



Season 13: Episode 3 | Robin Wallar | Are Students More Open to Faith Than You Think?

Hello and welcome to Scripture Untangled, a podcast by the Canadian Bible Society. My name is Joanna la Fleur. I'm a friend of the Canadian Bible Society and I'm going to be your guide for today's episode.

A dynamic church planting work is underway at Canadian universities and we're going to catch up on that story as Lorna Dueck interviews Robin Wallar. For the past 20 years, Robin Wallar has devoted himself to Christian witness and discipleship on university campuses in Canada. Robin tackled that first as a nuclear engineering student and now as a church planter and software developer.

Together with his wife, Laura, they lead Lift Church, a collegiate discipleship and church planting movement on nine university campuses across Canada. Robin's passion is to equip every follower of Christ for disciple making and church planting in co-vocational settings. He shares the values and theology behind that co-vocational ministry in his book *Everyone Sent* and has written a comprehensive discipleship guide called *Living Sent*, which are used by students and ministries across North America.

He also writes on these topics weekly on Substack and in addition to leading Lift Church, Robin leads Engage Spaces, a software company designed to support discipleship making movements. He and Laura live in the beautiful city of Hamilton, Ontario with their two children. So, enjoy this conversation as Robin is in conversation with Lorna Dueck.

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Lorna Dueck: Robin Wallar, welcome to the podcast. It's just crazy to think about how fast the years have gone of your church planting on university campuses in Ontario.

Has it gone quickly for you or is this like, no, you've been slugging it out?

Robin Wallar: Some days it feels like a day is a million years and then other days it feels like a decade is like a minute and so, but I would say overall it feels like we're flying too fast. I wish we could slow down, slow time down, but it's been fun. It's been a fun couple decades.

Lorna Dueck: Okay, it is your 20th year of planting churches on Ontario university campuses. You've got 10 now, right? 10 churches.

Robin Wallar: Nine, hopefully 10 later this year, but yeah, right now nine.

Lorna Dueck: Okay, and where are you hoping for that 10th one to go?

Robin Wallar: We're praying to plant at McGill (University) in Quebec, in Montreal.

Lorna Dueck: Okay, so getting outside. Wow, you've been making these engaging spaces for people to go to church, and I just love what first began for you.

You're 24 years old and you stepped into lead pastoring at McMaster universities. It was a church in a pub, right? Tell us about that.

Robin Wallar: Yeah, in those early days we used to rent the bar at McMaster, and it was closed those days.

We would come in after the university had thrown parties the night before, we would clean it all up. It was at times pretty wild, pretty rough, but yeah, it was beautiful. I mean, 2012 when my wife, Laura and I took over leading, we were just a handful of students really.

And we just spoke life into it and God blessed it and has, you know, allowed us to, to raise leaders up and send them out to start churches. And it's been really quite an

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incredible ride to go from this little, tiny thing in the basement bar of the McMaster university student center to now all over the province.

Lorna Dueck: 10 churches actively running.

Wow. Robin, tell us then about, you're an engineering student back then. Tell us about sensing, I can also be a pastor.

Robin Wallar: Yeah, I've been so blessed as a teenager to have just incredible men and women of God disciple me and invest into me. And I knew I wanted to serve the church early on in my journey with Jesus. I just caught the love of His church, but I also loved the technical world, the maths and the sciences.

And so, the counsel that I received, which I'm very grateful for at the time was not to choose too early, but to go and complete an engineering degree while sowing in and investing into the church. And that ended up being particularly wise because in the early days of our church, we were really small. We had, really no financial resources and sort of the sustainability was a big question.

And so, because I was able to work as a software engineer to pay my bills and contribute to our church, I was also then able to lead. And so, for a long time, I kind of just held those two things together, engineer by day and, pastor by night. And eventually I ended up, when I think we planted our fourth church in 2018, I ended up walking away from my engineering career full-time to sow into our church full-time.

But that template of inviting people to work their careers and serve the churches is now kind of the template that we use for all of our church plants. And so, the heart that I think we have, and that I've always had is that, you know, every member of the body of Christ is invited to contribute in a significant way to the church. And so, it's been fun to try to figure out how to do that at scale.

How do we have people working careers and serving the church? And that's kind of just been my story.

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Lorna Dueck: And in challenging economic times, that is a big stretch for people to say, how do I support myself, my family and then add church to it. But it works, doesn't it? You're seeing it happen in all of these major cities.

Robin Wallar: One of the big questions we really wrestled with was how do you plant a church in a major urban center? And especially amongst university students, you know, we just recently planted downtown Toronto, one of the most expensive cities in North America. And that meant we had to get pretty creative around how do we think about funding this and by marrying people's professional careers. And that's kind of who we work with as university students going into their professional world.

Marrying that career in with a life of ministry has been kind of a really creative way to deploy people into, into context where maybe the economic environment is more difficult.

Lorna Dueck: Okay. And we're going to talk about that in a little bit.

I want to unpack what created Robin first. You came to Jesus as a young person, right? Tell us a little bit about the home environment where you found Jesus and what started this spark to be a church planter.

Robin Wallar: Yeah.

So, both my parents are first generation Christians. They both radically came to know Jesus in the late seventies. And so, I was raised by these super on fire, Jesus loving parents.

Lorna Dueck: And was that in South Africa? You're from South Africa, right?

Robin Wallar: Yeah, that's right. My dad's Canadian, my mom's South African. So, I'm of mixed background, but initially we lived in South Africa.

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And when I was nine years old or eight years old, I think, I had this, I can only describe it as like an encounter with Jesus. I was praying in my room, and I felt the Lord say, I want to use you. I want to accomplish something with your life.

I need you to trust me. And I said, yes.

Lorna Dueck: You remember that as an eight-year-old.

Robin Wallar: Yeah. Very distinctly.

Lorna Dueck: And now you have children that age, like you have two kids, right?

Robin Wallar: Well, yeah, my daughter is eight and she came to me and I've never shared that story with her, and recently she said, you know, I want to get baptized. And I kind of looked at her, I was like, oh, you're too young.

And then I remembered that, you know, the Lord encountered me when I was just a child in a very real way. Like I've never walked back that commitment I made to Jesus at eight. I have walked out, you know, the next almost 30 years.

So, my parents slow walked me on it a little bit. I think they wanted to go, okay, do you really understand? But I think, you know, when you've encountered the love of Jesus, it changes everything.

Lorna Dueck: Beautiful.

So, what happens, you go off to university, you actually moved out quite young, 17, right?

Robin Wallar: That's right.

Lorna Dueck: Tell us about that saying, I'm off.

Robin Wallar: Yeah.

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So, I famously, when my parents dropped me off in the fall of 2006 for university, I said, thanks, mom. I won't be returning home. I've moved out now.

I didn't realize that I broke my poor mother's heart that day. And when I was a bit older, she explained to me that that was not a good move, but I had this deal, the sense of which like, God has sent me into the world. And so, I prayed a prayer in that fall of my first year, I said, Lord, either you bring me a church on the university campus, or I'll start one here in my dorm room.

And like all good impulsive, zealous prayers, I gave God a deadline of a week. And I don't really know what I had in, you know, in mind for him to do with that. But three days later, a guy called me and said, hey, I'm planting a church on the campus.

Would you like to be a part of it? And he had gotten my contact information through a sequence of events. But I said, well, I kind of made a deal with the Lord. I think I have no choice.

And so, I jumped in at 17 and we helped plant that church. And then it was quite a bumpy ride through the first six years, but I'm so glad that sort of silly prayer I prayed is what has.., I often go back to and say, Lord, I really feel like You've appointed me to do this.

Lorna Dueck: Beautiful.

And you met Laura, your wife in that bumpy ride of planting that church at McMaster University. And she jumped right in on saying, we can do this. We can plant it.

We can do church here. Tell us about getting married, meeting in a bar, meeting in a church. It was all one.

Robin Wallar: Yeah. Depending on the version of the story I want to spin. I can, you know, say we met at church, at a bar or at school and they're all true at the same time.

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And it was great. She was, you know, I was kind of running around serving all over the place. She was running our food team.

We used to provide hotdogs to students after gatherings. And I was like, oh, she looks cute. I should go serve on the food team.

And next thing, you know, we're dating, engaged, get married. And then after about a year of marriage, we took over leading the church and have been serving really arm in arm. I really couldn't do it without Laura.

You know, Lift Church has been a labor of both of us. And I feel grateful every day that I have not just a co-laborer, but a friend that I get to walk through the journey with.

Lorna Dueck: Beautiful.

Now, how does it work that university students, get attracted to church? How are you filling up these Lift Churches in all the universities in the major cities? It's incredible. What attracts them?

Robin Wallar: It's really simple. We go and we talk to strangers about Jesus on campus.

There is really nothing about what we're doing that is externally attractive. We have no big presence, especially at the beginning. And so, what we do is we just, we have a few leaders that will land on a university campus, and they'll just go around and start talking to people.

It's like kind of old school in some ways but done with a real spirit of grace and humility. And we just kind of probe around to say, okay, who is spiritually curious? And it turns out that almost everybody is spiritually curious. And then out of that, we invite people into what at the beginning is really just a house church.

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And over time those evolve or grow into what would look like a larger format style church. But at the beginning, it's just, people that love Jesus talking to people that don't know Jesus.

Lorna Dueck: And what's an opening question? What do you start with?

Robin Wallar: Usually, we'll open up with some kind of question around, "hey, we're looking to understand or gain perspective of how students feel about, spiritual things. Do you have any background in spirituality or any experience with faith or religion?"

And what follows from that is really, and I think this is key is it's not us actually telling what we think it's really a sequence of questions to understand where is the person we're talking to at? And what we're trying to figure out is what would be a helpful next step for that person. And so, we get, you know, every possible answer you could imagine, to the question of what's your experience with spirituality. But the beautiful part is that independent of what answer we get back, there's a sequence that we can take them on a series of questions.

We can ask that can help them discover more about who Jesus is more about the Gospels, more about Scripture, and there's a real openness there.

Lorna Dueck: And maybe I should add here, you've written about this. You've got a couple of manuals, three outright that are books, manuals that help your core team that help people understand how to keep these discipleship questions developing.

Tell us a bit about the book series.

Robin Wallar: So, the core one is a book we wrote called *Living Sent*. It's two parts, *Living Sent, Discovering Jesus*, and then *Living Sent, Discovering Disciple Making*.

And what we discovered was that there was really a lack of clarity around how do you make disciples? How do you take someone from no knowledge of Jesus all the way through to being able to reproduce disciples themselves? And we kind of took all of our learnings over about 15 years and we compiled them into what is really a tool to

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allow someone to walk relationally with someone from, like I say, no knowledge of Jesus to making disciples themselves. And it takes about a year to go through all of it, depending on the pace. But it covers everything from like, why would we believe in God? Why would we trust the Bible? Why is Jesus important all the way through to the foundations of our faith and who they are in Christ and what it means to live in community? And the core issue was that none of its super revolutionary in terms of content, but it's organizing it in a way that's helpful so that somebody can lead someone relationally and follow a bit of a roadmap through the process.

Lorna Dueck: Well, and at the Bible Society, we're curious about how does the Bible fit into that process? University students are familiar with books, with studying books. How do you bring in the authority of the Bible?

Robin Wallar: I often say that, you know, the most important thing we do as a church, we have lots of things we're doing, but the most important thing we do is something we call daily devotions. Across our whole church, including many non-believers, we study Scripture together every day.

Lorna Dueck: Wow. Across all nine campuses that you're in, 10 with McGill coming.

Robin Wallar: Yeah.

And it's not, we don't write devotions. There's not a lot of, it's just, here's a piece of Scripture, read it, ask God what He's saying. And that process as we walk through it results in a university student, they'll study the whole Old Testament in four years and the whole New Testament twice in two years, every two years.

And where it's really rooted in this conviction that as much help as resources and sermons and all these things are, what people really need is the Word of God. And that time in the Word is the best way to make disciples. And by doing that all together, there's like this built in community that's journeying with Jesus and asking questions and reading the Word.

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And, you know, the Bible can be tough at times, right? It can be hard to wrap our heads around, but it's a lot easier when you're doing it with hundreds of other people at the same time.

Lorna Dueck: Okay. You're just the engineer in you has figured something out.

The rest of us are going, you're doing what? You're reading the Bible through in four years, right? Is that how long? How do you do it? Is it on an app? How did you figure that out? That everybody is walking in their community, reading these passages.

Robin Wallar: It's, really simple.

We produce devotional books. They're like coil bound, that beautiful artwork with some artists in the church that would put like some artwork on it. And there's a reading plan in that book.

And it's one Scripture a day and everybody gets a book. Um, your first day, that you connect to our church, you'll get handed a Devo book and say, hey, this is the most important thing you can do. And then we've built the rhythms of our community around.

How do we get into that Word? How do we, it's kind of like the central organizing thing. So, we preach out of it, at our church gatherings across all the campuses. Everybody's preaching out of what we did in Devo's that week.

Most people are studying it in community through the week, but the core tool is just a book with a bunch of readings. It's very simple. And it's, you know, it is a significant investment for us to print them and distribute them.

But it's the single best investment we can make.

Lorna Dueck: Wow. And you preach out of the passages that you've done that week.

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I must say, I want to encourage our listeners to go to Lift church, just Lift church website and look at what you guys are doing. It's so beautiful. The baptisms, the energy that's in the photos, everything that you've put together there.

How do you stay fueled Robin? You've got two little kids, you and your wife are co-leading this project. You are still, got the self-employed model. You still got your other, your engaged platform that's software that you sell to support you and your family.

How do you stay, uh, fueled?

Robin Wallar: I think I would say there's two pieces. One is that on a personal level, it's just time and the Word every day. I think I started every day in Scripture, slow down, listen to what Jesus wants to say to me.

That's also accompanied by other rhythms, like, you know, riding my bike and things like that. But I think the other thing that's really important is, simplicity and community. Although there's a lot on the go, I'm not running around like crazy all the time.

I'm just invested into the people God has entrusted into my hands. And so, in a lot of ways, I just live in community and serve the community. We live within walking distance to our church.

There's a lot of, of really practical, simple rhythms that we've done. And I think maintaining a simple life has allowed us to live a full and rich life that's sustainable.

The Bible Course: Pausing this conversation here for a moment to tell you about The Bible Course, because whether you're a seasoned Bible reader or you're just starting

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on your journey, The Bible Course offers a superb overview of the world's best-selling book. This eight-session course will help you grow in your understanding of the Bible using a unique storyline. The Bible Course shows you how key events books and characters all fit together.

It's great for in-person groups or digital gatherings. It can be used anywhere. You like watch the first session for free and review the accompanying course guide, go to Biblecourse.ca to learn more. That's Bible course . ca . And as always, the link is down in the show notes.

Lorna Dueck: Okay. You call it a simple life. Um, secrets out.

I know your wife a bit. She calls it a simple life. And I go, but you guys have people over for dinner two or three times a week.

Robin Wallar: Oh yeh, at least, at least.

Lorna Dueck: Yeah. You've got a church building that you financed and funded. That's just a short step from McMaster campus where kids, students are coming in and out all the time. You both have part-time jobs to fund yourselves so you can be full-time missionaries. Um, and your kids are doing great. How do you say that simple?

Like let's just say the hospitality factor, because that's kind of a big thing you really want all your churches doing is open homes. How do you manage that open home?

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Robin Wallar: I think the key is that we're not hosting. We, it's like, it's much more like we're just having friends over.

Uh, and so we invite people into our mess. Uh, our house is often quite untidy. We have two little children, you know, it's not perfect.

I think what we've opted to say is a life lived in community where people are just a part of our mess, whatever that means. Uh, you know, I'm a dad. Sometimes I have bad days.

Sometimes our kids are hard to wrangle. Our friends see that side too. They're not just seeing the sort of curated perfect side.

Part of the simple way of life is that people have to be able to see our mess and be invited into the mess. And sometimes the mess is, I yell at my kids, or I get upset, or our house is a disaster. Uh, last night I had a whole bunch of guys over that I'm discipling and, you know, they had to clean the kitchen, you know, so I'm like, hey guys, clean the kitchen.

You know, they were actually there before us cooking. We were at a separate thing with a bunch of other parents in our church and then I and then I show up and they've already prepared a meal.

So, I think openness with all of life. And that includes the parts that maybe are a little bit embarrassing or not as curated as we would like. But the beauty of that is that it deepens relationship because there isn't this sort of boundary between, you know, pastor Robin and Robin. It's like, I'm just a guy trying to love Jesus come into my home and join me in it.

There are some really tactical things we do. We don't own a TV.

You know, I think Canadians, we spend a lot of time watching TV. By not having a TV, by you know, eliminating some really practical things like that out.

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Lorna Dueck: And you're pretty limited on social media, aren't you?

Robin Wallar: Yeah. I might be your only guest this year that doesn't have any personal social media accounts.

And that's again, like we've just chosen to live simply externally, but intentionally with the people we're around.

Lorna Dueck: Okay. But it all is fueled by individuals looking for people to have these spiritual conversations.

Robin Wallar: Yes.

Lorna Dueck: And do you guys, I don't know, do you keep track? Do you say, Tuesday's the day we're going to go look for someone on campus who's secular? How do you keep us motivated to talk to people who aren't Christians?

Robin Wallar: That's a great question. We made a really strategic shift maybe two years ago where we were kind of saying, do evangelism, get out and talk to people. But what we were finding was that in asking people to do evangelism but not providing enough clarity around when, it kind of is this responsibility that has, you know, it's important, but it would never be urgent enough to actually happen.

So, what we did was we said, okay, instead of saying, do evangelism all the time, one week of every month, everyone in our church does evangelism. And I mean, everyone, like everyone, everyone.

Lorna Dueck: One week a month.

Robin Wallar: One week a month. And so instead of it being all the time and every week, it's one week.

And usually what will happen is in our core discipleship groups, people will go out on an evening and go talk to people. And that's provided this cadence where everyone knows once a month, we're going to go out and talk to strangers. We have a lot of

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other evangelistic initiatives happening as well, but the core one, we call it every one week, everyone goes out on that week.

And it's like this big kind of pull together moment, everyone in the church, uniting around let's go do evangelism. And I was, on the day of recording. It was last week for us.

Lorna Dueck: Wow. And that's all nine churches are doing.

Robin Wallar: Yes.

Lorna Dueck: Okay.

Tell me a story from last week in somewhere in these churches here. What's happened in every one week.

Robin Wallar: So, I'll just share my own personal story.

Cause it's, I think the easiest to recall, I went out with two of the other guys in my group and, we had five conversations. One of them was with a Hindu who was very open to asking questions. Didn't really have many great, you know, much awareness said he's for sure going to come out to a gathering.

We had another conversation with sort of a nominally Orthodox guy, uh, very philosophical. Uh, they went really deep into the weeds. And it kind of got a bit stalled out.

They didn't go anywhere. Um, it was one of those conversations that, you know, the guys just had to sow some seeds and trust God. And then after that, we had about an hour and a half conversation with two young Muslim guys.

Uh, and we got into a rich debate about all, all kinds of subjects. Who is Jesus, the nature of the Trinity and, can we trust the Scriptures? And, it was really beautiful. And, you know, all of those, I would say one of them is likely to come, uh, those conversations we had of the people we talked to.

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But the beautiful part is the benefit is not just to in the seeds that were sown. I had a bunch of young guys with me, and they had to defend their faith. They had to explain their faith to people.

So, it wasn't just that we were doing evangelism. We were also discipling these guys to, you know, to better understand and articulate their faith when faced with hard questions. And so, we probably had, I don't know, several hundred conversations as a whole.

And we've done the research now to show that without a doubt, getting out and doing evangelism results in non-Christians coming to know Jesus, like it's shock and awe. I know it's kind of a da thing, but if you talk to non-Christians, they do come to faith.

Lorna Dueck: But how deliberate you have been, like we don't talk to non-Christians unless we make a plan.

So, you have every one week, once a month and just let the Holy Spirit work and ripple with that. Um, as you're going out there, and you are on these nine campuses, McGill is the next, what are you learning about the culture of our universities? What are some of the macro issues that you're going, wow, over the 10 years we've been here or you're heading into year 20. Now you've seen what's the culture like at our universities?

Robin Wallar: Man, it is changing all the time, but the biggest shift I would say is that we've gone from my generation, I'm a quintessential millennial, and my generation is what I would call de-churched.

So, a lot of my generation, Gen Xers walked away from the church, maybe had a negative view of the church, but this generation is not de-churched, they're completely unchurched. And so, the perception, there's no preconceived ideas of church, of the Bible, of Scripture. We're really starting from a blank slate.

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And to be honest, I think it's a much easier context. It's a lot easier to work with people that have no preconceived ideas versus having like negative preconceived ideas. And so, the biggest shift we've seen, and I think this is why our evangelism is bearing fruit is that I think there's a genuine openness to the gospel.

And I would say that that's true across every demographic within the university campuses. The second trend that I think is kind of interesting is that Canada is not a monoculture. It's really difficult to say like what is happening culturally, because there's all these subcultures within Canada.

And so, one of the trends that for sure is playing out on university campuses is there's a lot more people of other faiths. So, the number of Muslims, the number of Hindus, the number of Sikhs, those have all doubled in the last 10 years. That's true across Canada.

I suspect it's probably more than a doubling on the university campuses. And there's a real strong commitment within those communities to their families of origin and to their faith. And so that changes how we interact quite a bit.

And then I would say the other thing that, and this is a kind of connected to that, but really positive is that who we are reaching is just so much more diverse. The diversity of our church and of the university campus is just tremendous. The nations really are on our university campuses.

We have at last count more than 40 nationalities represented on any given Sunday. And at least, and we think it would be a lot higher than that, you know, if you were to survey across a month, for example. And that means that there's just, we get the joy of seeing how the Gospel can work into any kind of cultural background.

It really is transcultural. And that's beautiful and it's a blessing. And then at the risk of maybe taking too long on this one question, because there's just so much happening in our culture.

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We've really seen our men really step up to the plate. Universities are about 60% female, 40% male. But, and historically it's been, you know, typically churches are a bit more female dominant than male dominant.

But what we're seeing is a real engagement with our men in, on campus and in the church. And that's, there's some broader research that points to that as well, but we're definitely seeing that bear out.

Lorna Dueck: Yet you do your small groups gendered.

Your discipleship is gendered. Tell me about that, why you've organized in that way.

Robin Wallar: Well, part of it is just from tough learnings.

You put a whole pile of 20-year-old guys and girls together and they'll talk about a lot of things, but they're probably not going to talk that much about Scripture. And so, what we just learned was that if we really, if we want to see like formation by the Word of God happen, we probably need to create a more focused context. And I think that was the right call.

That said, although that core unit, I think what we're really trying to create is deep friendships. And that happens a little bit more easily if we can separate the genders. That said, that's only one part of what we're doing.

We're always trying to figure out how do we get our guys and our girls to talk to each other. And there's some interesting cultural knock-on effects. We think possibly because of COVID, where guys and girls seem not to be as eager to talk to each other.

There seems to be a bit more, maybe hesitancy. And so, we're trying to close that gap with social events and things like that, because we think it's important that men and women labor together for Christ, not just in their separate groups, but also arm in arm. So, it's a both end.

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Lorna Dueck: And you've got a very popular retreat that you drag, not drag because it sells out in like less than a week. Why do you go into the woods? Why do you do retreats?

Robin Wallar: Oh, retreats are awesome. One of the core things in order to, I think, have longevity with Jesus and as a part of his church's relationship and relationships and friendships take a long time to form.

They require a lot of time, proximity, vulnerability. And one of the ways that we can accelerate that friend making process is to sort of take people aside and give them a shared experience together where they're sharing a lot of time and proximity together. And so, there's a lot of things we do in terms of spiritual formation at our retreats, but really what we're trying to do is deepen friendship. Because it's when people have friends in the context of living on mission for Jesus, their longevity will just be so much better.

Lorna Dueck: Love one another, right?

Robin Wallar: Love one another.

Lorna Dueck: As you know, over 13 ways it tells us how to interact like that. And they're very popular. They sell out and you need space. You need more, you need, you need more retreat places because that's how keen these nine churches on university campuses are to get away and go deeper with their friendship. With the Bible. Wow.

Robin Wallar: Yeah. We have wait lists for all of our retreats. We, we could run a whole lot more of them if we had the capacity to do it for sure.

Lorna Dueck: It's a dream, isn't it? To get a retreat center.

Robin Wallar: We would love to get a retreat center. Yeah, for sure.

Lorna Dueck: In Ontario.

Scripture Untangled

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Robin Wallar: In Ontario. Yes, absolutely.

Lorna Dueck: Okay. Wow. We haven't talked very much about this is bi-vocational, like, so for all of these plants that have happened and the people who work on them, they were students, they now have careers, but they also are working as pastors. Is that right?

Robin Wallar: That's exactly right. Yeah.

Lorna Dueck: And why was that important, that model, not paid, hired pastors?

Robin Wallar: Part of it was practical.

It addresses some of the financial challenges of being on university campuses by not having to pay professional staff, but that wasn't the primary motivator. I'd say the primary motivator was we wanted to figure out how can we empower everyone to be significant contributors to the church. We didn't want to be a church where there was some ministry done by professionals.

And then everybody else is kind of sitting in the pew. We wanted to make sure everyone was fully engaged in the calling that God would have for them. And one of the ways that we could do that was by really asking the question, what would it look like to engage in what are traditionally professional ministry roles, but bi-vocationally, and how can we structure that to be effective and fruitful? The other part of it is almost everybody we reach on the university campus is a training to be some sort of professional.

And one of the most common questions we get asked is what does it look like to serve God alongside my career? And one of the ways that we've answered that is you can use your career to structure your life so that all of your life can be used for mission, both in your work, but also your work as a tool to enable you to maybe serve students outside of your work hours.

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Lorna Dueck: Wow. There's got to be a Bible passage that anchors you in this. We're almost out of time, but I'd love to ask, is there a place you land in Scripture? Is there a character you land in Scripture that you say, I'm really at home here with this?

Robin Wallar: I would say it's a relationship in Scripture. And it's the relationship between Paul and Timothy. And it really is captured in 2 Timothy 2, where Paul says to Timothy, what you have received from you, entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others.

And Paul and Timothy have this rich relationship, like they were really, really close. It wasn't just this like formal relationship, like they were, it was deeply personal. It really comes out in 2nd Timothy.

And I think on one hand, I long to be a Timothy in the world, someone that has been invested in and poured into so that I can pour into others. I long to be a Paul, where I can raise up younger men and women to be fruitful in ministry. But I think really what I'm inspired by that relationship, is just the love they have for one another.

At the, you know, Paul's about to die. And he says, you know, Timothy, I wish you were here with me. And I think at the end of the day, the church rides on relationship.

It rides on beautiful, deep friendships. And I hope that we can create a context where we have these beautiful, deep friendships in our church that labor together to serve Jesus and make him known. And so that profile is really a little window, I think, into what that could look like.

Lorna Dueck: Beautiful, beautiful. We are out of time. But I want to encourage our audience to just go to Liftchurch.ca, read more about you guys.

It's wonderful to know that you're on, you know, we're recording this in Ontario, and it's so good to know that on nine of our big campuses, we can refer kids to Lift Church. And God bless you, Robin. You've been very inspiring to us.

Robin Wallar: Thank you. Thank you, Lorna. It's been a privilege.