Lab

A 12-month pastoral formation community shaping vibrant, faithful
pastors for decades of ministry

Canadian Youth Pastor Summits

A three-day gathering for youth pastors to collaborate and
connect with lead practitioners, other Canadian pastors & most
importantly, Jesus



Emerging Leaders Lab

Pastors grow over a lifetime. The Emerging Leaders Lab is designed to be one part of a young pastor's development, setting them on a trajectory of ongoing growth as a disciple and pastor. Serving 30+ unique pastors each year, this program fuels the hope of more Canadian pastors finishing the race in love with Jesus and with joy in their hearts.

Program Components



In-Person Retreat



Online Gatherings



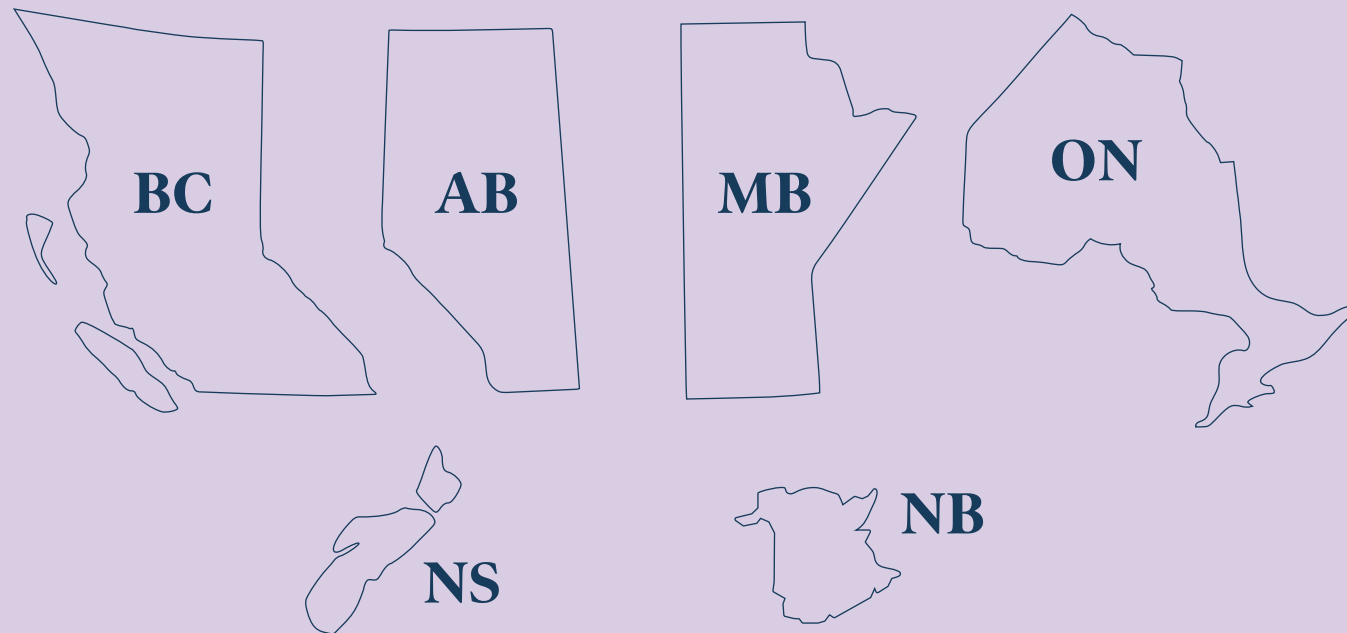
Cohort Sessions



1:1 Mentorship

This Year's Class

32 pastors representing **13** denominations from



This Year's Guides

Six pastoral mentors investing 159 years of church ministry experience



Helen Burns

38 years, BC



Keith Taylor

42 years, AB



Chris Price

17 years, BC



Jay Ewing

18 years, ON



Josie Vance

18 years, AB



Mark Peters

26 years, BC

Calling

A divine invitation to the life of vocational ministry as expressed through your God-given wiring and gifting

"If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit..."
John 15:5

Community

A willingness to cultivate deep, vulnerable friendships that fuels love and good deeds

"Through the Lab, I've been given the gift of a family that understands the challenges of ministry. Recently, I received a difficult health diagnosis. Having my cohort walk with me through this trying time has been a blessing.

I no longer feel alone in ministry; I have friends who truly care."

Alycia Geiger | New Life Church, BC

Craft

The willingness and resolve to strengthen ministry skills over time

Abiding in Christ

Character

A strong moral fiber that embodies the character of Christ and refuses to bend to the prevailing culture

*"Through a simple question posed in one of our Lab gatherings, I saw the floodgates of my own shadowy yet persistent ego and insecurity opened. I thought I took my character formation very seriously, but somehow through this program, I've found myself in an environment where **I am excited to take this difficult road of growth more seriously than ever."***

Nathan Archer | Central Heights Church, BC

Contending

Living with a sense of dependency on the Holy Spirit to bring renewal to a people and a place

*"There can be a strong temptation for me to focus more on what I do for Jesus instead of being with Him. **This community has refocused my vision on abiding,** and helped me set up rhythms in my life to be more deeply-rooted in Jesus than ever before."*

Aliza Latta | Mountainside Church, ON

Context

Cultivating an understanding and love for your unique place and people

*"This program encouraged me to think more critically, not only about the people I serve, but also the neighborhood that surrounds my church. Since, I've experienced what it's like to **practically be the hands & feet of Jesus,** forming impactful partnerships with a nearby school and even our local police force."*

Levi Fraser | Johnston Heights Church, BC



General Session Five
**DOING HOLISTIC
YOUTH MINISTRY**
Jason Ballard
Canadian Youth Pastor Summit

SEEKING TO
REEMBRACE JESUS
AND THE
JOY OF THEIR HOMELANDS

HUMBLY
LINKING PEOPLE

SWEEPING OVER
THEIR PLACES

Canadian Youth Pastor Summits

There is a lot required of today's youth pastor. Leading at the intersection of the wide range of challenges facing young people, the requirement to wear a multiplicity of hats, with many being early on in their church ministry experience, thousands of youth pastors in our nation are in critical need of resourcing and community. That is why we dedicate three highly intentional days to easing the burden of these pastors.

222

Pastors Served

183

Unique Churches

15,000+

Students Represented

Serving youth pastors from coast to coast

Mississauga, ON

March 21-23

(Our first in-person gathering in Central Canada)

Vancouver, BC

October 23-25

(Back in Western Canada, for the second time)

(Some of) What We Covered

High Level

Four Strategic Focuses
Doing Holistic Youth Ministry
Understanding Generation Z

Topical

Partnering with Parents & Families
Emerging Gender Identities
Navigating Doubt & Deconstruction

Inspirational

Come to Jesus
Go in the Power of the Holy Spirit

A special moment of prayer with Spencer

"I was coming into the Youth Pastor Summit tired and in desperate need of a reminder of why I went into youth ministry to begin with.

I left feeling so cared for, and full of fresh passion.

I could tell the CCLN team is serious about reaching the next generation of pastors & students."

Spencer Conway

Rock Church Halifax, Nova Scotia

Resourcing Youth Pastors Beyond the Summit

Creating a hub for youth pastors like Spencer to revisit for valuable youth ministry content



Facilitating Experiences that Bring the Whole Church Together

Spiritual Formation in the Life of the Local Church

A one-day gathering in Vancouver, B.C. designed around the question:
How can pastors and churches be more deeply formed in Jesus' way?

Discipleship in Our Complex Age

An online gathering for pastors across Canada focusing on
the question: *How can pastors match the complexity of our time
with courageous & creative responses for discipleship?*



**How can
pastors and
churches be
more deeply
formed in
Jesus' way?**



Spiritual Formation in the Life of the Local Church

On February 17th, we hosted a wide range of pastors from all over Western Canada to connect and worship with one another while hearing thoughtful teaching on spiritual formation from special contributors like Elita Friesen, John Mark Comer, Ken Shigematsu, and Tyler Staton.

What we heard

"In this time, my sense of the shared convictions between followers of Jesus grew, irrespective of denominational differences. I spent most of the day sitting beside an Orthodox priest, and **despite our outward differences, it was clear that our hearts and aspirations for our communities were identical.**"

Tammy Giffen | Groundswell Church, NS

Teaching 

Discussion 

Worship 

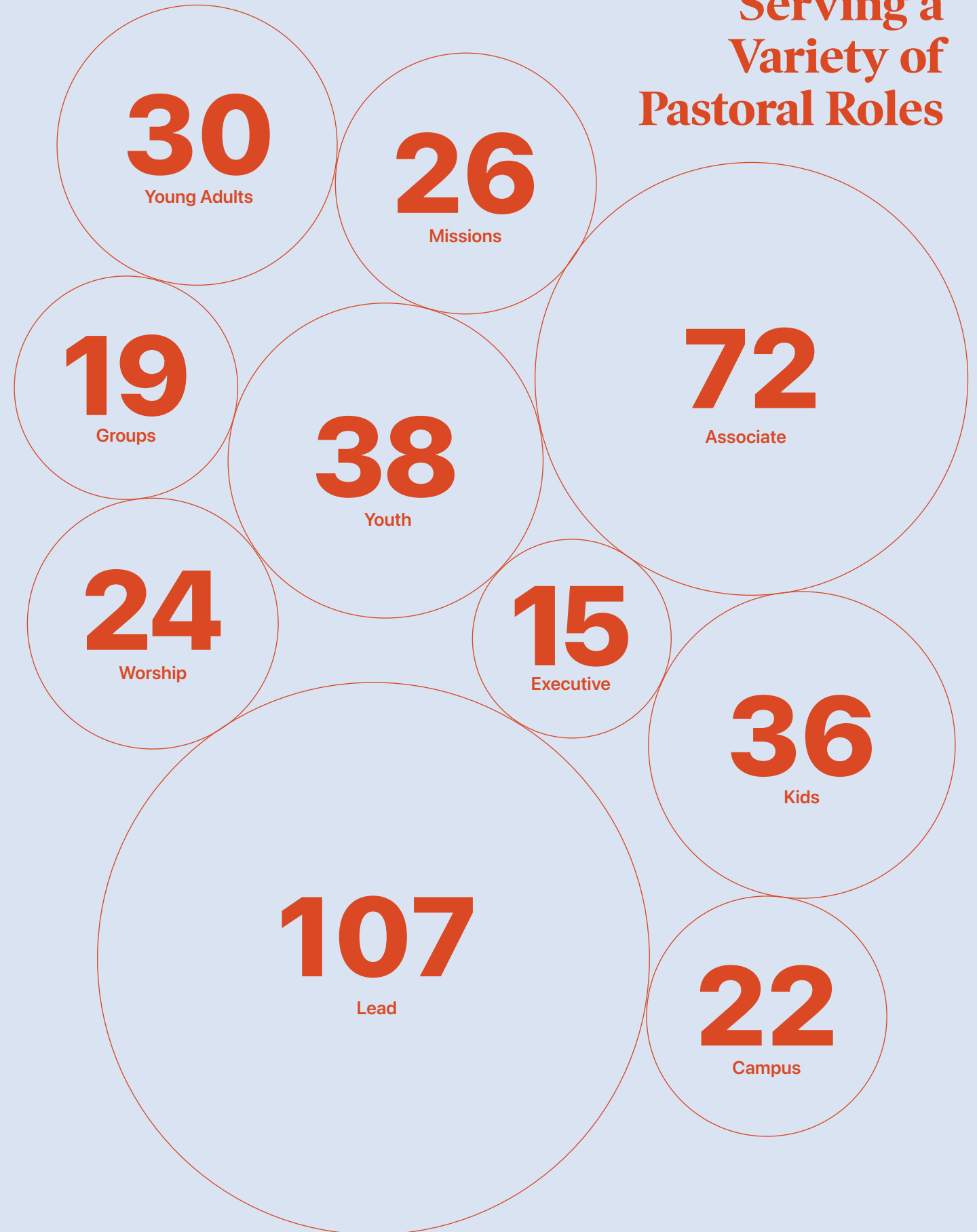
Prayer Ministry 

Space for Connection 

47
Denominations

153
Unique Churches

Serving a Variety of Pastoral Roles



How can pastors match the complexity of our time with courageous & creative responses for discipleship?



This gathering had what we can only describe as a "holy moment."
Take a look.



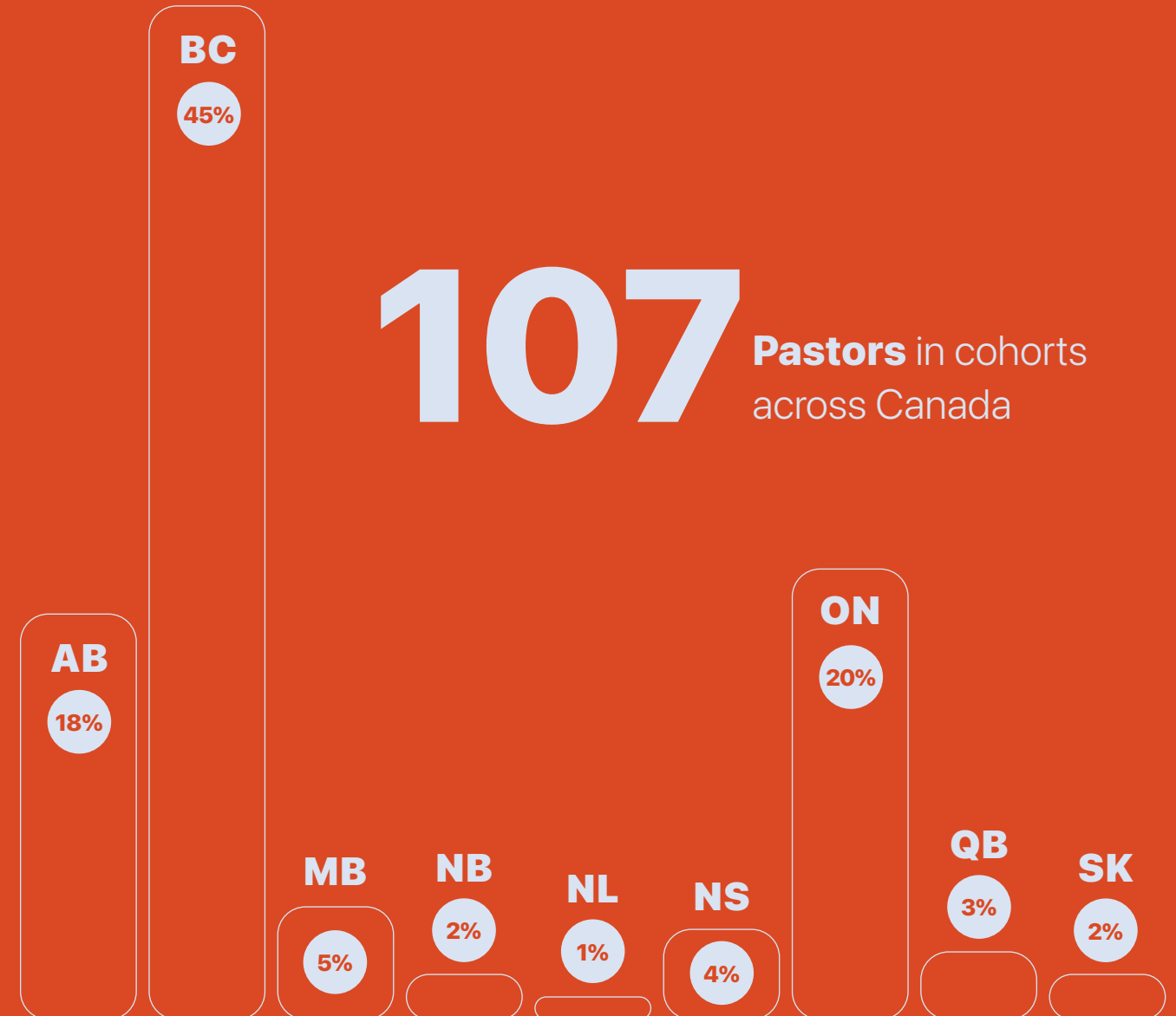
Discipleship in Our Complex Age

On April 20th, we facilitated a free digital gathering for pastors nationwide to hear from thought leader Mark Sayers, followed by time in cohorts to discuss and pray with other pastors in similar roles.

Together, we discussed:



107 Pastors in cohorts across Canada



**“Somehow,
CCLN made
the country
feel even
smaller.”**

Tammy Giffen | Groundswell Church, Nova Scotia



Halifax, Nova Scotia

Finding Connection on Canada's East Coast



Tammy lives in Milford, Nova Scotia with her husband Peter and three children: Taylor, Wesley, and Mya. She came to know Jesus personally through Alpha 22 years ago, and in 2018, she planted Groundswell Church, which currently serves Truro, a town of 14,000 people.

Since getting connected to the work of CCLN in 2020, these are some of Tammy's reflections on how the Lord has used it all.

Making a Large Country Small

Pastoring on the East Coast is wonderful, but it comes with its unique challenges. **Canada is a large country, and ministry here can feel siloed from the rest of the nation.**

As a lead pastor, it is honestly challenging to find and build safe friendships. Despite this challenge, I have always aimed to connect with other pastors, both near and far from me.

Once I began connecting with pastors through CCLN, it felt like the country, somehow, became even smaller. Before CCLN, my efforts in building connections might have extended as far as Ontario; **now, I have relationships with pastors from coast to coast.** Beyond these connections, I feel that

I've discovered a family of like-minded people who are leading the church at this time.

Through the spaces created by CCLN, my husband and I have been able to nurture deeply meaningful friendships that aren't just *my* friends in ministry but *our* friends in ministry.

Churches Helping Churches In Crisis

At one of CCLN's Pastors Retreats, we were all given photos of other pastoral couples to take home and were invited to pray for them throughout the year. My new friends, Jono and Nicole Zantingh from Evolve Church in Edmonton, took home the photo of Peter and me.

A few weeks later, our region was hit by Hurricane Fiona.

Jono and Nicole heard about what happened and reached out immediately. Despite leading a

newer church of the same age as our own, they ended up sending a generous donation to support our service to the community around us. It was so special to feel that support from this couple I met just a month ago. It made us feel like

it's not just Groundswell over here in Truro and Evolve Church over there in Edmonton; we are all in this together.



Investing In Young Pastors, Including My Daughter

Ministry is hard and it seems like pastors are dropping like flies in Canada. We have more churches than we have pastors prepared, both in craft and character, to lead them.

With many young leaders on my staff, including my daughter, Taylor, I believe deeply in championing young pastors and instilling qualities that will sustain them for a lifetime of living out their calling.

I'm also aware that, although I want to provide these young pastors with everything they need, I can't.

My daughter Taylor is a part of the first class of the Emerging Leaders Lab, and I am so grateful. For her, it's been a safe space to be formed by competent, seasoned leaders and to process with like-minded pastors in her age and stage. **She's already learning and living into a lot of wisdom that I wish I had at the beginning.**

Ultimately, I think being in a program like this is not just a gift for her or even just for our church;

it's a gift that will pay back for decades in the Church in Canada.

Strengthening Pastors for Effective, Long-Term Ministry

Church Leaders Incubator

A two-year program for young senior leaders who have a vision to influence the Church in Canada



Shepherding

Shepherding Jesus' Flock

Psalms 23

Ezekiel 34

John 10

Q- what do we learn about shepherding/pastoring from God's criteria? God's purpose?

Q- what do we learn about shepherding/pastoring from God's desire?

Luke 15:1-7

1 Peter 5:1-7

Church Leaders Incubator

A snapshot of two years together

11

Cohort Sessions

Teaching and dialogue with seasoned pastor and preacher Darrell Johnson, exploring the question *“What does it mean to be a pastor?”* through 2 Timothy and Matthew

2

In-Person Retreats

November 2021

+ Writing Your Eulogy

+ Understanding Your Wiring & Calling

+ Creating a Rule of Life

October 2022

+ Defining the Pastor

+ Dealing With Your Past

+ Fostering the Deeper

Spiritual Disciplines

1:1

Coaching & Mentorship

Regular tailored meetings to enable pastors to identify growth areas and personal wiring for ministry

Senior leadership in the church comes with a diverse set of challenges and can be uniquely isolating for the pastor. We designed the Incubator to address the nuances of leading a church today in a highly dialectic environment that also fosters friendship and peer ministry. **After gathering together since 2021, this year marked the conclusion of our first-ever class.**

12

Online Gatherings

Unpacking topics like:

Preaching to Post-Christian Culture, Justice & Service in Your City, Self-Leadership, Principles for Healthy Governance & more

Learning from leaders:

+ Jon Tyson

+ Alex Seeley

+ Jonathan Tremaine Thomas

+ Shaila Visser

+ & others

2

City Visits

London

May 2022

Fuelling Imagination for:

Church Revitalization, Renewal & Diverse Expressions of the Church, the Work of the Spirit & more

Learning from leaders:

+ N.T. Wright

+ Emmy Wilson

+ Nicky Gumbel

+ & others

Southern California

April 2023

Fuelling imagination for:

Perseverance in Ministry, Mission & Evangelism in a Deconstructing Culture, Spiritual Formation in the Life of the Church & more

Learning from leaders:

+ John Mark Comer

+ Glenn Packiam

+ Ger Jones

+ & others

Finishing the program with our first class of

17 pastors,

representing

18,000+ people

in their churches.

“The Incubator was a unique experience in my pastoral journey, and looking back, one that I desperately needed. Our times together were valuable, yes for the content – we heard from some amazing voices, visited incredible churches, but in hindsight, **I can’t begin to overstate the value of the friendships that were formed. They have an ongoing, regular impact on my life, my family, and my ministry, and for that, I’m so grateful.**”

Dan Comrie | Relate Church, BC

The Lead Pastors Fellowship

Launching **September 2024**

After two years of the Church Leaders Incubator, it was undeniable that this program met a deep relational and practical need for these 17 pastors.

That’s why in 2024, we are distilling the most effective parts of the Incubator and the learnings we gathered along the way into a reboot of the program called **The Lead Pastors Fellowship**. The Fellowship will accept 20 senior pastors from across Canada, in order to strengthen their soul and vision over two years together.

**I remember
thinking, for
the first time
in a while,
*"I can actually
do this."***

Joel Varty | Celebration Church, Alberta



Edmonton, Alberta

An Interview with **Joel Varty**

Discovering a New Vision for Pastoring

Joel and his wife, Jessica, have three kids: Brixton, Navy, and Clover. He has been on staff at Celebration Church in Edmonton for 10 years, moving from facilities to youth ministry, and now serving as the one of the lead pastors.

Here's a snapshot of Joel's journey as a pastor and how the Lord brought the ministry of CCLN at just the right time.



“It Was Dark.”

Through years in the church and following Jesus, I think I picked up an unhelpful image of what it meant to be a pastor.

Somewhere along the way, I began to see pastors mainly as CEO-type leaders.

While I felt called to lead in the church, knowing myself as more of a shepherd with a soft heart, I didn't feel like I fit that mold. There was a sincere struggle to find my identity as a pastor.

Then came the pandemic. Our ministry seemed to hit the brakes, but at the same time, there was an acceleration of insecurity and a deep sense of loneliness in my inner

world. **It's hard to put words to this season – it just felt dark.** I know most pastors experienced a sense of powerlessness and overwhelm during this time, and I was no exception. The polarization and criticism were crushing. I felt in over my head. Even in the work, I couldn't shake this sense that I needed to prove myself somehow.

You can't just process this kind of burden with your church; it's a really select group of people that can shoulder that unique weight with you. I had a few of those relationships, but the connections were too few and far between to sustain me.

I needed a consistent family in the Church world.

Gaining More Than What I Expected

Attending CCLN's Pastors Retreat with my wife Jessica was absolutely pivotal; it has become a core memory for us. CCLN facilitated a space that allowed for deep, meaningful connections and conversations. It went far beyond the networking that I was used to. There was one moment where Jessica and I were being surrounded in prayer, and

I remember looking up and, for the first time in a while, thinking, 'I can actually do this.'

It's not an exaggeration to say that my wife and I made deeper connections in those few days than in ten years of church ministry.



A Vision For Healthy Pastoring

Through CCLN's Pastors Retreat, podcast, and other gatherings, I finally found the language for an identity of pastoring that I had been searching for all along. Today, I'm coming alive, loving the people at Celebration Church as the shepherd God made me to be.

I've seen what I emphasize in life and ministry change too, as new values become more deeply embedded in my life. I love how CCLN works backward from the hope to see renewal in Canada and necessitates healthier churches and pastors.

I think every pastor wants to see their city changed, and for me, the starting place has become my own health.

Within that, I also find I'm increasingly shifting my focus away from finding new methods or proving the worth of the ministry I lead, and now asking different questions entirely: Am I healthy? Do I love God with all my being? Through this, I've seen the Spirit make me more open-handed, widening my desire beyond the church I lead, to wanting to see the Church in my city thrive.

Today, through CCLN, I feel like a completely different person and pastor, but somehow more myself than ever.

Telling the Story of the Church in Canada

**We believe the Church in Canada
has a story worth telling.**

With its blend of cultural diversity, distinctive regionalism, and increasing secularism, Canada's spiritual landscape is a dynamic and challenging context to pastor. Yet, in the midst of these unique influences, the Church is being built, and its leaders have remarkable, often unprofiled insights.

**So we are dedicated to sharing the stories of Canadian pastors
and churches.**

The Montreal Spotlight Series

In a highly post-Christian city like Montreal, innovation is required for churches, and the pastors who lead them are uniquely resilient. In our *Montreal Spotlight Series* we profiled two of those pastors, providing an avenue for them to share their story and wisdom with the broader Church.

Montreal's Decline Into Secularism

"This is the first time I was in a city where you couldn't throw a brick without breaking a church window."

Mark Twain, 1881

FROM

The City of a Hundred Steeples

In the 1970s, evangelical work in French Canada exploded from **40 to nearly 500 churches**, stabilizing at **400 churches**.*

*Memoirs of An Ordinary Pastor, D.A. Carson

TO

The Largest Unreached People Group in North America*
Today, only **0.5% of Quebec** and **0.7% of Montreal** identify as evangelical.

*The Gospel Coalition, 2018

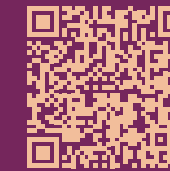
Two communities, representing the one Church, being built in Montreal against the odds



Patti Miller
Evangel Church



David Pothier
La Chapelle



"As a Montrealer who moved to Vancouver in 2020, I have increasingly recognized the importance of mining Canada's regionalism to more fully understand the unfolding story of the Canadian Church. I was deeply struck by the cultural humility, hope and honesty shared by both pastors in this series.

As I listened, I longed for my hometown, cried in compassion, and have since been praying for revival in Quebec."

Jessica Debanné Thiessen | Wycliffe Bible Translators

Telling the **stories of men and women** from
A variety of **church expressions** and **places**

Partnering with Jesus to see the Church thrive



54 Canadian stories told, **hundreds more to tell**

Check out our
full library on the
Canadian Church
Leaders Podcast



“The Canadian Church Leaders Podcast has widened my perspective of what Jesus is doing across our nation by sharing stories I may never have heard of otherwise. I don’t know of any other podcast that offers unique content for and from the Canadian Church.”



A Moment for the Canadian Church

Searock Sessions

Vancouver Gathering

From January 11-13, we were able to partner with Searock Sessions to host a time for **60+ U.S. and Canadian pastors** to intentionally glean from the Church in Vancouver.



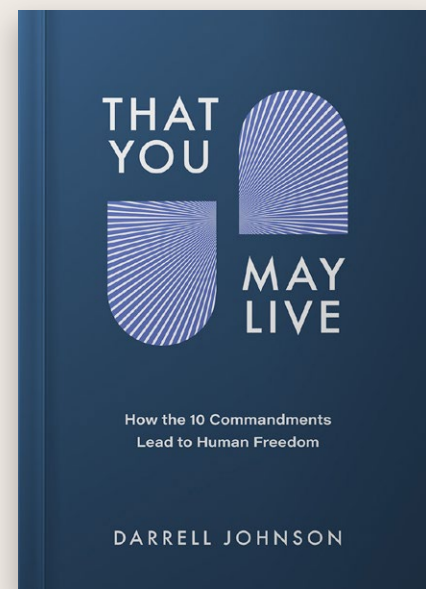
The challenge of pastoring in Canada's diverse geographical and cultural landscape is yielding insights that are valuable for the broader Church. In the past, it has been more typical for Canadian pastors to approach the U.S. Church for fresh and creative strategies. However, this gathering represents a growing trend, with U.S. pastors now seeking learnings from Canadian leaders who have witnessed Jesus building His Church in the midst of a more widely secularized context.

This pattern only underscores the importance of strengthening Canadian pastors in our time.



Addressing the Complex Pastoral Challenges of Our Day

If we were tasked with listing all the challenges pastors face, there wouldn't be enough room on this page. One of the acute challenges confronting pastors today is Western culture's view of the Bible, specifically its historic moral positions as irrelevant and, in some cases, as dangerous. Using Jesus' parable of the Kingdom, there is a temptation for pastors to "change the seed" due to the hostile conditions of the day's soil; in other words, to change the Word to fit the time. Into that temptation, we want to be one voice that deposits courage in pastors to instead stand on the bedrock of God's Word, and empowers them to hold a fidelity to the unchanging truth of Scripture



That You May Live: How the 10 Commandments Lead to Human Freedom

In September, we helped long-time pastor, preacher and author Darrell Johnson release a new book on the 10 Commandments, with the goal of helping pastors navigate the moral ambiguity of our time with their communities.



Check out the Book & Group Discussion Guide

Facilitating candid conversations on the real stuff pastors are navigating



Chris Price

on Preaching to a Post-Christian Context



Pieter Valk

on Pastoring the LGBT+ Community

"I resonated deeply with Chris' episode on preaching, and it had me 'amen-ing' and connecting the whole way through. **I will be sure to use it to help guide the preachers on our team** – it's the best podcast episode on preaching I have ever heard."

Matthew Price | North Langley Community Church, BC

Meet Our Team



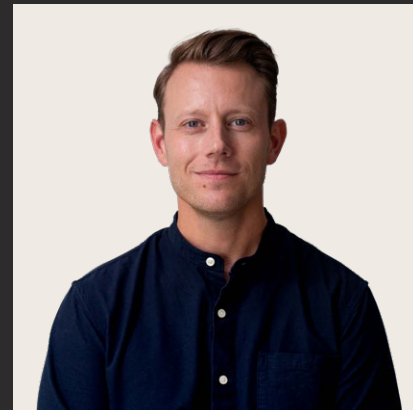
Sidney Shukalov
Project Manager



Daniel Roe
Creative Director



Darrell Johnson
Pastoral Overseer



Jason Ballard
Executive Director



Ralph Alvaro
Communications Manager



Kiera Bloomer
Project Coordinator



Jaden Neufeld
Director of Content & Experiences



Josh Thompson
Director of Operations & Development



Sandra Mota
Events Coordinator



Nick Corbin
Podcast Coordinator

**Strengthening
pastors
together.**

"Being pastors' kids, we both know firsthand that healthy pastors make healthy families and churches. We consider it a privilege to be able to give to CCLN's work to support, uplift, and walk alongside church leaders across Canada."

Ainslay & Josh Dewling | Monthly Givers, AB



Through your generosity, we can strengthen even more pastors in 2024.

Join The Seed

Our giving community for monthly supporters and prayer partners.

This is the best way to invest in our work in an ongoing way and to get a regular window into how your giving is impacting pastors from coast to coast. Join The Seed and you will also receive exclusive content and invitations to gatherings facilitated just for this community.

Become a Partner Church

If we are going to see a widespread renewal in Canada, it will require thousands of healthy churches, not just one. When you partner with CCLN, you are linking arms with other churches and strengthening the Kingdom fabric across our nation.

Together, we can see more vibrant, faithful pastors both in your community and the churches beyond yours.



Ways to Give

You can give by cheque, credit, or e-transfer. All giving is tax-deductible (CRA Charity #: 73353 9514 RR 0001) and you will be issued a tax receipt after the close of our fiscal year.



Give Online



ccln.ca/give



E-Transfer

You can send an Interac e-Transfer to:

contact@ccln.ca

We will send your charitable tax receipt to the email address you use to send your donation.



Mail a Cheque

Please make the **cheque** out to "Canadian Church Leaders Network" and mail to:

Canadian Church Leaders Network

#101-1155 Thurlow St.
Vancouver, BC
V6E 1X2





**See, I am doing a
new thing! Now it
springs up; do you
not perceive it? I
am making a way
in the wilderness
and streams in the
wasteland.**

Isaiah 43:19