

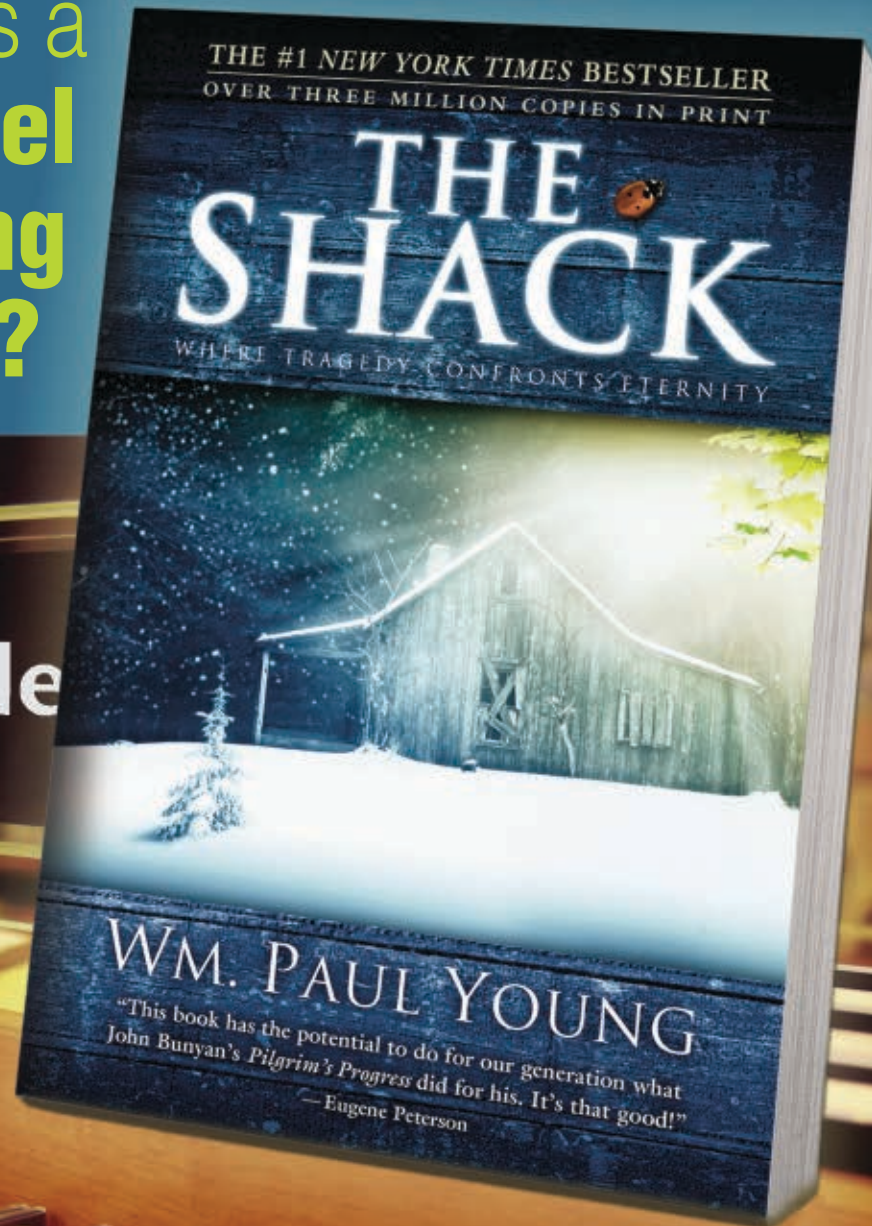
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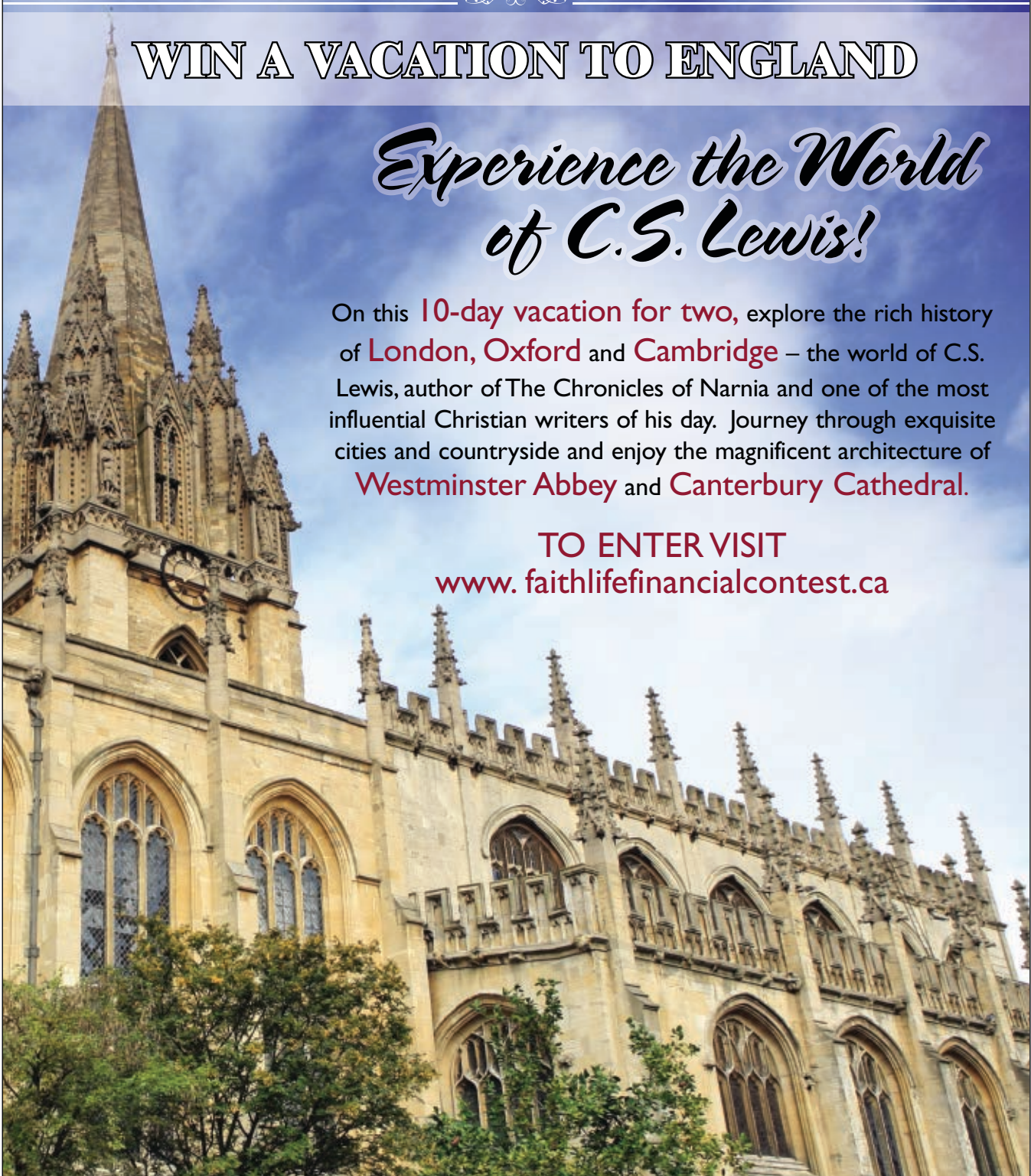


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PHOTO: JOCELYN DURSTON



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Challenging Ideas

By Gail Reid

The bestselling novel *The Shack* is challenging our theology while the Christian retail industry is facing a huge crisis



I'm a novel reader. When I was a little girl my favourite books were C. S. Lewis's Narnia series. Though I had no idea of their Christian foundation, the content aroused in me a longing for the character of Aslan in my life. Fiction encourages an emotional response – for good or for ill.

Today, non-fiction is a daily necessity in my work but I turn to novels for emotional expression and insight that can be experienced safely. So it didn't take much convincing for me to curl up and read *The Shack* when it was highly recommended by someone dependable. Her only comment: "You have to read it! I can't tell you anything."

Intrigued, I began to read. The journey took me through many emotions and some inner concerns about where the author was going with his theology. And yet, in the end, I am thankful for the challenge.

Whether you have read *The Shack* or not, *Faith Today's* interview with author William Paul Young will help you to understand why this book is being both applauded and challenged.

However, getting your own copy may not be as easy as it used to be. Over the past year, Canada has been hit by a deluge of closings in Christian bookstores as well as the collapse and sale of the major music distributor Christian Marketing Canada (better known as CMC Distribution). But the shock for many came in September when R. G. Mitchell Family Books, in business for 74 years, filed for bankruptcy, leaving

many worried about the future of the entire industry in Canada.

Nevertheless, there may be new forms that will meet the challenge. In "Reinventing the Christian Bookstore," writer Doris Fleck interviews some leaders in the publishing world

who believe there can be new ways to meet the literary and musical needs of Canadian Christians.

According to Christian retailer Lando Klassen, the challenge is not the competition between Christian companies but rather the competition with massive American distributors such as Costco, Wal-Mart and

Amazon. With his eye on the younger generation, Klassen is meeting this challenge by transforming his bookstore, House of James, into a gathering place – with coffee house, live bands and a unique children's section. It is still evolving, says Klassen, but his audience has expanded to a new generation.

With Christian bookstores in flux, it may be an opportune time to get your church library in order – or to begin one. In "How to Build a Great Church Library" by Sheila Wray Gregoire you will discover practical tips on choosing publications, DVDs and CDs to meet the unique needs of your church as well as suggestions for display. And perhaps, most importantly, how to meet the spiritual needs of your family and neighbours. ■

Gail Reid is managing editor of Faith Today and director of communications for The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.

Oswald J. Smith, Hymn Writer

Re: Canadian Hymns (Sep/Oct 2008)

Thank you for this article. However, it missed mentioning Oswald J. Smith. My wife and I just finished reading the official biography, which has a forward where Billy Graham writes: “Dr. Smith will go down in history as the greatest combination of pastor, hymn writer, missionary statesman and evangelist of our time.”

Smith was a prolific hymn writer, composing 1,200 hymns including “The Song of the Soul Set Free,” “Then Jesus Came,” “He Rose Triumphantly,” “Come With Your Heartache,” “Jesus Only,” “Deeper and Deeper” and “There Is Joy in Serving Jesus.”

Smith, who founded The Peoples Church in Toronto, was also named honorary president at the founding of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada in 1964, with Harry Faught as the actual president.

HENRY P. KLASSEN
Grand Forks, B.C.

Responding to Bentley

Re: Religion Watch (Sep/Oct 2008)

James Beverley’s comments generated some very fruitful discussion in a recent gathering of pastoral colleagues. Certainly there were divergent views expressed about the Florida Outpouring but upon two matters we found singular agreement.

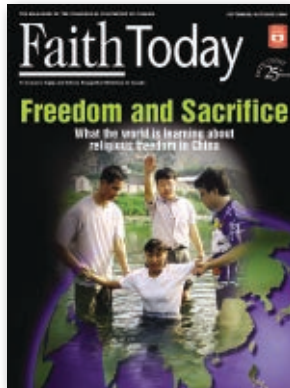
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First, we resolved to be open with and accountable to each other about our respective ministries and personal lives. Of course, accountability is only



as good as our honesty. Nonetheless, our resolve was sombre and mutually supportive. For this all who were present were very grateful.

Second, we agreed how important it is to be publicly honest. After reading Beverley’s column and then visiting various media websites

and Outpouring websites, I was struck by the lack of clarity. One Outpouring website indicated the reason for Bentley’s departure from the public eye as “the need to rest after one hundred days of ministry.” Later it was revealed he left not for rest but for restoration after a moral indiscretion.

I recognize that no one is immune to the pressures of ministry. Public ministry is rife with potential for colossal failures. One of the greatest failures, however, is the failure to be honest about failures. We all (I include myself here) sometimes need reminders about the obvious.

BRIAN KRUSHEL
Camrose, Alta.

James Beverley’s columns continue to be an excellent resource. Prof. Beverley is a great gift to the Canadian Church and well beyond as he tirelessly, charitably and critically examines the never-ending waves of new religious movements and reports so lucidly and fair-mindedly on his findings.

Bravo to him, then, for courageously calling the church to account over the fiasco of Todd Bentley’s stardom, the embarrassing endorsements he received from people who claim special spiritual insight and now the deafening silence of their refusal to retract their approval in the face of his failures. This sort of writing strikes me as much more prophetic

and much more edifying than most of the utterances of the International Coalition of Apostles and the like.

JOHN G. STACKHOUSE JR.
Vancouver, B.C.

I agree with James Beverley that the problems with the Lakeland Outpouring go much deeper than Todd Bentley’s marital problems. I do, however, take issue with his statement that it is extreme to say this “revival” was all of God or all of Satan.

Gold dust, frequent angelic visits, strange manifestations and out-of-body travel come from a real source of power. It is either satanic or of God. These phenomena are common in the world of the occult. We are told to test the spirits (1 John 4:1).

Could Colossians 2:18 be relevant? “Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions.”

Todd Bentley a con artist? Perhaps not, but I do believe he was listening to his “angels” a little too closely!

KAREN MARTENS
Carnduff, Sask.

Cobra Bites Two Ways

Re: Arts & Culture, Sep/Oct 2008

Tim Stabell’s review of the novel *When Cobras Laugh* was a bit two-faced. While he patted authors Don Ranney and Ray Wiseman on the back with one hand (saying he couldn’t put the book down), he slapped them across the cheek with the other (stating that the quality of the writing leaves much to be desired).

While I agreed with him about the strength of the story, I found his criticism of the writing unfair. For example, he described the dialogue as “unrealistic.” Much of the conversation is in the mouths of the indigenous populations of South Africa and India. The fact that these people don’t speak English quite

the same way we do doesn't speak to a failure on the side of the authors but reflects their ability to bring us a true taste of the worlds in which they lived for a number of years.

Stabell also thought the plots were disconnected but I found the stories of the two men paralleled each other. They diverged only when one rose above the problems and the other fell victim to them.

Having read other works by the authors, I know them both to be more than capable wordsmiths and I think they exhibited their skill successfully in this novel. I hope readers will pay more attention to Stabell's praise of the book than his questionable criticisms.

M. L. CORNISH
Fergus, Ont.

Jesus on Gay Marriage

Re: *Letters* (Sep/Oct 2008)

Glen Eagle's letter on the J. I. Packer interview misses two important points.

First, just because Jesus did not specifically mention homosexuality does not diminish the topic or suggest that He condoned homosexual behaviour. There are many Scripture verses that describe homosexual behaviour as sinful. Romans and 1 Corinthians, for example, are as much the Word of God as the four Gospels.

Second, Jesus firmly upheld the Levitical law when He declared divorce to be sinful. It is not consistent, then, that Jesus would support one part of the Levitical moral law (about divorce) but not another (about homosexuality). Both Jesus' and Paul's teachings on Christian moral behaviour were rooted in the first five books of the Bible.

War, as Eagles points out, is a serious topic that many Evangelicals are guilty of not discussing. But this does not discount that Christian moral behaviour is also a serious discussion topic, especially when some church leaders are steering a denomination in an unbiblical direction.

ROB ROBOTHAM
Toronto, Ont.

Resigned: Gary Walsh as president of Opportunity International Canada, effective Dec. 31. Walsh, president of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada from 1997 to 2003, is leaving OIC after five years to become senior vice-president at Northeastern Seminary and Roberts Wesleyan College in Rochester, N.Y. Board chair Robert van Beers will be interim president.



Gary Walsh

Appointed: Peter Montgomery as national director of International Child Care (Canada). This interdenominational health development agency, based in Mississauga, Ont., works in Haiti (since 1967) and the Dominican Republic (since 1988). Montgomery has 15 years experience in the non-profit sector and has travelled widely in the developing world. An ICC board member has served as interim national director for most of the past two years.



Peter Montgomery

Appointed: George Woodward as president of outreach ministries for the Christian Broadcasting Associates (CBA), an organization responsible for the daily Canadian broadcast of the Pat Robertson TV show *The 700 Club*. CBA also offers the weekly half-hour show *Canadian Edition* and operates a 24/7 prayer call centre in Scarborough, Ont., and an outreach to Canada's poor, prisoners and First Nations. Rev. Woodward, who has 35 years

experience in pastoring, TV ministry and Bible college administration, succeeds Rev. Alex Parachin who held the position for almost 20 years.

Joined: Campusfire, a ministry that serves youth groups at more than 1,200 high schools, colleges and universities across Canada, has become an arm of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association of Canada. The See You at the Pole school prayer ministry, youth training events and ministry networking are some of its programs. The BGEAC already offers a year-long Christian training and mentoring initiative for young people, called Epicentre.

Renamed: Back to God Ministries International is the new name for the electronic media ministry of the Christian Reformed Church in North America. The ministry, based in Palos Heights, Ill., and known for 70 years as The Back to God Hour, started as a one-hour Chicago radio program and has grown into television, Internet, video and other forms of outreach and evangelism in nine languages reaching 190 countries.

Appointed: Rob Brynjolfson of Langley, B.C., as dean of the World Evangelical Alliance Leadership Institute. Jonathan Lewis continues as the director of the Leadership Institute.

Appointed: Denise Budd Rumble of St. Marys, Ont., as managing director of The Word Guild, an association of Canadians who write from a Christian faith perspective. Rumble, the first paid full-time director, succeeds volunteer director Sandra Reimer. The Word Guild, founded in 2001, merged with the charity Christian Info Canada in January.

Spiritual Formation?

Re: *Hungry for God* (May/June 2008)

The disciplines being advocated such as meditation, silent retreats and centering prayer are basically the disciplines of pre-Reformation mystics such as the Desert Fathers mixed in with a Christianized form of Eastern meditation. Most of these practices are unbiblical.

It pains me to see Spirit-filled, born-

again Christians being deceived again and in the same old ways (like Transcendental Meditation in the 1960s). We need to wake up and recognize Satan's schemes.

Living in the Word and meditating on its Author will fill you. Please allow the peace of God to rule (umpire) in your heart concerning these new/old practices.

KAREN WICKWIRE
Halifax, N.S.

Broken Walls Seeks to End Cul



Walls created between cultures by colonialism need to be broken down. Broken Walls – Bill Paganan, Jonathan Maracle and Kris Delorenzi – performs at an outdoor concert.

“God works best in the diversity of every culture,” states Jonathan Maracle, 53-year-old lead singer of the band Broken Walls. His biblical message of reconciliation has been heard in 12 countries. The band’s latest release,

The Father’s Dance, was nominated in six categories for the Aboriginal People’s Choice Music Awards.

“We’ve tried to make our music palatable to the world. We use a strong indigenous foundation to the

music,” says Maracle.

The three-member band Broken Walls formed in 1995. Maracle, a Mohawk raised in a Christian home, already had an award-winning music career. But that year he wrote a Mohawk chant for the 1995 March for Jesus and later attended the Sacred Gathering in Hull hosted by Elijah Harper. Maracle

From Out of the Flames

At the age most children are out chasing butterflies and the ice cream man, Dave Hammer lay alone, receiving his 16th skin graft.

It happened when he was five. A tent engulfed in flames. His sister, dead. A brother and friends singed by flames. Hammer, nearly lost to the licking fires of a prank gone terribly amiss.

Decades later he began piecing together the tale: interviewing family, neighbours and friends, combing his own memory for the episodes that would best tell his story. Though he has stumps for hands, Hammer completed his manuscript, author-

ing a story of redemption, healing and – ultimately – a life fully lived.

His story is one of resolve, faith, utter despair and uncompromising honesty about his journey through life with extreme deformity. To meet Hammer is to meet a man who has overcome endless hurdles and is teeming with a joy that alone comes from his heavenly Father.

“At first I simply felt writing was something God wanted me to do,” explained the author in a phone interview. “Now that I’ve written the book I see that it was really important for me to realize just how much I miss my sister. It has helped me deal with the loss. But ultimately I wrote it because I feel I have an important message to share: that you don’t have to let all these things

ture Wars

felt convicted that walls created between cultures by colonialism needed to be broken down.

"I had this revelation that why should I give up my culture? I had a revelation of walls being broken down."

The band celebrates the Christian message using First Nations flute and drums with chants and songs of praise in indigenous languages and styles. It includes Bill Pagaran, a Tlingit from Palmer, Alaska, and Kris Delorenzi, a non-aboriginal from Thunder Bay, Ont.

"Jesus is not restricted to a culture," Maracle says. "The diversity of peoples and cultures around the world is an expression of God's creativity, not something to be suffocated and put down. When God created our people, He didn't make a mistake. He wants to use the good things in our people to bring healing to the world."

Broken Walls focuses its ministry on North America, although it has played in many other places. "The same situations are prevalent everywhere. There are the dominant societies and then there are the hurting and broken. In general, the Church hasn't done the job right with First Nations people."

Maracle believes that "our need is to get into the North and role-model respect: to break the cycle of suicide and lack of respect." He is concerned about "the hidden communities that have been for-

gotten by the outside world" and where "the cycle of sorrow has been going on for generations. There is desperation everywhere across North America."

The band was set to tour the prison system in South Dakota in October 2008. "It's the first time this has ever been done," says Maracle. "Seventy to 80 per cent of incarcerated people

are native people."

The band has also been invited by a regional United Nations representative to perform for the troops in Afghanistan close to Christmas.

"I'm privileged and honoured to do it," says Maracle, adding, "Jesus performs well within other cultures." □

—MARIANNE JONES

Ontario Filmmaker Succeeding

Chris J. Zayachkowski's film *A Life* opened to sold-out audiences at a Galaxy Cinema in Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., in May. Aimed at youth, the movie garnered praise from all age groups.

Zayachkowski's character-driven story dramatizes a teenage girl's struggle to hold onto her faith after learning her mother will die from a rare form of cancer. He says: "I wanted to show how a tragedy like this affects a young person's belief in God. Through the main character, Janie, I wanted viewers to see that Jesus is here, right now with us in our struggles."

After viewing the film, some teen viewers told Zayachkowski that the film moved them to trust God when personal tragedies and disturbing world events confuse them. "Their words confirmed my mission. This is what I wanted to accomplish by making *A Life*," said the movie's writer-producer-director.

Zayachkowski's plans include submitting *A Life* to film festivals and releasing it on commercial DVD in 2009. He's already knee-deep in writing a television miniseries, *Angel of God*, a 16-episode series to be shot in his hometown of Peterborough, Ont., and in several Toronto-area locations. The miniseries begins where the movie ended.

Zayachkowski, 35, has been passionate about using his creative abilities to bring Christ to others since he turned to Christ at a Whiteheart concert in Peterborough. "When God changed my life, He also called me to make films. But I couldn't do it without a special crew. Many talents are needed to put together a compelling drama."

One of the film's supporting actresses, 15-year-old Megan Doble, died in a car accident after the filming was completed. The message of *A Life* helps her family and friends cope. Zayachkowski dedicated the movie to Doble, whose love for Christ and passion for acting contributed to the movie's success.

To schedule a viewing of *A Life*, visit www.alifemovie.com. □

—ROSE BRANDON



Chris J. Zayachkowski



Dave Hammer before and after he received his severe burns.

oir *From Out of the Flames* (ImaginePublishing) to be released in December, readers journey with a young boy wrestling with

in life get you down. I want this book to inspire people that they can go the extra mile and that what the enemy intended for evil God intended for good."

In his mem-

death, overcoming infections and mastering button holes. Eventually they see into the inner workings of a man, superficially disfigured yet solicitous, living with measured humour and seasoned grace. It is a story of hope that surprises and inspires and a testimony to the strength God offers in our supreme weakness.

"It has all been about faith in my life," explains Hammer. "I could write a whole book on that. I think I've always had a simple faith in God. Since senior high, people have always asked 'What are you going to do with your life.' My reply has always been 'Whatever God wants me to do.' I have always known that would be the most awesome path." □

—CHRISTINA CROOK

Giving Christmas a Makeover

Holiday ads may paint cozy pictures of family and presents but, for hundreds of women in Edmonton's shelters, such ads are merely haunting reminders of poverty and pain.

Single moms are hit the hardest, says Linda Demers of Catholic Social Services. "They try to stretch their money so their children can have a few presents. Most moms never spend any money on themselves."

Eight years ago Edmonton's non-denominational church Community of Hope decided to do something about this need.

As Pastor Stew Carson says, the whole idea of being a church is to bring hope to the brokenhearted.

And so, every year since 2000, Carson's 100-member congregation has orchestrated A Christmas With Style.

At 10 a.m. on the appointed day, guests are picked up from various Edmonton shelters, taken to salons for haircuts and styles, then over to the church where they are fed a sumptuous feast and allowed to choose as much clothing as they desire from among thousands of donated pieces. At the end of the day they're graced with flowers.


"We give them one day of sunshine," says 59-year-old Gordon Bertie who organizes the event. "It empowers them."

Known as the neighbourhood cross-dresser (for the thousands of donated items of clothing in his garage), Bertie dedicates three months a year to canvassing the neighbourhood for assistance. Even though it means making a dent in his own business, Bertie does it because he cares.

"Some of the women have nothing," Bertie says, emotion in his voice. "They live on the streets. The clothes on their backs are all they own. This really touches them."

Despite being a church-run event, organizers are careful not to preach. "We just do this because we think it's something Christ would want us to do."

Eight years in the running, A Christmas With Style has grown from helping 12 women to more than 145. Bertie says they've never had to turn anyone away.

"I had a group of women ask me 'Why are you doing this?' I said 'Because we think you deserve it.'" 

—EMILY WIERENGA

Alternative Gifts for Evangelicals

In a recent Ipsos-Reid poll, 84 per cent of Canadians said they would prefer to have a donation made in their name to a charity rather than receive a traditional gift. Many Christian ministries and church agencies are making that easier by publishing Christmas brochures of gifts that help people in need.

Check out these organizations to change the way you give. Visit www.evangelicalfellowship.ca/affiliates for a more complete list of groups that may also offer this giving option.

• **Billy Graham Evangelistic Association Canada:** If your passion is evangelism, shop from BGEAC's catalogue for gifts like Bibles, projector screens and training programs for pastors overseas. Call 1-800-293-3717 to request a copy.

• **Partners International:** Partner's *Harvest of Hope* catalogue offers gift-giving opportunities from sewing machines to rickshaws and blankets. Call 1-800-883-7697 or visit www.partnersinternational.ca.

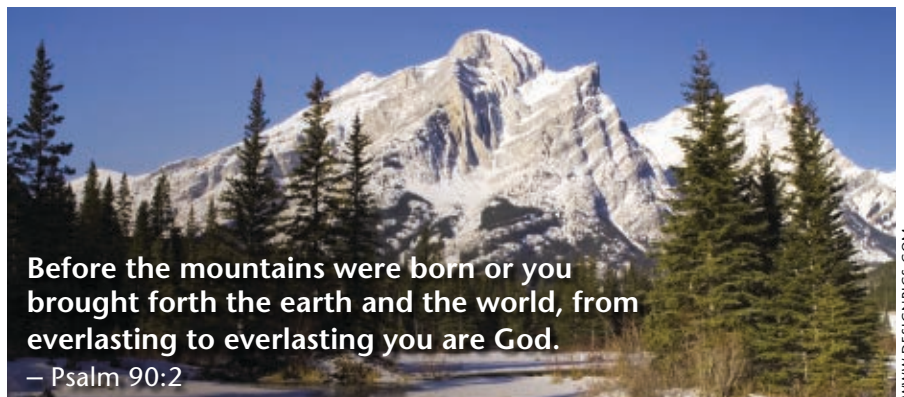
• **Samaritan's Purse Canada:** This gift catalogue, available online, features an affordable section of "gifts that kids can give" including seed kits, soccer gear and school supplies among many other items. View at www.samaritanspurse.ca or call 1-800-663-6500.



A boy in India enjoys the goat his family received through the *Harvest of Hope* catalogue.

• **World Relief Canada:** Sewing machines, small livestock and water for one family or village are all options. Gifts start at around \$30. Available at www.wrcanada.org or 1-800-567-8190.

• **World Vision Canada:** Long known for its gift catalogue, World Vision gifts range from the high end of a \$600 Mongolian ger (or tent for a family) to two



Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

— Psalm 90:2

hens and a rooster, its most popular gift item. Visit www.worldvision.ca or 1-866-595-5550. **FI** —KAREN STILLER

Canadians Impacting Cuba

A new openness in Cuba's religious climate has meant new opportunities for Canadian Christian organizations to reach out to Cuba's churches and people. This tolerance for religion may come as a surprise for many Canadians who are used to thinking of the Caribbean island as an atheistic state.

But when Cuba made the official switch from an atheist state to a secular state in the 1990s it actually meant "more freedom for the church. Because if a government is secular it has to be open to all religions," says Steve Wile, deputy executive director of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association Canada (BGEAC), one of the many Canadian organizations making inroads into Cuba.

Wile says the BGEAC has become involved in a support capacity for the Protestant Church in Cuba for the first time ever, providing videos, Bibles and reading materials to help churches communicate the gospel to their friends and neighbours.

Their program also trains pastors so when congregants attend house churches they can watch a 50-minute video "uniquely created for Cuba, with music and interviews of local Cubans asking them about their hopes. The fact that people on the street will agree to be interviewed indicates the level of openness happening in the country," says Wile.

The video alternates between music —which Wile says Cubans love—and testimonies, including one from a well-known female spiritus (witch) and a 20-minute dramatization of a man's conversion experience. Wile reports that during a recent visit to Cuba he witnessed hosts of home churches sharing their testimonies then providing the opportunity for congregants to make a decision for Christ.

Meanwhile, I.N. Network Canada, based in Collingwood, Ont., is also making what they call "unprecedented"

inroads into Cuban culture in partnership with Seeds International, a Christian non-profit organization based in Abbotsford, B.C.

I.N. Network is focusing its efforts on child evangelism with a 14-week Christian discipleship program.

"We reached 26,850 children last year and we are now officially in our second phase of the outreach," explains Otoniel Perez, Latin America director. "We're well on our way to reaching 60,000 children." The program puts

Christian workbooks into the hands of Cuban children, something Perez says has never happened before.

Perez, himself a Cuban-born Canadian, believes Canada has a special connection with Cuba, which residents of both countries feel. "Over half a million Canadians went to Cuba on vacation last year. Because of the American blockade of Cuba, we are the next neighbour to the north. We have a welcome mat. We ought to use it," says Perez. **FI**

—ALEX NEWMAN

Church Fixes Bikes

When North Park Community Church was looking for a practical way to "be Jesus" to their neighbourhood, fixing bikes seemed to fit, especially among a surge of refugee families and new Canadians populating low-income neighbourhoods in London, Ont.

Such families require affordable transportation to get to work and school. Many, even families with six or more children, rely on bicycles for their livelihood.

David Cottrill, North Park's director of community outreach, enlisted the help of some men from the church and set aside a Saturday to fix bikes at a local school.

Over 60 people came that day, senior pastor Terry Sanderson says. Watching people walk in with their broken-down bikes and then seeing them ride these bikes home again was "such a picture of what Jesus wants to do in our life."

That was three years ago and these bike clinics have now become a fixture at their outreach centre on Huron Street.

Sanderson says this is "a really tangible way of connecting skilled people in our congregation with our community."

It wasn't long before North Park's 2,000-member congregation donated hundreds of their unwanted bikes to be fixed and given away to people in the area.

The next step was to set up training sessions for the community kids to learn how to complete bike repairs on their own.

"Then they could fix their family's bikes and bikes in the neighbourhood or



Don Kennedy (r) of North Park Community Church teaches children from refugee families how to repair their bikes.

even be able to make it a little side business," Sanderson says. "This seems to be a more effective way of helping people learn to live and care for themselves."

The bike ministry has been so successful, this past summer North Park purchased a 16-foot trailer to take the bike clinics on the road. They targeted two neighbourhoods and visited them three times each, creating a block party with activities and sports for the kids, a puppet show and a barbecue as well as time for bike repairs.

For the people who come, there are no strings attached, Sanderson says. They don't have to sit through an hour-long Bible study to get their bikes fixed. "We're here in the love of Christ to be able to share and talk while we're working together."

On Sundays the outreach centre provides a meal and a Bible study with some singing and worship. "For a large group of people, this is their Christian community," Sanderson says. **FI** —DORIS FLECK

Hopes for Canada's 40th Parliament

By Bruce J. Clemenger



Good governance requires civility

During the federal election I was asked a number of times what the most important issue was. My reply: civility.

I realize there were a number of important issues being debated and others being ignored (especially the lack of any regulation of abortion in Canada). Most observers predicted leadership would be a prominent issue, and it did remain a key theme particularly with the worldwide economic turmoil that emerged during the election. In the end, we as a nation did not entrust one leader with a majority to guide Canada through the economic and financial challenges to come.

But within these dynamics I still think civility is a critical issue for Parliament and, indeed, for the country as a whole. If we are going to address contentious issues, particularly in a minority Parliament, we will need to learn new ways of processing the range of views that Canadians hold.

Many have said the pre-election Parliament was one of the most rancorous. The rhetoric was often debilitating and caustic, and the tendency was to define oneself or one's position by belittling or marginalizing the other.

In our highly pluralized society we are groping for that which defines us as a nation and the basis upon which we can strive together for the public good. Both these contexts increase our need for politicians who practise and foster civility.

The election itself did not raise the bar in that regard.

More broadly, when substantive issues like abortion are raised, the usual response is not thoughtful dialogue but attempts to shut down any debate.

We face serious issues as a nation. To grapple with these

we need attitudes and approaches that will encourage an environment in which the substantive issues of the day can be aired and debated with respect – from the economy to the environment, from the role of Canada's military in international conflicts to criminal justice, from caring for vulnerable and marginalized people to addressing the rifts between peoples and regions.

When substantive issues like abortion are raised, the usual response is not thoughtful dialogue but attempts to shut down any debate

Imagine a forum where agreement is sought whenever possible and where eventual "losers" in the policy debates as well as the "winners" can return to their communities and homes feeling good about their participation. They can be empowered – not by frustration, anger and hostility but by hope and passion for a better way when justice will flow.

This plea for civility requires receptivity in other areas of life besides politics. But it must be modelled in the public square, and the legislatures of our nation are critical arenas of public engagement.

A more civil approach to the business of the nation may also attract more participants and encourage greater voter turnout. Civility may be an antidote to apathy.

At its root civility emanates from an affirmation of the dignity of all and the importance of treating others with respect. It acknowledges that we can always benefit from listening to others with contrary views.

Who will contribute to convening the nation's business so that the outcome will be just *and* the process fair and constructive? Process, as well as outcome, is what good governance is about. And that is what governments and our political leaders are called by God to be and to do. ■



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The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada is the national association of Evangelicals gathered together for influence, impact and identity in ministry and public witness. Since 1964 the EFC has provided a national forum for Evangelicals and a constructive voice for biblical principles in life and society. Visit us at www.evangelicalfellowship.ca.

Bruce J. Clemenger is the president of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. Read more columns at www.evangelicalfellowship.ca/clemenger.



Paul Hilsden

New EFC Faces, Titles

Paul Hilsden is the EFC's new ministry advancement associate. His work includes caring for existing EFC supporters and affiliate leaders in Ontario through to Atlantic Canada and also seeking new supporters and affiliates. He formerly served as lead pastor at Stouffville Pentecostal Church in Ontario. He has also pastored in Aurora and Newmarket,

Ont., and before that worked as an insurance broker. He is married with four daughters.

Three EFC leaders have new job titles, signifying that they make up a new EFC management team assisting the EFC president in managing the organization. Aileen Van Ginkel is now vice-president, ministry services. Bill Winger is vice-president, operations. Don Hutchinson is vice-president, Centre for Faith and Public Life (and continues as general legal counsel).

Religious Freedom for Doctors

The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO) released a controversial draft policy this summer entitled "Physicians and the Ontario Human Rights Code." It would have led to professional misconduct charges and human rights complaints against physicians who refuse to perform non-urgent or elective medical procedures for moral or religious reasons, limiting the physicians' constitutional right to opt out of actions that go against their religious beliefs or conscience (for example, prescribing birth control and morning-after pills).

The EFC's Don Hutchinson and Faye Sonier were quoted in national media on the issue and they assisted others in preparing submissions that requested the CPSO reject or amend the policy. In mid-September the CPSO cut the contested provisions and released an amended policy.

Conventionally, doctors across Canada may also refuse to do referrals in cases that go against their religious beliefs or conscience. But they are required to post clearly what they will or will not do so no patient is surprised.

Supreme Court on Religious Freedom

The EFC intervened in a Supreme Court of Canada case Oct. 7 regarding religious freedom as a community right (rather than only an individual right). The case, which involves government policy in Alberta negatively impacting the religious beliefs of a Hutterian Brethren community, could provide a

key definition of religious freedom rights for groups such as congregations and denominations in Canada.

Intercultural Report

More than 300 church leaders, professors, community workers and missionaries from diverse ethnic backgrounds attended the Intercultural Symposiums held in six Canadian cities in September. Participants shared testimonies and learned from each other on how to effectively encourage churches to become more intercultural in building God's kingdom. Practical and inspirational presentations by Dr. Sam Owusu, pastor of Calvary Worship Centre in New Westminster, B.C., and the EFC's David A. Macfarlane will soon be available on CD from www.evangelicalfellowship.ca/national. ■

Coming Events

Details at www.evangelicalfellowship.ca/EFCEvents or call 905-479-5885

- **International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church.** Download free toolkit. Focus this year on North Korea, India, the Maldives and Eritrea. Nov. 9. www.idop.ca
- **EFC Christian Leaders Connection.** New season of one-day leadership seminars on current Canadian trends, legislation and events that will affect the local congregation. Kanata, Ont., Nov. 12, and Peterborough, Ont., Nov. 13.
- **Street Level,** a national conference on homelessness and working with street-involved youth and adults. Ottawa, March 25-29. www.streetlevel.ca
- **Cross the Street** evangelism conference. Tools for engaging your community and growing a church. Calgary, May 1-2.

New EFC Resources

Order from www.evangelicalfellowship.ca or call 905-479-5885 ext. 234

- **Community Research Guide for Church Leaders:** A practical guide to help churches learn more about their neighbours in order to love them better. Produced in partnership with Outreach Canada. Includes web links to a host of resources to get you started. Available on CD-ROM or as a downloadable PDF (\$19.95) or in print (\$29.95).
- **Through the Pain DVD:** Highlights the seriousness of suicide in First Nations communities and provides tools to educate both native and non-native communities on suicide awareness and intervention training. Produced in partnership with My People International. \$10.
- **Shifts: Changing Gears to Advance Issues Facing the Church Today DVDs:** A four-disk DVD recording of the last Christian Leaders Connection, an EFC seminar for pastors and church leaders. Includes sessions by the EFC's Bruce J. Clemenger, Don Hutchinson and David A. Macfarlane. \$40.
- **Federal Election Kit:** As Canadians prepared to go to the polls, the EFC offered a free, online election kit. It included 10 issue summaries and outlined the rules about churches hosting election events. The kit received coverage in the national media. ■

For more on these
and other stories visit
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Translating Scripture, Transforming Lives

Addiction Program Survives Fire



PHOTO COURTESY: THE MUSTARD SEED

Staff at Mountain Aire Lodge in Alberta proudly declare their ministry remains open despite a devastating fire that completely burned the main building to the ground.

An innovative program for treating former addicts and others from the streets of Calgary carries on despite a devastating fire early on July 21. On that morning, the main building of Mountain Aire Lodge, owned and operated by The Mustard Seed ministry of Calgary, burned to the ground. The cause is under investigation.

The program, located northwest of Calgary in the foothills of the Rockies, started in 2006 as a means of helping street people rebuild their lives. The original vision, says Mustard Seed director Pat Nixon, was to “build healthy community, with a good healthy working environment for people to get them off the streets.”

The destroyed building had housed a restaurant, store and conference room. With the use of portables, the store and restaurant were operational again within 11 days. Since the building was not insured due to an oversight at time of purchase, a fundraising project

of around a million dollars will be required to replace the structure with a larger facility. According to managing director Jason Nixon, an expansion had already been planned for 2010.

Since 2006 about 30 former members of the successful program have moved on to independent, productive lives.

Twelve participants have been baptized, with eight more planned at press time. But evangelism is a “low-key” part of the program, says Pat Nixon. “We’re living our faith and person after person is saying they want that too.” Volunteers from nearby Sundre provide transportation to church on Sundays and some program members have started their own Bible studies.

The 22 current program participants run the lodge as a non-profit business, keeping costs low. Members work full time for pay. They must also attend a weekly meeting where they learn to raise concerns and support one another in a safe setting.

Participants manage the restaurant,

maintain the lodge’s motel and campground, supervise at provincial parks and fulfil contracts for private industry. They are trusted with high levels of responsibility. “It’s their businesses,” says Jason Nixon, 28, a successful former business owner (and son of Pat Nixon).

When Jason first saw the fire his initial thoughts were “What are we going to do? [But] within three or four hours we all knew God would take care of it: that was the attitude. I look at it more as an opportunity now. I don’t think God burned down the lodge

but I think God allowed it to happen. It burned down for a reason.”

—TED WILCOX

Video Tells of Missionary Abuse

A new documentary film about child abuse at a missionary boarding school in West Africa reopens the painful experiences of survivors who endured physical, sexual, emotional and spiritual assaults.

In *All God’s Children: The Ultimate Sacrifice*, former students share their memories of Mamou boarding school in Guinea from the late 1950s to the early 1970s—memories that include beatings, ridicule and being sexually violated in the secrecy of their dorm rooms. Interspersed with interviews of survivors and their missionary parents is footage of seemingly happy children playing in the schoolyard and at the swimming pool.

New York filmmakers Luci Westphal and Scott Solary say the documentary isn’t intended as just another exposé. (*Faith Today’s* first report on Mamou in 1997 was followed by extensive print coverage in other media.)

“Our biggest goal is to help the healing of past survivors,” says Westphal.

The idea for the film came about five years ago during a visit with Solary’s great-aunt and uncle, when the retired missionaries began talking about their experiences in sending their two sons to Mamou. Deeply moved by the stories, Solary asked, “How can I not make a film about it?” The pair abandoned the film their company, Good Hard Work-

ing People, had begun and devoted the next four years to putting together *All God’s Children*, their first full-length documentary.

For Canadian Beverly Shellrude Thompson, participating in the project was both difficult and helpful. “One of the things that has been my mantra is that the story needs to be told, that there’s healing in telling the story,” she said from her home in Burlington, Ont.

“I’ve always carried in my head a deep shroud of secrecy that allowed both the pain and the system to go on.”

Old black-and-white photographs of smiling missionary families, recordings of “Onward Christian Soldiers” and other familiar hymns, and the footage of laughing children form the backdrop to the interviews with alumni and former missionaries. The children seem to be happy – at least when they’re playing. But as Shellrude Thompson explains, the playtime laughter was a way of coping with what was taking place in the classroom or at night.

Shellrude Thompson and other Mamou alumni worked for years to get The Christian and Missionary Alliance, which ran the school, to acknowledge what happened at Mamou. A formal inquiry was eventually established and some 80 alumni came forward to tell their stories. The Alliance’s president offered an official apology. Former Mamou staff who were still alive were investigated and a few received reprimands or suspensions.

But to many alumni the apology and the reprimands did little to redress the harm done. In *All God’s Children*, a current Alliance leader acknowledges the inadequacy of the denomination in dealing properly with the abuse. “They were slower than they should have been in doing something about it when they heard,” says Bob Fetherlin, vice-president for international ministries. “The refusal to deal with it and acknowledge it had as big an impact as the abuse itself.”

Thoughts of suicide, depression, loss of faith and other issues are the legacy of Mamou. Asked to endure a cruel boarding school for the sake of the gospel, some adult survivors are now asking if all those African souls were worth the sacrifice of children.

All God’s Children premiered at the Sarasota Film Festival in Florida in March. It has yet to receive wide distribution and there are no plans so far to screen the film in Canada. DVDs are available from www.allgodschilrenthefilm.com.

For Shellrude Thompson, delving

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into the past pain once again was worth it. After the film was shown in Sarasota, she recalls "At least two people stood up and said, 'This is my story.'"

—DEBRA FIEGUTH

Abortion Protest Case Decided

The British Columbia Court of Appeal has decided that freedom of expression can be suspended near abortion clinics without violating Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The action dates back 10 years to when Donald Spratt walked near a clinic carrying a nine-foot cross with a sign that read "You Shall Not Murder" and speaking about God's forgiveness and repentance for sin. British Columbia's Access to Abortion Services Act prohibits protesting and providing information about abortion services near a clinic. Spratt was convicted in 1998 and given a 30-day sentence.

Courts agree the "bubble zone" is a violation of freedom of expression. But the September 2008 decision agreed

WEA Warns of More Violence in India

When a violent anti-Christian Hindu pogrom erupted in Orissa (northeast India) in August, an expert at the World Evangelical Alliance labelled the event "ethnic-religious cleansing" and warned that more of India's Christians and Muslims could face abuse on an even wider scale in the years ahead.

"Hindu nationalist elements acting with legal impunity and state government support have been stoking the flames of hatred for decades, cultivating an incendiary environment in Orissa," also evident in an earlier Orissa pogrom at Christmas 2007, wrote Elizabeth Kendall, a WEA researcher, on Sept. 1.

"Now Orissa, like Gujarat [another Indian state where 2,000 Muslims were killed in a similar pogrom in 2002], is primed for genocide. And hot on the heels of Gujarat and Orissa are numerous other Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-ruled states."

In the weeks after her warning, the violence spread to five other provinces. The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada issued a call to prayer Sept. 25.

According to Kendall, "the present persecution is not primarily about religion. India's Christians are pawns in a deadly struggle between modernity and the beneficiaries of traditional Hindu culture who are desperate to secure the political power that would guarantee their privileged status into the future by perpetuating the racist, fatalist, immoral Hindu caste system."

To read more, visit www.evangelicalfellowship.ca/alerts and www.worldevangelicals.org.

—BILL FLEDDERUS

with the lower court ruling that the zone is the sort of reasonable limitation allowed by the charter.

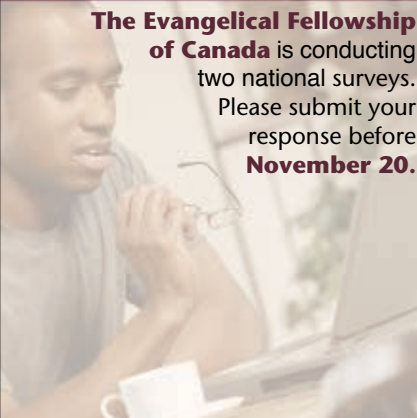
The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada filed an intervention in 2006 and presented arguments in 2007, together with the Christian Legal Fellowship

and the Catholic Civil Rights League. Together they argued that the freedom of speech of protesters within the zone must be protected and that women using clinics must be allowed access to full information about abortion.

—BILL FLEDDERUS

EFC Survey of Pastors and Churches

The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada is conducting two national surveys. Please submit your response before **November 20**.



What makes a church missional? Your voice will help in determining how Canadian churches perceive and practise strategic missional values. Go to www.evangelicalfellowship.ca/missional

A Church Missions Survey will explore how Canadian churches are engaged in global missions. Go to www.globalmission.ca

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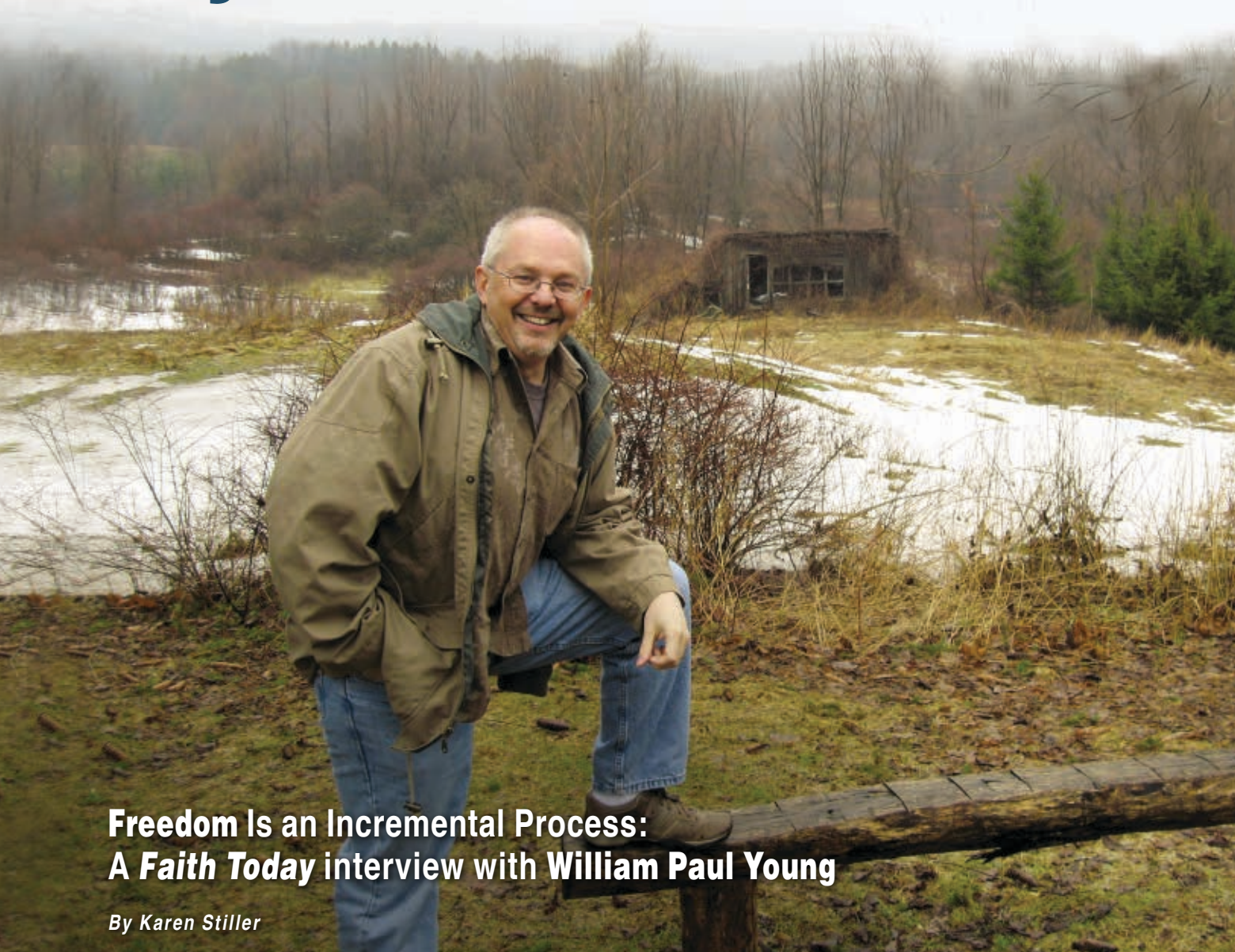
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Why Is a **Christian Novel** the



Freedom Is an Incremental Process: A Faith Today interview with William Paul Young

By Karen Stiller

The Shack, a novel by Alberta-born missionary kid William Paul Young, was a bestseller throughout the summer and fall in the United States and Canada. So associate editor Karen Stiller (KS) spent some time on the phone with the author (PY, who goes by his middle name) to ask some deeper questions about his views on church, suffering, legalism and healing.

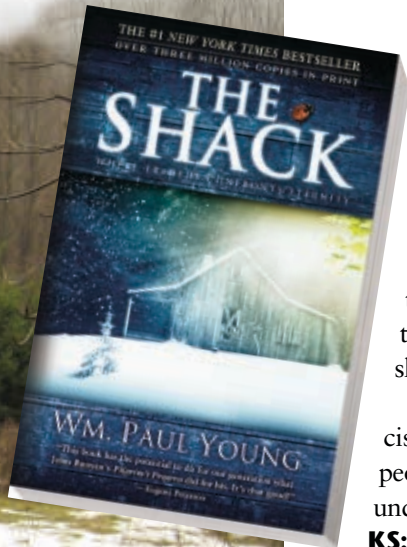
KS: Paul, you have said you've been amazed at the positive response to the book. As you know, not everyone likes it. There's been harsh criticism. Did that surprise you?

PY: No, I thought it would be worse. I thought I took some really hard shots at existing paradigms, and I thought people

would be more identified with those paradigms than they have been. That's been a really pleasant surprise.

I was surprised how much openness there was in traditional Christianity. And the embracing of the Church was way beyond what I had imagined. For example, I live in the

Bestselling Book in Canada?



United States where there is this allegiance between religion and politics. As a Jesus follower, I find it difficult to understand. And I took some pretty hard shots at that.

In terms of the criticism, I understand what people bring to the table. I understand it's out of fear.

KS: Some theologians have loved the book but others not so much. Has there been a point of critique that made you think "If I did it again I would change that one thing?"

PY: Nope. Because I didn't write it for the audience. I did it for my children.

KS: But you made a decision to publish it, right? It's gone way past your children.

PY: I know. I know. I wanted it published in the sense that it seemed like the next place to go with it. It wasn't part of a master plan. Wayne Jacobsen and Brad Cummings [Young's co-publishers] had a goal from the beginning that, someday, if we

could get to 100,000 copies, then they could begin to have a conversation about a movie. And me, I don't know what I'm doing. I'm along for the ride. But it was my children that I wanted to talk to.

As for the theology, John Stackhouse, at a Regent College event in Vancouver where we were talking about the book, had four theological points he wanted to change. One of the other theologians leaned over [to me] and said "I wouldn't change any of those four things." So even people who are making suggestions are doing it very carefully. The book is a mystery suspense wrapped in a "What if?" What if there's a God who actually cares about us? It's not that the book is

flawless. I wrote it. It's obviously flawed. But as soon as you start to make it theology you lose the point of the book.

KS: But you have a character who is God having discussions and offering explanations on things like suffering and forgiveness. There is theology in the book.

PY: I'm putting words into the mouth of God. The goal was to open up an artistic understanding of the relationship with God. All life is theology. Writing a story is theology and talking about it is theology because God is involved in everything. So you're working with context and paradigm and theology with that.

KS: Do you think there is something bigger happening in the Church right now that your book has struck such a nerve? Would it have even happened 10 years ago?

PY: This book would never have happened 10 years ago because the Internet wasn't in the position to support it as it has. I think the timing is a God thing. Well, I think it's all a God thing. But I'm travelling a lot and starting to get a better pulse of what is going on. There is a confluence of a lot of things. People are being exposed to a whole bunch of new things. There is globalization. All of that is contributing to people being able to have a voice and being able to question. People are really tired of religion. They're looking for a relationship. They're looking for what religion says it will offer,

The Story Behind *The Shack*

What is this bestselling novel that so many people are talking about anyway?

By Ted Wilcox

When William P. Young sat down to write a God-themed story for his six children, he didn't have the faintest clue what was about to follow. "Not even a hint of a suggestion," he says.

The private manuscript, written at the request of his wife to help explain his tortured spiritual journey, was eventually turned into a controversial bestselling novel. First released in May 2007, *The Shack* has now topped the *New York Times* best-seller list more than four months in a row, with 3.8 million copies in print. A major motion picture is in the works.

Among Evangelicals, the story of tragedy and redemption has sparked both celebration and condemnation. Theologian Eugene Peterson, author of *The Message*, says *The Shack* "has the potential to do for our generation what John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* did for his." By contrast Albert Mohler, president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kentucky, calls parts of the book "undiluted heresy."

The book's storyline involves Mack, an Oregon family man, whose six-year-old

Continued on page 22

The Story Behind *The Shack*

Continued from page 21

daughter is murdered by a serial rapist. Four years later Mack receives a mysterious invitation from "Papa," his wife's favourite name for God, to revisit the remote crime scene, a shack in the mountains. There, Mack meets all three members of the Godhead. God the Father appears as a large African-American woman, Jesus as an ordinary-looking Jewish man and the Spirit as an artistic Asian woman. Conversations about life, tragedy and the ways of God follow. Mack returns a changed man.

Young regards the way the book came into being, then flourished, as "a God thing." After first distributing 15 copies to friends and family members, he began receiving requests for more. "Before long I was getting emails from people I didn't know," he said.

Puzzled, Young sent a copy to author friend Wayne Jacobsen, who encouraged him to rework the story for publication. Enlisting the help of Jacobsen and another friend, Young revamped the book – but could find no publisher. With minimal resources, the three friends decided to publish it themselves. To their surprise, sales took off.

During a recent visit to Calgary, Young recounted his own story of tragedy and redemption. Born in Grande Prairie, Alta., to missionary parents, he spent the next 10 years living among cannibals and attending boarding school in what was then New Guinea. In both situations he experienced sexual abuse. This led to adultery and thoughts of suicide in his adult years.

As he tells it, healing came only after intense therapy. The result was a new understanding of God. Instead of a distant, judgmental God, Young says he came to experience God as intimate and loving.

Evangelical reaction in Canada to *The Shack* has been mixed. In his lengthy review, author and blogger Tim Challies of Oakville, Ont., wrote that *The Shack's* "subversive undertones seek to dismantle many aspects of the faith. Error abounds."

Theologian John Stackhouse Jr. of Regent College in Vancouver, however, found more to like than dislike. The book's theological flaws were "not crucial to the good work done by *The Shack*," he wrote. "I hope that in a subsequent edition Brother Young will either rework or omit these problematic spots."

According to Young, positive responses from readers around the world make it all worthwhile. He tells of a man who rode his motorcycle across the United States seeking reconciliation with his father, bringing with him "a great gift." It turned out to be a dog-eared copy of *The Shack*.

"When you get one [response] like that," says Young, criticism doesn't mean so much. "And I get thousands." ■

Ted Wilcox is a freelance writer in Calgary.

but doesn't.

There are common themes of the book's impact that I hear: here's a story that asks the questions I would have asked, the ones I wasn't allowed to ask growing up. The Great Sadness, people know. Then there is this accessibility to relationship with God and the whole idea that relationship is also inside God. That is blowing people away.

KS: So people have misunderstood the Trinity, then, if they are that surprised there is relationship within God?

PY: People don't think of it that way. They think of God the Father, Jesus the person and the Holy Spirit as a force. There's

not been a conversation about what exists inside.

KS: Why did you choose an African-American woman to represent Papa?

PY: I wanted a female character. Mack's issue in the book is that God has become unacceptable because he's painted the face of God with the face of his father. Mack can't get across that division. God has to get to Mack. In the United States, my experience has been that, if I had to pick a group of people who manifested the "in your face truth" about God and a commitment to loving, it was large, black African-American women. It violated the paradigm well enough that I was really comfortable with it right from the get-go.

The people who are bothered by that think I am taking God from His high and holy transcendence and making God into a common thing. Their paradigm has convinced them God is at least 51 per cent male. Our paradigms are very powerful.

When my own mother saw Papa come through the door, she put the book down, called my sister and said "Your brother is a heretic." But she gets it now.

KS: Now for the question I really wanted to ask. Did Mack kill his father?

PY: We don't know. It's ambiguous. It would seem more likely that he did. Since there's no statute of limitations on murder, that would present certain plot problems.

KS: Do we all have a Shack?

PY: No. Not in the same kind of way. My kids don't have a Shack. They have a lot better foundation than I ever did. Their walls are a lot stronger. I'm not one of those who believe you have to have great sadness and great baggage and pain and loss in order to become spiritual.

KS: Aren't people lucky when they don't?

PY: Oh my gosh. My kids are so far ahead of me at their ages. I am so grateful. Living in this world and their experiences will bring enough stuff for them to deal with. I want them to have as little baggage from my stuff as possible.

KS: Do you think those of us in the evangelical subculture face an extra challenge or obstacle to being real and authentic, to being honest about our brokenness?

PY: The more conservative the culture, where the law becomes dominant, the more hiding there is. I'm around all these different denominations. It is obvious that the more the law is pronounced the more devastated people are. And it gets worse when everything is an event. You asked Jesus into your life so now you are perfect. [People think] "I was born again but I still have a Shack. And I can't tell anyone because I'm supposed to be all free now."

Hiding will not heal you. But the consequences of not hiding are really messy. It means you become honest about what is

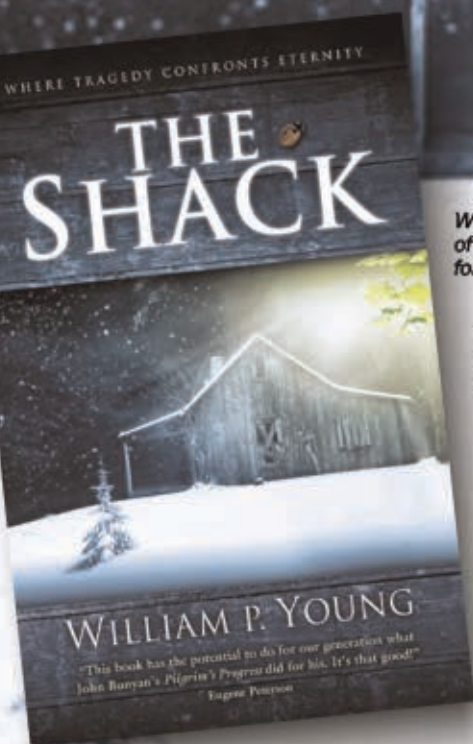
The more conservative the culture, where the law becomes dominant, the more hiding there is

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Eugene Peterson, Professor Emeritus Of Spiritual Theology, Regent College, Vancouver, B.C.

Do you ever stand by the ocean, just close your eyes and breath deeply, filling your lungs with purity? That's what *The Shack* is like. I've filled my lungs with clean, fresh air, after choking on the stifling smog of religiosity. At times I had tears in my eyes, and others I was laughing out loud.

Dale Bruniski, corrections counsellor, Vancouver, B.C.

This book goes beyond being the well-written suspenseful page-turner that it is. Since the death of our son Jason the Lord has led us to a small number of life-changing books and this one heads the list. When you close the back cover you will be changed.

Dale Lang, RockCanada.org, father of student killed in Taber, Alberta

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* Author/Speaker WAYNE JACOBSEN was one of the primary editors of *The Shack* book.

in your Shack. And you let someone in there. It is a risky thing. My favourite line in the book is when Papa says to Mack that freedom is an incremental process. We tend to define freedom as an event.

KS: Do you go to a church?

PY: You can't go to something you already are. The church as a religious institution is an easy target. Religion hurts people. It damages them. It distances them from God. It sets up a value system based on performance. It separates gender and positions of power. But structure is no rival to God. God will use anything we build to accomplish his purpose. The Church is a great place to drive people to helplessness.

KS: But we need Christian community, right?

PY: The Church is always people. Always and only people. Everything that is attached to that is humanly created for whatever purposes they have. The problem with systems that get attached is they begin to define the people instead of people defining the system. Those systems will move toward dehumanization. At some point it's the existence of the system that gets paramount. The system will do anything to continue to exist. To me the Church is people. You either are or you aren't.

KS: So you have a Christian community you are a part of?

PY: I've got a few of them.

KS: How does a church get healthy?

PY: How do people get healthy? We tend to use structure as a crutch. It's like a cast. A cast can serve a purpose: it can hold the bones together so it can heal. But if the bones continue to grow, at some point the cast becomes disabling. That is different from skin, because skin will stretch and grow and is a part of it. If structure is what is important, at some point it will become debilitating. It

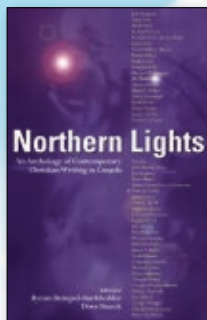
Religion hurts people.
It damages them.
It distances them
from God. It sets up
a value system based
on performance

doesn't take long in many situations. If the way you relate to one another promotes hiding and role-stereotyping, then it's just an expression of the sickness that is in the heart of the people.

There's no formula to this. I believe that every human being is so incredibly made. There's a universe inside every human being. When a soul gets damaged, it gets uniquely damaged. Only God knows how to untie the knots in the right sequence so it doesn't break. But down deeper than fear is the desire for authenticity. It is built into the very core of who we were designed to be.

KS: Paul, thank you. ☒

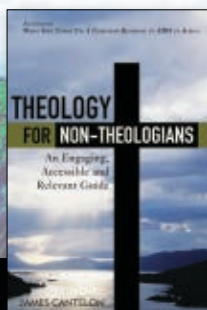
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How to Build a Great Church Library

If you're passionate about books but your church owns only a few Janette Oke novels and some dusty commentaries on Romans, you may want to consider starting a church library. Here's how to begin

By Sheila Wray Gregoire

Even if you begin with only a few titles, thinking through your purpose at the outset is a must, says Alison McCullough, board member of the Church Library Association of Ontario (CLAO) and volunteer in the library at Hebron Christian Reformed Church in Whitby, Ont. "First and foremost," she believes, "this is a ministry."

Grace Snip, a former CLAO board member and librarian at First Christian Reformed Church in Orillia, Ont., agrees. To Snip, "A library isn't about books—it's

about getting the right resource into the right hands at the right time."

Ask for Resources

Once you have established how the library will fit into the mission of your church, draft a proposal asking the leadership for both space and money.

In church libraries, as in real estate, location is almost everything. The library at Parkville Fellowship Baptist Church on Vancouver Island, where Olive Batchelor volunteers, is a bustling

place with 200 visitors every Sunday. "We used to be tucked away in a little room," explains Batchelor, "but when they expanded the church we asked for a place off the foyer. It's ideal!"

Weed Ruthlessly

To create an enticing library, weed through your collection, urges Grace Snip. If your shelves are filled with dilapidated or outdated volumes, people won't browse.

This year Judy McIntosh, a board

member of the Congregational Libraries Association of British Columbia (CLABC) and librarian at Richmond Presbyterian Church, had to weed out even good books in order to increase her library's appeal. Its shelves span both walls of a wide hallway, which doesn't provide room for display. She decided to free up one shelf per bay to highlight some books by turning the covers out. "We had to get rid of almost a quarter of our books," she explains. "But the spines don't tell enough of a story."

Know Your Congregation

Part of knowing what to throw out and what to purchase is knowing whom you're serving. To do that you must become familiar with the doctrines of your church. "The library has to support the teaching of the congregation," McIntosh explains. The first things

she purged at her library were the *Left Behind* novels. "We're Reformed and they contradict Reformed teaching."

Grace Snip also advises librarians to keep track of what subjects are being covered in the sermons and small group teaching so that the library carries these topics.

Consider, too, the demographics of your congregation. If your church has young families, DVDs can be a big draw. If your church is mainly seniors, though, a garage sale of your children's materials may be in order. Similarly, if your church was once largely Caucasian but now is multicultural, the library needs to reflect that change. And don't forget the men! Olive Batchelor advises keeping good non-fiction books on hand because many men tend to read for information rather than for pleasure.

If you're unsure of your church's needs, Catherine Betts found surveying her congregation at Bakersview Mennonite Brethren Church in Abbotsford, B.C., to be helpful. A book lover herself, Betts expected to have the surveys returned with lists of authors people wanted. Instead, the survey came back strongly in favour of DVDs.

Think Outside the Box

Increasingly church libraries are focusing on multimedia. "You have to meet people's needs not only in terms of resources but also in terms of format," Grace Snip explains. Her library carries games and puzzles along with books, DVDs, music CDs and teaching CDs. And the youth group loves the quiz books she buys!

Shop Shrewdly

Before you spend a chunk of your first budget, McCullough advises librarians



"A library isn't about books – it's about getting the right resource into the right hands at the right time," says Grace Snip of First Christian Reformed Church in Orillia, Ont.

to check what's in the public library. Oshawa Public Library, for instance, carries many Christian bestsellers so there's not necessarily a need to invest their church budget in books that are already available. Judy McIntosh agrees. "Why duplicate in the church with our few budget dollars what is already available for free elsewhere?"

Once you've decided what materials to purchase, visit your local Christian bookstore. Many hold "librarian nights" once or twice a year with discounts on purchases so you can get the most value for your dollar.

Don't Take Shortcuts

When launching a library, it's natural to want to do things the easy way. But be careful! Use the Dewey decimal system, advise all the librarians, or chances are you'll have to reclassify everything years down the road when your collection grows larger.

Get Wired – Or Not?

A computer system makes checkout easier, produces overdue notices automatically, creates waiting lists and helps

Donate Used Materials to the Christian Salvage Mission

If you're weeding out your library and you find things you no longer need, the Christian Salvage Mission wants them! They collect and sort used Christian resources and ship them to overseas missions where they're desperately needed.

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- Children's books
- DVDs and VHS
- French materials

They then ship English materials to India, Africa and the Caribbean, and French materials to Haiti.

For a more complete listing of what they accept and for information on drop-off locations around Canada, visit www.csmcanada.org. ■

—SWG



A bustling place with 200 visitors each Sunday: Olive Batchelor and Louise Brygadyr, chair of the library committee at Parksville Fellowship Baptist Church on Vancouver Island.

to keep track of your collection. Catherine Betts finds her computer system useful in the weeding process too. “I can take a good and hard look at books that have been sitting there for two years, and ask whether we can free up that space for something else.”

But as helpful as a computer can be, the librarians agree that, if you only have a few hundred items, it’s better to invest in quality resources. Once the collection reaches a few thousand, then it’s time to automate.

Don’t Let Them Forget

Alison McCullough’s library announces new books in the church bulletin. Judy McIntosh places displays in the church hall. Recently, when the PGA (Presbyterian Golfers Association) met at her church, she created a display of books about golf and God. If your library is to serve the congregation, reminding them what the library has to offer is one of the most important aspects of fulfilling your ministry.

Plan to Avoid Pitfalls

One of the biggest traps a library can fall into, says Grace Snip, is being inconsistent. Whether it’s the circula-

tion policy, the late policy or even the library hours, if you don’t take these seriously, people won’t take the ministry of the library seriously.

A librarian must also be ready for conflict, warns McCullough. Invariably a congregation member will complain at some point about the doctrine or writing style of a book. Having a policy to deal with these complaints helps to resolve them with less stress.

Finally, all librarians should aim to work themselves out of a job. Judy McIntosh has been the librarian for 14 years and she is now grooming some volunteers to take over – not because she wants to quit but because, as she says, “If you want your ministry to outlast you, you must mentor others.”

Ask for Help

In Canada, both Ontario and British Columbia have church library associations, which hold conferences, publish newsletters and sell manuals on setting up libraries. If you’re not a resident of those provinces, you can still join to receive their materials. (See sidebar on this page.)

Grace Snip also suggests that new librarians ask other local churches

for advice. Public librarians and school librarians know how to classify books and can often point you to suppliers for racks, pockets, cards and spine labels.

Celebrate

For Grace Snip, building a thriving library is a process she has had to measure in years. When she started, people tended to overlook the library when they needed help. “Now I

have people coming to me and saying, ‘There have been a number of deaths of people close to us and our daughter is asking questions. Do you have anything?’ ” And then she does the dance of joy. ■

Sheila Wray Gregoire is the author of four books including To Love, Honor and Vacuum, a parenting columnist and a conference speaker. Find her at www.SheilaWrayGregoire.com.

Where to Find Help

For newsletters, manuals, advice and conferences, you can join the Church Library Association of Ontario (www.churchlibraries.ca) or the Congregational Libraries Association of British Columbia (contact Linda Baxter, membership chair, at r_lbaxter@telus.net).

Both associations charge \$15/year membership dues. Out-of-province churches are welcome to join.

For library software, the experts seem to agree to recommend ResourceMate (www.resourcemate.com). It is used by more than 500 Canadian churches. Current cost is \$195, with a \$60 optional yearly fee for extras. ■

—SWG



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Reinventing the Canadian

The Christian bookstore industry has collapsed, and survival will only be possible for stores that can reinvent themselves as places customers enjoy visiting repeatedly

By Doris Fleck

Christian bookstores have been reeling from an economic meltdown in the past year that has forced store closures across Canada and fuelled fears about the future of the Christian retail industry.

The latest blow came September 15 when R. G. Mitchell Family Books filed for bankruptcy. The sudden closure of this 74-year-old company, the largest distributor of Christian books in Canada, sent other Christian bookstores scrambling to find new lines of distribution.

R. G. Mitchell's wholesale operation in Willowdale, Ont., and eight retail outlets throughout the province were shut down with amazing speed.

Tim Underwood, a marketing manager who worked out of the Kitchener office, says he caught wind of the news earlier on that Monday. But he was taken aback, he told the secular book industry magazine *Quill & Quire*, when he and the other employees were asked for their keys and then immediately escorted out of the building.

According to receiver Deloitte & Touche, R. G. Mitchell owes creditors \$9 million but only has \$4 million in total assets. Its only secured creditor is the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, and Mitchell Books owes that bank over \$4 million. This could leave

all other creditors unpaid with much of the money owed to Christian publishers in the United States.

This comes on the heels of Christian Publications closing all four of its stores in Western Canada this August and Blessings Christian Marketplace filing for bankruptcy protection last November. They subsequently closed 19 of their 23 stores across the country, leaving the

"People no longer want to go to a bookstore to buy a book but they will go if it's an experience"

four strongest retail outlets in Alberta and British Columbia.

And on September 2, Christian Marketing Canada (CMC), the largest distributor of Christian music outside the United States, was taken over by David C. Cook Distribution Canada, which is wholly owned by its American parent company.

While the sale resulted in the downsizing of staff and reduced inventories, Martin Smith, former vice-president of sales for CMC, says the move created greater stability for both organizations.

A FIVE-YEAR CRASH

The crash may have hit in 2008 but Christian bookstores have been battling for their lives for the past five years. They are being undersold by national bookstore chains, big-box department stores, wholesale clubs and dramatically affected by the advent of con-

venient and affordable online shopping. Rising rental costs and the fluctuating Canadian dollar were the death knell of many stores.

"It's death by a thousand cuts," says Larry Willard, owner of Castle Quay Books, a Canadian book publishing house.

He and other insiders say the only way the Christian bookstore will survive is if it can reinvent itself as a place customers will want to come back to. In October he pulled together a team that made an unsuccessful bid for the assets of Mitchell's. His team hoped to keep the company alive in some form but, at press time, it appeared a higher bidder planned to sell everything off and shut it all down.

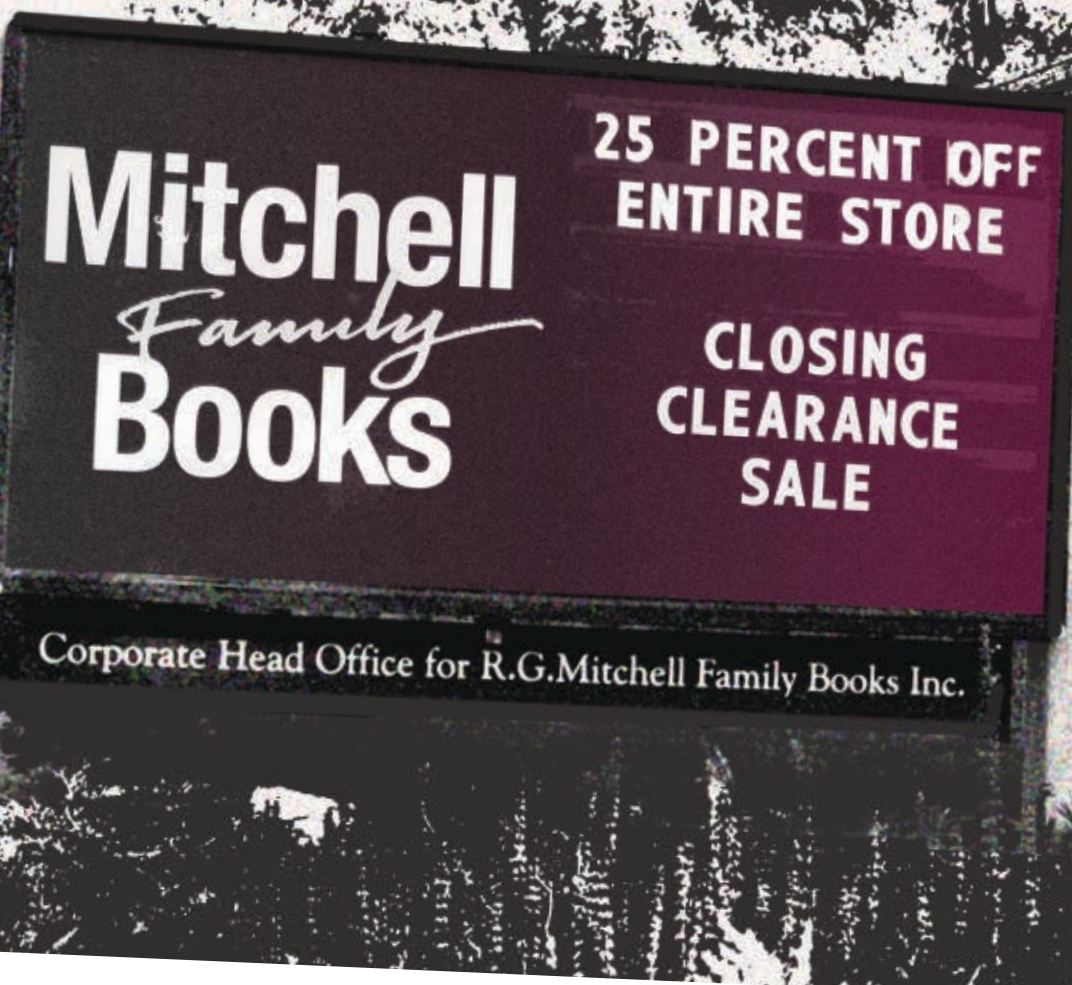
Willard believes Christian bookstores are not hopeless but most need radical change. People no longer want to go to a bookstore to buy a book, he says, "but they will go if it's an experience."

KLASSEN'S NEW MODEL

For example, Willard commends Lando Klassen's House of James in Abbotsford, B.C., as being "on the leading



Christian Bookstore



edge of things. That's the group that is probably going to survive."

Klassen, a Christian retailer for more than 30 years, admits Christian bookstores have been "way too predictable, boring and old-fashioned. We were really, really great and new and exciting in the '70s but it's time to – using a Starbuck's term – surprise and delight people."

Klassen is renovating and reinventing

the House of James, making it a "happening place" in the local community. After a four-year construction project is completed this November, the store will feature an expanded coffee house, children's area, Bible department, used books section and a live stage enabling Christian bands to play every weekend. After polling past crowds, Klassen discovered that about 50 per cent of the young people who come out for the

concerts they already put on have never been in their store before.

"We're raising awareness and creating a whole new audience," Klassen says.

Martin Smith, who now provides sales and marketing for Christian music through David C. Cook Distribution, also lauds Klassen's plans.

"It's an incredible idea. It connects

with the community. It's vital for their survival," Smith says. "Certainly for Canadian artists, there's hardly anyone who goes out to the West Coast who doesn't desire a chance to play at the House of James."

Although Klassen admits the renovations are driving them deeper into debt, he is optimistic the changes in

the store will provide "larger leaps of growth" in the future.

WORKING TOGETHER

Mark Hutchinson, the owner of Blessings Christian Marketplace, agrees Christian retailers need to embrace change. Part of that is supporting each other, he says. He is working in part-

nership with Klassen, co-ordinating all their flyers.

"Lando Klassen is not my competitor. He's my colleague," Hutchinson says. "Our competition is Costco, Wal-Mart and Amazon."

Already in the process of redesigning the Blessings website to make it compatible with the iPhone and BlackBerry, Hutchinson says customers will soon be able to buy direct from their phone.

"I am cautiously optimistic," Hutchinson says – even after losing \$4 million that he and his wife personally invested into Blessings. "We have a future ahead of us if we continue to completely re-evaluate and adapt the model we have."

He is actively creating partnerships with local churches to help promote the churches' events, encouraging Christian musicians and writers to have CD- and book-signings in the store and recently supported a Canadian writing contest.

This is all welcome news for Nancy Lindquist, an award-winning Christian author from Markham, Ont. When her first book was published in 1991, she naively went to her local Christian bookstore expecting to see a display of her books complete with a big "Local Author" sign.

But not one copy of her book could be found in the store. When Lindquist asked the manager if the store was going to carry her novel, the manager replied only if it became a bestseller or went on sale.

The irony was that this was an R. G. Mitchell store – and they were the distributors of the book, Lindquist says.

Frustrated by the American domination of the Christian publishing industry, Lindquist realized the need for a Canadian association for writers with a Christian world view. Her vision led to the founding of The Word Guild in December 2001. She has been the executive director ever since.



It can be an exhausting tune. Perhaps you're familiar with this dilemma: You rest a bit too long in the work Christ has done for you and realize you're getting comfortably complacent. So you charge into doing "good" works and find yourself flirting with legalism. You begin to wonder if the song and dance is worth it.

For centuries, Christians have wrestled with their identity as God's people, asking *Who are we? And what do we do about it?* Today, we ask the same questions. Since our works will be accounted for, isn't it important to "do" for God? Or, if God already knows us intimately, shouldn't we just "be" ourselves?

There's no easy answer. But as we seek God's intentions for us, we'll likely find that, lovingly paired, doing and being make a beautiful harmony.

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After its four years of renovations, the House of James bookstore will feature an expanded coffee house, children's area, Bible department, used books section and a live stage enabling Christian bands to play every weekend.

The Word Guild focuses on connecting Christian writers across Canada, helping them develop their craft through seminars and contests, and promoting these writers through speaking engagements and the Internet.

Lindquist says it's hard for fledgling Canadian Christian authors to promote their books in an American-driven market. She points to the flourishing secular book industry in Canada and explains, "What we really need right now are people who believe that what we're doing is worthwhile and who will partner with us."

Through his publishing house, Willard is dedicated to making Canadian Christian authors "known around the world."

He explains it's not only about selling products. "This is about the communication of our faith. There's a wealth of value and life-changing experiences we're not getting into the hands of the people who want them and need them."

NOT TIME TO GIVE UP

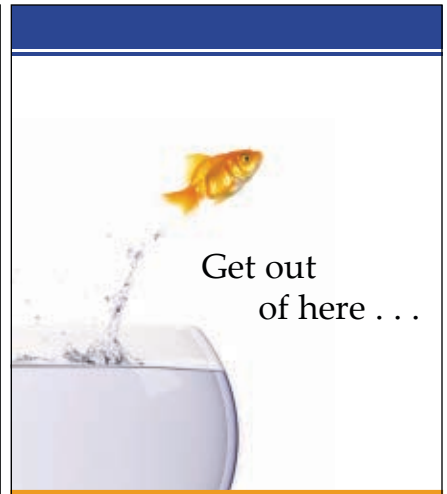
In her blog at bluecollarwriter.wordpress.com, Lindquist asks "Has the day of the brick and mortar bookstore come and gone?"

Klassen's response? Having a Christian resource centre is life-giving – just ask the man in his 20s who recently walked into House of James and said "I want to start reading the Bible."

Hutchinson concurs. "If we had said 'Let's shut our doors and run,' how would this have helped the woman who has just lost her husband and needs help in her bereavement? We're here for the community."

Making Christian bookstores a vital resource centre is akin to advancing the kingdom of God, he says. "I believe in what I'm doing and I will do everything in the power God gives me to make it work well." ☒

Doris Fleck of Calgary regularly writes features for Faith Today.



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Christian Lawyers Find Faith an Asset

Christians called to the bar try to be models of integrity despite public distrust and often feeling disconnected in their churches By Ben Volman

Our society doesn't put much trust in some of its highest paid professionals. Yes, we usually trust doctors to tell the truth – 85 per cent of us do according to a 2006 Harris poll. But only 27 per cent of us trust lawyers to tell the truth according to the same poll. Lawyers rank even lower than stockbrokers (29 per cent).

How do biblical principles fit into a profession that draws so much mistrust? Christian lawyers say they are determined to carry out their professional duties with integrity, but convincing other people is not easy.

Ruth A. M. Ross, an experienced lawyer in London, Ont., is familiar with having her principles undermined by clients' expectations.

She recalls an episode when "a client wanted me to act a certain way. The other side was being totally dishonest. I had to tell the client I would not do certain things. And I had to stand my ground."

Ross expected the client would leave her but, instead, the client decided to stay.

"I saw the Lord come through for us," says Ross. "I believe if we do the right thing we will come to the place where we have not violated our conscience. No Christian can be satisfied living with shady principles or dishonouring God."

Ross is now executive director of the Christian Legal Fellowship (CLF), a national organization of Canadian lawyers, law students and legal professionals with a commitment to integrating Christian faith and law. CLF currently has about 550 members across 30 Christian denominations.

Ross practised law for eight years before committing her life to Christ – and then felt immediately confronted by personal dilemmas.

"I didn't think I could [practise law] and glorify God," she says. But mature Christian lawyers with a passion for Christ inspired her to work through the difficulty.

Connecting with other Christian legal professionals transformed her personal vision but also revealed the severe detachment that many of them feel from the Body of Christ.

Rev. Reid Cooke, recently appointed chaplain of CLF, sees this contrast of dedicated individuals who are disconnected from their churches as the primary challenge for Christian legal professionals.

"They're the social outcasts in our church," says Cooke.

He recalls sharing the news of his chaplaincy appointment with his own church after 17 years as their pastor. "There were a lot of people who asked, 'Why are you going to work with those scoundrels?'"

One way to overcome the alienation between Christian lawyers and the rest of the church is to hear about their heart for Christ. Several of the lawyers *Faith Today* spoke with were willing to share about God's call on their hearts.

GOD CALLS LAWYERS

Ross studied law at Dalhousie University in Halifax and was practising in New Brunswick when God intruded. It happened at a luncheon during a business trip to the West Coast.

"I was uprooted geographically so I had the opportunity to think," she says. Despite professional success and even her impending marriage, Ross became aware of the acute hollowness of "something missing."

Despite a clear attraction to the Christian life, she refrained from committing herself. "I knew that identifying with the cause of Christ would be uncomfortable. I battled with this for 18 months," she says.

The spiritual questions were buried while she got married to a railway consultant, planning to start a family and keep her career. But the desire to know God quickly resurfaced, and Ross felt "miserable serving myself."

Although she never spoke about spiritual struggles with her new husband, God was also working in his life. In 1984 they began attending a church. Finally, she responded to an altar call, surrendering her life to God – "all that I was and all that I hoped to be."

Her husband had come to church with her and, on the same day, he made a commitment to follow Jesus Christ. Their united faith became the foundation of their growing family.

Another lawyer surprised by God is Scott Kennedy of Winnipeg. He serves as a legal counsel for a wide variety of local and national Christian causes and organizations.



EFC lawyers: Faye Sonier and Don Hutchinson.

That call will have a direct impact in the lives of clients. Lawyers “have this special opportunity to meet people at a time of their greatest point of need. There’s an opening to show the hope that is in you. This is the gospel: to share the love of God. We’re uniquely positioned: because law is so pervasive, we can share the salt and light.”

Canadian Christian lawyers deliver that impact in a wide variety of national and even international arenas.

SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Bryan Campbell is in-house counsel for The Salvation Army at their headquarters in Toronto. He lays out the scope of their ministry to put his own contribution into focus: “The Salvation Army is one of the largest and most complex organizations in Canada. It has a net annual operating budget of almost \$500 million and its workforce includes approximately 8,000 employees and clergy and more than 102,000 volunteers.”

PHOTO: JOCELYN DURSTON

“I came to Christ the day before leaving for law school in Ontario. I assumed I would be directed by the Lord out of law. To my surprise I was clearly directed to continue,” says Kennedy. “As a result, I see my practice as a calling directed from the Lord.”

For Kennedy, working out that calling has included serving a stint as president of the CLF.

But the top priority for a Christian lawyer, says Kennedy, “ought to be to ‘do all things as unto Christ.’ Related to this mandate is the Scripture [verse] that says ‘Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.’”

Ross agrees emphatically. “The calling for Christian lawyers, the same as for every Christian, is to bring Christ into their world.”

diverse Salvation Army ministries that touch thousands of lives across Canada. “I derive enormous pleasure from it,” he says.

Ministry staff have also earned his respect. “They are gifted, insightful, intelligent and passionate about sharing the love of Jesus Christ,” he says. “Most days it’s hard not to be inspired.”

Janet Epp Buckingham, formerly director of law and public policy at The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC), has also handled diverse national issues, including sharing her concerns in Canada’s highest courts and levels of government.

In 2007 Buckingham left the EFC to become director of the Laurentian Leadership Centre in Ottawa, an extension program of Trinity Western University where she is also an assistant professor in the department of political studies.

At both these posts, and in others over the past two

decades, she has been a leader in developing Christian responses to euthanasia, the Meech Lake and Charlottetown accords, and religious persecution in Canada and around the world.

“I have made religious freedom my life’s work,” she says, noting that this was also the area of her doctorate.

Who Are the EFC’s Lawyers?

Faith Today asked the two lawyers on staff at the Ottawa office of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada to introduce themselves to readers.

My dad wanted his son to be a lawyer but I was more interested in politics. I received advice from a mentor that a law degree would be a good launch pad to a political career.

During first year law I was struck with the realization that I was not a Christian. My pastor loaned me the book *The Cost of Discipleship* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer. The book opens and closes with the words “When God calls a man, He bids him come and die.” As I finished the book I knew what I had to do.

I left law school and went into pastoral ministry, from whence I was plucked by our denominational leader and returned to law school! As legal adviser to The Salvation Army I had opportunity to experience several aspects of the law for Christian charities, sit as a member of a council dealing with social issues and ethics, chair the board of Christian Legal Fellowship and develop an interest in religious freedom.

My position with the EFC allows me to engage in the areas that God has prepared me for and placed desires in my heart – presenting biblical principles on public policy, advocating for religious freedom in Canada and around the world, and equipping the local church to do the same.

Don Hutchinson
Vice-President, Centre for Faith and Public Life
EFC General Legal Counsel

I have a passion for the Church and concern for the religious freedom challenges it has faced in the past two decades. I interned with the Christian Legal Fellowship, an EFC affiliate, which gave me an opportunity to develop my interest in that area of the law. Then I worked at a private law firm in its charity law and corporate division where I became familiar with many issues that Christian charities face. When the opportunity to practise law at the EFC arose, I could not think of a better place to pursue this passion and serve the Christian community. This position has offered me an incredible opportunity to integrate my faith with my career – to examine my faith and assess how it is worked out in the public square.

This is a critical time in Canadian history. We live in a multi-cultural, multi-faith, pluralistic society. The courts and the State are struggling to determine where the line should be drawn in cases of conflicting rights and how best to accommodate Christians and other religious Canadians. The lawyers at the EFC – as well as Christian lawyers in private practice – are essential to ensuring that the voice of Canadian Christians is heard in the courts and in the media.

Faye Sonier
EFC Associate Legal Counsel

Buckingham, born in Toronto, grew up attending mainline churches as her family moved frequently. “I developed a serious faith around the time I went to law school,” she says. “I got very involved with IVCF [Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship] and we started a Christian group around a Bible study.” The support group was extremely important in a setting where her Christian identity was thoroughly tested. “That was an anchor for me while my faith was still at a formative stage. We were grappling seriously with issues and questioning ‘How does a lawyer come to grips with the law in society?’” Later she chose to identify more strongly with her family’s Christian roots, attending a Mennonite Brethren church and seeking to develop a mature biblical theology.

After law school Buckingham clerked in Ottawa for a national court specializing in areas of federal jurisdiction. She became immersed in many of the early cases related to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. That led to a lifelong interest in constitutional law and a vision for nation-building. “So many of our big issues are decided by the courts,” she says.

While her husband pursued graduate work at Oxford, Buckingham worked at a Christian public policy centre in London, England. On her return to Canada in the early 1990s, she joined CLF and helped prepare responses to issues that shaped the lives of all Canadians. She later developed similar papers for the EFC.

Buckingham expects future rulings from Canadian courts to directly impact the Christian community, “including Christian schools and their funding, home schooling and freedom of expression.”

She has special concern for the lack of legal recognition given to institutions and organizations that express the corporate voice of the Christian community. “Most Christians practise their faith as a group in a church,” she explains. “There hasn’t been any recognition that these institutions don’t have religious freedom.”

She points to the example of Trinity Western University, a major interdenominational school of 4,000 students in Langley, B.C., that tried to represent itself as a religious institution in a case that went to the Supreme Court, and lost. “The court’s final decision focused on the freedom of individual students.”

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS

Another Christian lawyer whose concerns for religious freedom and human rights extend beyond our borders is Johanna Blom of Toronto. She has done much work as an international human rights advocate.

“I always wanted to be a lawyer,” says Blom, “but since high school I had a sense of calling to what I thought was missions.”

As her vision of the church’s international ministry has expanded, Blom has come to appreciate the importance of



Lawyers surprised by God: Ruth Ross, Bryan Campbell and Janet Epp Buckingham.

her calling as a lawyer. “Missions cannot take place or be successful if there is no religious freedom.”

Blom’s work often addresses human rights in countries where religious freedoms are threatened or non-existent. “Much of this work involves people who reject the very notion that Christianity or, in many cases, Christians themselves have any right to approach the table.”

Blom’s extensive work with Christian organizations has meant personal financial sacrifice rather than the usual benefits of legal success. “I’ve had a few cases,” she says, “in which I’ve been able to play a small part in saving the life of someone on the other side of the globe whom I’ll probably never meet, and that makes it all worth it.”

LAW AS MINISTRY

International involvement is a common concern among Canadian lawyers. A desire to learn more about it and to build new professional contacts was expected to draw a substantial delegation to a global conference for Christian legal professionals in Washington, D.C., in October, accord-

ing to CLF director Ruth Ross.

The CLF unites many Christian lawyers in its proactive vision. “We see ourselves as able to do ministry for the Body” of Christ, explains Ross, “and fight battles that impact our Christian principles in three areas: religious freedom, the sanctity of life and the biblical family.”

The CLF, an EFC affiliate, and the EFC have worked side by side in addressing cases where, for example, quoting from the Bible was being considered by the courts as “hate speech.” CLF members also support freedom of conscience for marriage commissioners who have been told that if they do not marry same-sex couples they must resign.

So what about popular disregard for lawyers? Is it possible for Christians to improve their appreciation for lawyers in their church?

The CLF’s chaplain, Reid Cooke, sees that the onus for change is on those in the legal profession. He quotes Micah 6:8 as a guide to renewing that relationship: “And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

Cooke explains: “Many lawyers want to do justice. They truly love mercy. But where they fail is to walk humbly before God.”

Cooke admits to his own fears of confronting professional arrogance. As he began phoning hundreds of CLF members, Cooke was moved when virtually every lawyer responded with open gratitude for his prayers and spiritual encouragement.

Antipathy to lawyers in the church, according to Cooke, is to everyone’s loss. Lawyers have tremendous ability, financial potential and a determined work ethic. But their success can be intimidating and raise barriers to genuine relationships.

Cooke’s chaplaincy efforts are now focusing on legal students. “Most students coming to the bar have a five-year plan to get involved in a practice or a large firm and work to be partner one day. The spiritual is the last thing on their radar. We have to let them know the spiritual should be the first thing in their lives and to be about the things of the kingdom. I’ve been asked to speak those values into their lives.”

Those values are well attested by Canada’s outstanding Christian legal professionals. Kennedy says it well: “As a Christian lawyer puts Christ first and operates in His integrity and righteousness, there ought to be no dichotomy between ‘keeping the faith’ in the practice of law and carrying on a successful law practice.” ■

Ben Volman is a freelance writer in Toronto.

Your Love is Their Miracle!

Over four million children live in the streets of Russia's cities.

Over 18,000 boys and girls occupy Russia's 64 children's prison camps.

You can help them know the meaning of Christmas through your love!

Who are these children? Many have never known the love of a mother or father. No one cares whether they live or die. Yet, they crave love, they need to know that they really matter to somebody.

Children in prison live in inhumane conditions behind concrete walls and barbed wire. **Often, they do not have proper shoes or clothes to endure the freezing temperatures of Russia's winters.** The stench of urine permeates their sleeping quarters.

On your behalf, IRR/TV will visit many of these boys and girls and give them their first Christmas meal ever and a complete set of warm winter clothing.

Miracle of Love aid package includes: underwear, winter clothing, boots, socks, personal hygiene kit.

Give these children a Christmas experience they will not forget. Let them know there is someone who really cares. Thank you for your tax-deductible gift!



Your love is their miracle.
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- **\$15** feeds a child for 1 week *
- **\$75** provides a child with warm winter clothes **

* food bought locally, delivered to prison camp kitchens
** winter coat & pants, fur hat, boots, socks, underwear



Visit www.irrtv.org and read more! Watch a short video from Russia's prisons.

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White Rock, BC V4B 5L4

For more information

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**IRR/TV
Ministries**

Cutting-Edge Missions in Russia, the Middle East, Asia
IRR/TV ministries is a registered non profit organization in Canada

Ministering Through Missions

Reaching Muslims

ARAB WORLD MINISTRIES

Arab World Ministries, established in 1881, is an evangelical, international and interdenominational mission agency. Our vision is to see mature, multiplying churches among all Muslim peoples of the Arab world.

We serve in North Africa, the Middle East, the Arabian Peninsula, as well as in Europe and North America in areas including tentmaking, church planting, transformational development, and media. AWM media use the Internet, SMS, TV, and radio to reach today's awakening generation of Muslim young people. We give young Arab-world Muslims a place to go where they can learn the truth about Jesus Christ, express questions and concerns, and develop lasting relationships with caring Christians who understand the cost of following Christ.

In Canada, AWM works alongside churches to reach out to Muslim immigrants, international students, refugees, and Christian believers from Muslim backgrounds. We partner with churches to place outreach teams in Canadian cities and mentor and train Christians for a compassionate outreach to Muslim neighbours, colleagues and friends.

For information on joining our team, or if your church would like to know how it can reach out to Muslims in your community, please contact us at Arab World Ministries, P.O. Box 3398, Cambridge, ON N3H 4T3; tel.: 888-624-6170; e-mail: info@awmcanada.org; website: www.awm.org.

Fighting poverty

CHRISTIAN CHILDREN'S FUND OF CANADA

For almost 50 years, Christian Children's Fund of Canada (CCFC), has led the fight against poverty, child by child, family by family, community by community, breaking the cycle of poverty and replacing it with the cycle of self-reliance. CCFC is a Canadian-based charity and child-centred international development organization that supports children, families and communities living in extreme poverty.

We are inspired by Christ's example of personal, caring love while respecting the diversity of all religious faiths.

CCFC works side by side with colleagues in developing countries, emphasizing child and community development, starting with basic assistance that evolves into programs that stress self-help and eventual independence. Integrity is the common thread of all of our activities.

Today, CCFC has approximately 46,000 sponsored children in eight countries, providing access to clean water, education, health care and nutrition, and a chance to earn a living. Because CCFC believes that a child does not live in isolation and that to help one child we must help that child's family and community, CCFC works to restore parents' ability to care and provide for their own children.

Our goal is to teach children and families to be self-reliant.

1200 Denison Street, Markham, ON L3R 8G6; tel.: 800-263-5437, website: www.cfcCanada.ca

Partners in mission

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What do we do?

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- church planting and evangelistic work in Eastern Europe and Russia. We work with nationals, whom we support, to share the gospel message of Jesus with their own people, in their own language, within their own culture

and community.

- giving humanitarian aid to families and individuals in need. Programs such as Harvest for the Hungry, Operation Fresh Start and feeding programs are used and implemented by our national partners. As basic physical needs are met, the mind begins to open to receive nourishment for the spirit.
- promoting the work of the Alpha program in 13 Eastern European countries, in 9 languages. This is a growing ministry, where materials are provided and training is being done by Eurovangelism/EuroAid, assisting churches in reaching out with a saving message. Alpha is nourishment for the spirit, for many have come to know Jesus through this world-renowned program.

We consider it a privilege to be in service in Eastern Europe and Russia, and we look forward to many more years helping those in need. As Brian Lise, executive director, says "We're excited to be able to help!" For more info phone 1-866-630-6301 or visit www.eurovangelism.ca.

See enclosed Gift Giving Guide.

Assisting indigenous missionaries

INTERCEDE INTERNATIONAL

Intercede International is a mission board with a unique calling. Its main focus is assisting indigenous (national) missionaries working within their own or a neighbouring culture.

Established in Canada in 1953, Intercede International was raised up by God to establish, encourage and strengthen an indigenous

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Christian Children's Fund of Canada

Contact Lorelei Wilkinson at
1-800-263-5437 ext. 322
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New Testament witness for our Lord Jesus Christ among all nations, by providing intercessory spiritual and material aid to Christians who are impoverished or persecuted, and to encourage a Christian witness to the international community in Canada.

Intercede partners with 65 indigenous missions worldwide and makes known detailed information about our joint ministry programs. Intercede, together with Christians in Canada, raises awareness of the work of indigenous ministries, sends out missionaries, and provides financial and intercessory prayer support. Intercede also

hosts pioneer national missionary leaders to speak in churches and at Intercede Mission Events. In Canada, Intercede works with Christian refugees and sends short-term Mission Action Teams to mission fields.

Discover the joy of partnering with indigenous missions. Let's intercede for the poor, the perishing and persecuted fellow Christians among the nations!

For further information please check out our website at www.IntercedeNow.ca. Contact us: 800-871-0882. 201 Stanton St, Fort Erie, ON L2A 3N8. Registration: 130520802RR0001.

Telling of the power to change IRR/TV MEDIA MINISTRY OUTREACH

The main thrust of IRR/TV ministry is to tell Russia, Ukraine, Central Asia, Israel, India and the Islamic world that the power to change comes from God, and that Jesus Christ, His Son, died on the cross to make it possible.

IRR/TV targets large cities in Russia, Ukraine and Central Asia with month-long campaigns, using all available media. A call-center in each city receives calls from people seeking salvation, spiritual guidance and prayer. Hundreds of church members in each city are trained in follow-up home visitations.

Over the past five years IRR/TV has visited 18,000 boys and girls in Russia's correctional centres for children, delivering winter clothing, hygiene kits and food, and ministering the gospel at the same time. Local churches continue with aid and spiritual counselling for the children.

Christian TV programs have been aired in four major languages in India, and by satellite television we currently reach Arab nations in the Middle East, 95 percent of homes in Israel, and most of mainland China, Hong Kong, and Macao.

You can find more information about IRR/TV missions at www.irrtv.org, or write to us at IRR/TV Ministries, PO Box 75297, White Rock, BC V4B 5L4. See our ad in this issue.

Fighting hunger LESEA GLOBAL FEED THE HUNGRY

LeSEA Global Feed the Hungry is a non-profit Christian organization dedicated to fighting hunger around the world, reaching those in desperate need. This unique ministry is designed to fulfill people's physical and spiritual needs through a three-pronged approach of feeding, training leaders, and sharing the gospel. In the past 20 years almost \$180 million of food and relief supplies have been distributed in 95 nations. Whenever and wherever possible, Bibles are distributed with food packs.

In 2008 Feed the Hungry was among the first responders to the disasters in Myanmar, China, Haiti, Cuba, and the USA. In addition to these, Feed the Hungry continues to support almost 15,000 children daily with nutritious hot meals in countries such as Uganda, Kenya, Sudan, India, Cambodia, Liberia, Peru, Burundi and North Korea. Through the generous support of partners, and the strong network of international offices, Feed the Hungry continues to provide emergency relief to those in need because of famine, drought, flood, war, or other disaster.

You can be part of the vision of Feed the Hungry to make a difference in the world! For more information, log on to our website at www.feedthehungrycanada.com.



CAN A TOY MAKE ALL THAT DIFFERENCE?

- YES**, when it comes with love from an incarcerated parent.
- YES**, when it is delivered by caring Christian volunteers who share God's love.
- YES**, when caregivers can get some relief from the pressures of Christmas.
- YES**, when supportive Christian churches reach out to families in crisis.



YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE THIS CHRISTMAS THERE IS A CHILD WAITING FOR YOU!



ANGEL TREE CHRISTMAS
Prison Fellowship Canada
1.888.470.2748 or 416.848.4793

Making a difference

PARTNERS INTERNATIONAL

Through the Harvest of Hope catalogue Canadians can share the good news of Jesus with people living in poverty and darkness.

Nemesia Meza Guerrero, a woman living in Huaracayo, Peru, has benefited from generous Canadians. In the high Andes Mountains, illiteracy is one of the factors that leads to poverty among the indigenous Quechua people. As a wife and mother, Nemesia knows what literacy can provide for her seven children. But when harvests were bad, the family simply could not afford to send the children to school.

Last year things changed for Nemesia and her family. She joined a group of women who were learning how to raise cuy (guinea pigs). Using the training and assistance offered by Partners International through the Harvest of Hope catalogue, Nemesia launched her own small business. Soon her initial batch of three cuy multiplied as she fed and cared for them. When the animals were big enough, she sold them at the market.

The money generated by the cuy has provided school supplies and other family essentials. Nemesia is also learning about Jesus and she thanks God for the help she has received.

You can discover other life-changing gifts at www.harvestofhope.ca.

Power to establish hope

PRISON FELLOWSHIP

Krista was a teenager living in a group home after her mother was sent to prison. The group home was far from the institution, and Krista was not allowed to receive long-distance calls from her mom. It had been years since they had spoken. Krista's mother registered in the Angel Tree Christmas program, in which committed volunteers purchase and deliver gifts to children on behalf of offenders. Krista was pleased to receive a gift. As she read the words on the tag, she realized the gift was not just from caring people; it was from her mother! She began to cry as memories of the past, and hope for a future, flooded her.

One of our volunteers writes: "I know how blessed I have been, especially now that I see so many children without traditions, without presents and without their family members."

You have the power to establish hope and reunite loved ones.

Last year Angel Tree Christmas served more than 4,000 children across Canada. We need the help of both churches and individuals to purchase and deliver gifts as the need grows more and more every year.

Please call 888-470-2748 today.

Helping people in need

THE SCOTT MISSION

By Avril Henry

Communicating through a translator, I learn that 49-year-old Carlos* has been in Canada only 11 hours. Fleeing Mexico in fear for his life, he arrived in Toronto last night at 8:00 p.m.

Carlos is a well-dressed man wearing a suit and smart glasses. He could easily be mistaken for an investment banker on Bay Street. For the past 10 years, Carlos put his university education to work as a government inspector in Mexico, monitoring street vendors.

Only a few short days ago, Carlos made the tough decision to leave his job, his family and his home. If he hadn't, the consequences would have been dire. Illegal street vendors – the very ones he had closed down – were threatening his life.

With no other options before him, he hopped on a plane at the last minute and fled to Toronto, a place where he knew absolutely no one. And here he sits, with \$200 in his pocket and the worn business card of a pastor that has "The Scott Mission" scribbled on the reverse.

Leaving his ill wife and three children behind was the hardest thing he ever did. "They are now safe and I hope to be reunited with them here in one year."

Carlos never stops smiling. "Now I feel a

peace." With the curtain of fear lifted, Carlos doesn't seem to be able to contain his happiness and hope, crediting God for his unwavering faith. "I believe in Him and love Him so much that I put my life in His hands."

Carlos not only found a safe place to sleep and food to eat at The Scott Mission, but he also found the staff were willing to give him direction in establishing a life here. Judy, of the Mission's men's ministry, walks Carlos through every step of setting up his life in Canada.

"I'm finding a lot of people that want to help here. It's wonderful," he exclaims.

I ask if he has called his family to tell them of his safe arrival. Only now do I see tears well up in his eyes as he pulls a calling card from his inside pocket. The Mission purchased it for him.

"I will call them today." He smiles.

Andrew, from the Mission's men's ministry, described it this way: "It's almost as if an angel pointed him in the direction of the Mission."

If you would like to help someone in need this Christmas, log on to www.ScottMission.com or call 416-923-8872.

*Name changed to protect identity

Giving gifts of life

WORLD RELIEF CANADA

The task of selecting gifts for Christmas can sometimes be quite difficult. We want them to be meaningful and appreciated. But that



**THE CHRISTIAN
SYNAGOGUE'S**

100TH
Anniversary

JOIN US AT THE SCOTT MISSION on Sunday
Nov. 9, 2008 at 2:30 p.m. as we celebrate our roots,
beginning with The Christian Synagogue in 1908. Under
the leadership of the late Rev. Morris and Mrs. Annie
Zeidman in 1941, the ministry grew to embrace all
people and today continues a strong Christian presence.



The Scott Mission
A Christian Ministry of Mercy and Love

502 Spadina Avenue,
Toronto, ON M5S 2H1
Telephone: 416.923.8872
www.ScottMission.com

can often be a problem simply because we are all blessed with so much. Rather than coping with the stress of finding the appropriate gifts for family and friends, why not honour them by sending a World Relief Canada Gift of Life in their name?

"Appreciation" and "meaningful" seem inadequate when trying to describe what these Gifts of Life will mean to those who will receive them. It may be making a difference in the life of a small businessperson in Burundi; helping a family get started in Bangladesh, Rwanda or Vietnam; providing safe water to a community in China; or assisting with health education for young people in Cambodia. These gifts will go far beyond those descriptions as they will bring life and hope to individuals, families and communities.

We believe there is no better way to convey the message of Christ's love and redemptive story this Christmas than to participate in World Relief Canada's Gifts of Life at www.wrcanada.org.

Advancing the gospel, impacting nations
WORLDSERVE MINISTRIES

More than 30 years ago, WorldServe Ministries ushered in a new era of missions by enabling believers in closed or restricted-access countries to continue the work of God in their own countries.

It all started after the Vietnam War, when the communist regime launched an era of intense persecution of Christians. When Dr. Garth Hunt, the founder of WorldServe Ministries, left the country in 1973, he knew that God's work was far from over in Vietnam. Although 300 churches were closed, and thousands of pastors and believers were jailed or lost their lives for their faith, a resilient church rose up. WorldServe was there, coming alongside God's faithful servants to support and fuel the work God was doing.

Today, WorldServe continues to serve the suffering and persecuted Church around the world, losing its identity in order to encourage, support, equip and strengthen suffering brothers and sisters.

With your support, WorldServe will continue distributing Bibles, planting churches, and supporting local Christian workers as it goes into some of the most difficult regions of the world to establish churches.

To learn more about the way God is working through WorldServe Ministries and influencing nations for Him, visit www.worldserve.org or call 800-414-7788.

Giving Christmas in their language
WYCLIFFE BIBLE TRANSLATORS

"The greatest gift this Christmas is that we will be able to hear the

angels sing in Kigiryama. We will be able to adore God from our hearts in our language!"

—Monsignor Michael Ruwa
from Kenya.

Each year, an increasingly larger number of indigenous people groups are hearing the Christmas story in their own language through the work of Wycliffe Bible Translators and its partner organizations. In 1999, Wycliffe adopted a vision statement called Vision 2025: By 2025, together with partners worldwide, we envision Bible translation in progress for every language that needs it.

Since 1999, the number of languages needing Bible translation to begin has dropped by more than 700, from about 3,000 languages to 2,251 languages. This represents the greatest acceleration in Bible translation the world has ever seen! It has been a matter of working smarter rather than harder.

Translation is in progress in 1,953 languages. Wycliffe personnel are working in 1,415 languages in 93 countries. In 1999, 470 Bibles and New Testaments had been completed with Wycliffe involvement; today that number exceeds 721.

Call us at 800-463-1143 for a free info packet or learn more about us at www.wycliffe.ca. ■

Arab World Ministries

- Muslim Outreach
- Media
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Is Emergent Heretical?

By James Beverley



A new movement calls Evangelicals to engage postmodern culture and to correct common flaws

A pastor with deep biblical training is called a “wolf in sheep’s clothing.” A growing church in British Columbia is accused of heresy. A famous evangelical leader is targeted as part of an “end-times deception.” The common denominator in these three cases? Alleged spiritual poisoning from the “Emergent Church” movement.

Is it accurate to label Emergent as a cult? Is Brian McLaren, the most famous of Emergent leaders, really a New Ager? Is Satan at work here?

Well, first of all, what is the Emergent movement? Here’s a nine-part description from some insiders: “Emerging churches are communities that practise the way of Jesus within postmodern cultures. [They] (1) identify with the life of Jesus, (2) transform the secular realm, and (3) live highly communal lives. Because of these three activities, they (4) welcome the stranger, (5) serve with generosity, (6) participate as producers, (7) create as created beings, (8) lead as a body, and (9) take part in spiritual activities” (Eddie Gibbs and Ryan Bolger, *Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures*.)

The late Robert Webber helpfully described Emergent as a third alternative to traditional Evangelicals (think John MacArthur) and pragmatic Evangelicals (think Bill Hybels and Rick Warren).

Emergent is upsetting because it argues there are flaws in traditional evangelicalism. Emergent leaders believe that the older models of evangelical Christianity fail because of an outdated epistemology (the fancy word for how we know things), capitulation to a consumer view of faith and a failure to adopt a real missional (and fully Christ-centred) approach to the culture.

But what makes the Emergent case messy is that it is not a unified movement and it has experienced its own internal strife.

Besides McLaren (labelled one of 25 leading Evangelicals by *Time* magazine), leaders in the movement include Dan Kimball, Leonard Sweet, Sally Morgenthaler, Erwin McManus, Andrew Jones (Internet name: Tall Skinny Kiwi), Doug Pagitt, Tony Jones, Scot McKnight and Karen Ward.

Some say McLaren crossed a line in his 2006 proposal of a moratorium on pronouncements on homosexuality. There are also in-house debates about whether the movement has

become elitist, unnecessarily provocative and unbalanced in its critique of non-Emergent Evangelicals.

Hopefully, Emergents will unite in showing the same sensitivity to both conservative and seeker-sensitive Christians as they extend to postmoderns.

Outside critics such as Chuck Colson and D. A. Carson object to Emergent’s postmodern leanings. They think McLaren and others have a deficient understanding of the objectivity and certainties of the gospel and its truth claims. However, they do not regard Emergent as cultic. Colson concluded an open letter to McLaren with “God bless you, brother.”

Other conservative Christians are far less generous. For example, Warren Smith, Roger Oakland, and David and Deborah Dombrowski view Emergent as non-Christian and as a powerful New Age conspiracy to seduce the Church.

Tragically, these four writers engage constantly in sloppy scholarship, careless logic and extreme overstatement. Thus, whatever legitimate concerns they have about Emergent gets lost in their tortuous use of invective, misrepresentation and guilt by association.

In October I had a long conversation with Brian McLaren from his home near Washington and conclude that his basic allegiance to the Christian faith is undeniable. I asked him for a basic statement of his identity.

“I am an evangelical Christian. I love God. I seek to follow Jesus and confess him as Lord. I love the Bible and seek to understand it and live by it in my daily life. I love to help people become disciples of Jesus and grow in Christ through their whole lives. I seek to love my neighbours, whatever their religious background, and I seek to love my enemies as well. I’m not perfect and I have a lot of flaws and blind spots but I am pouring out my life to bring the gospel to the postmodern world. The gospel is the only hope we have.”

Sadly, those Evangelicals who adopt an extreme overreaction to Emergent are missing out on some helpful insights. Yes, Emergent leaders are sometimes snobby and occasionally blunder in theology but they are brothers and sisters in Christ doing creative mission to our postmodern world. ■

James A. Beverley is a professor at Tyndale Seminary in Toronto. He lectured on the Emergent movement at a recent international conference at Trinity Graduate School in Deerfield, Illinois.

Do Pentecostals Think They Are the Only Ones Filled With the Spirit?

By Van Johnson



This is the number one question I am asked in the classroom. The question comes in a variety of forms from Evangelicals of all types: “Do Pentecostals think they are the only ones who are spiritual?” “Do I have to speak in tongues to be led by the Spirit?” “Are you saying I am not filled with the Spirit?”

How Pentecostals talk about their spirituality and how others hear this has caused offence to some. This I know from experience. The partnership between Master’s Pentecostal Seminary and Tyndale Seminary allows me to speak to and hear from the brightest from all evangelical traditions.

So let me come at this question from three different angles by looking at the nature of Pentecostal experience, the various New Testament terms for spirituality and the common experience we all share.

To grasp what we Pentecostals are saying when we speak about the Spirit, bear in mind the high value we place on experiencing the power of God.

I had lunch with my parents the other day. The buffet had a very impressive spread of desserts, all of them sugar-filled. My father wanted to know if they had bread pudding. He told me: “You haven’t eaten until you have eaten bread pudding.”

Having just finished dinner I did not ask him, “Are you saying I have never eaten?” I knew what he meant. His bread pudding experience as a kid shaped how he viewed all other sweet experiences.

Pentecostals expect to experience the presence of God, and some of these encounters with God are transformational. Our vivid memory of an overpowering moment – being healed or speaking in tongues while surrounded by God’s presence – tends to colour the way we perceive other moments in the Christian life.

Unfortunately, it might influence how we think of others who have not known such moments. Forgive us any offence we may cause when we tell our story. We testify with enthusiasm, believing that these experiences are available to all. I hope you know what we mean.

Pentecostals do not mean, if we are thinking biblically, that the person who has certain experiences is superior to others. The experiences Pentecostals tend to focus on are not the only

experiences one can have in encountering God. Furthermore, every aspect of the Spirit’s work among us originates in the grace of God and, if it is about grace (rather than merit), then no one should boast.

Misunderstanding can also arise due to a lack of common terminology about our spirituality, which goes back to the parts of the New Testament we tend to identify with most. Pentecostals tend to learn about the Spirit from the writings of Luke and adopt his terminology when speaking about the Spirit. Non-pentecostals, including many charismatics, understand the work of the Spirit from Paul’s perspective.

When Luke speaks of the Spirit he does so in terms of mission, showing how the empowering Spirit enables witness about Jesus outside the Church. His primary term for this is “filled with the Holy Spirit” (for example, Acts 2:4, 4:8, 4:31).

Paul only uses this phrase once in his letters (Ephesians 5:18). When Paul writes of the Spirit, his concern is pastoral. He counsels about the edifying work of the Spirit among believers. To do so, Paul employs a wider range of terms for life in the Spirit; for example, living according to the Spirit (Romans 8:4), being led by the Spirit (Galatians 5:18) and having drunk of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13).

In the end, no one term – Luke’s or Paul’s or yours or mine – describes all that the Spirit does. No one group has the market cornered on the Spirit. We may often mean different things when we talk with one another about being filled with or led by the Spirit. Nevertheless, our testimonies involve the same Spirit. All who know Christ enjoy a life in the Spirit.

Simply put, the Holy Spirit makes Jesus real to us. The Spirit draws us to Christ and witnesses to us about His truth (John 16:7-13), and the presence of the Spirit in us marks us as Christians (Romans 8:9). There is no growth into Christ-likeness without the fruit of the Spirit. And the fruit of the Spirit is unity. ■

Pentecostals do not mean that the person who has certain experiences is superior to others

Van Johnson is dean of Master’s Pentecostal Seminary in Toronto. Representatives of 10 seminaries affiliated with The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada take turns writing this column. Please send your questions to: FTeditor@efc-canada.com or Faith Today, Ask a Theologian, M.I.P. Box 3745, Markham, ON L3R 0Y4.

Connections Christian Church, Calgary

By
Charlene
de Haan



Connections Christian Church includes one Spanish-speaking house church and five that are English-speaking.

PHOTO: LISA CONTRERAS

Where can people ask real questions about the relevance of Jesus in the 21st century? Connections Christian Church strives to be such a place. Connections is a network of house churches meeting weekly in living rooms throughout the city of Calgary. Each meeting consists of a shared meal celebrated as the Lord's Supper, worship, discussion of a Bible passage, prayer and fellowship.

Keith Shields founded Connections in 2003 with the goal of "connecting people to people, people to the world and people to God." Today, he says, it strives "to be a community of God's people, filled with the Spirit, sent into the world to carry out the mandate of the kingdom of God."

Cody Kemper, lead minister, says Connections is different from most churches, where 20 per cent of the participants do most of the activity. "I guess we flipped [the 80/20 rule]. Eighty per cent of our people are involved in ministry."

Church in the Neighbourhood

Starting with a core of seven people in a house, groups grow to an average of 20 people. Connections now has six house churches. Currently they focus on being neighbourhood groups so people can walk to meetings and serve together in their immediate community.

Open Door monthly gatherings are the public expression of Connections. They're opportunities for house churches to gather together and to express their love to the neighbourhood. In summer you might see members gathering at a picnic area for broader interaction, reunion and worship. Or you may observe university professor colleagues attending a Documentary Film Café to view and discuss a film on social justice.

Some neighbours recognize Connections as the group that provides a band for a community Stampede supper, that painted a widow's fence or that hosted a barbecue for families in a low-rental housing project. Other Calgarians know Connections for the food baskets it distributed to families in need in a suburban neighbourhood. Still others have seen how Connections cared for an immigrant family with major medical bills and no health care.

Connections has also recently supported a couple who struggled with their marriage. After a five-year separation, the husband asked a house church to pray for clarity in his relationship with his wife. He was unsure if divorce was the answer. The day after the group's prayer, he received an e-mail from his wife asking about marriage counselling. They began dating and working at their relationship again and, about a year later, he moved back into the family home.

Shortly after, he made a public confession of faith and was baptized in a river during a summer picnic. His wife is also growing in her faith. Although there have been ups and downs in their lives, their house church community has supported them through it all.

Being the Hands and Feet of Jesus

Many people in Connections have a gift for evangelism. Sharing their faith with a co-worker or talking to someone on the bus is not uncommon. Another Connections member organizes an Ultimate Frisbee team as an opportunity to express faith through deeds.

Taking seriously their mandate of being sent into the world to carry the kingdom of God, each house church identifies a mission in which they invest themselves. While one group visits the Brentwood Care Centre monthly

to sing hymns, talk about faith and build relationships, another assembles backpacks for The Mustard Seed Street Ministry or assists with the Inn From the Cold program. Another group focuses on single moms or works with Airdrie Family Services, tangibly assisting families in need. Hawkwood Elementary School receives Christmas presents for students as well as for teaching assistants.

For Keith Shields and Cody Kemper, the goal is to find people who are willing to join hands with them in the community before they are interested in coming to church.

“We want people to see us serving first, and then they serve with us before they ask why and eventually join a house group to grow their own faith. We want people to know that the church is where they can call for help,” says Shields. “The life we live is to be an incarnation of Jesus Christ in our world.”

Reflecting Diversity

One house leader has a heart for South Americans, mainly Columbians in the northwest sector of the city who have come to Calgary because of jobs in the oil and gas industry. Nolly Mercado started a Bible study for women and, when their husbands began to attend, they became another house church. Conducted completely in Spanish, this group loves to “pack them in” and has grown to 35 people! They are facing the challenge of dividing in order to multiply. (Calgary was already home to more than 9,000 Spanish-speaking people in 2001, according to the most recent count from Statistics Canada.)

Another group in the northeast quadrant used the Alpha Course while its leaders served their East Indian neighbours, nurturing seekers and new believers into a community of faith.

Collaboration

The lead ministry team sets the direction for the church. At the beginning

in 2003, Shields wrote a proposal to network house churches in Calgary. Elders from Bow Valley Christian Church provided the initial management team and remain a solid partner in this church-planting vision. Because huge resources are not tied up in buildings, equipment or programs, Connections is able to give 10 per cent of its offerings to overseas endeavours, 10 per cent to local community initiatives and another 10 per cent to assist with other church-planting opportunities.

Future Opportunities and Challenges

Connections has been very intentional about replication. Shields recently passed the baton to Kemper in order to relocate to Vancouver to plant a similar “simple church” movement.

Kemper, having worshipped and served with Connections for more than three years during his college internship while learning to plant house churches, accepts the baton, expressing a desire to continue “being in community with the house church and serving.”

However, he also sees a need to focus on neighbourhoods. The smallest church demographic at the moment is adults with young children so Kemper and his team are looking at how to reach young families.

Kemper also sees the need to increase discipleship training. “Growth comes through relationships with friends and colleagues,” he says.

Shields is quick to add, “House church is not the only way to do church, but it is one way to be the Body of Christ.” ■

Charlene de Haan is a freelance writer in Toronto. She also co-ordinates the EFC's Missional Church Project. Connections Christian Church is an affiliate member of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. Read all the profiles in this ongoing series at www.faithtoday.ca.

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Living Transformations

By Franklin Pyles



The president of The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada explains their vision for transforming Canada

In the mid-1800s, a strict Presbyterian family migrated west from Cavendish, P.E.I., to a farm outside Chatham, Ont. One son was set aside for the ministry. But the younger son, Albert, also desired to enter the ministry and so his father, considering this a blessing from God, consented.

After his education at Knox College, University of Toronto, A. B. Simpson assumed the pastorate of Knox Presbyterian Church in Hamilton, Ont., at age 21. By age 30 he was the pastor of the largest Presbyterian church in Louisville, Kentucky. But God had more remarkable plans in store.

Over the next few decades, operating out of New York City, with key connections still in Canada, Simpson became one of the great missionary leaders of the 19th and early 20th centuries. He saw the birth of a missionary society called The Christian and Missionary Alliance, which is now active in more than 60 countries.

The Alliance was then a society, not a new denomination. It sought to bring in and network people from many churches and to co-operate with yet others. Only later did this missionary society face the reality that it had gradually become a denomination because of its church planting in Canada and the United States.

The Christian and Missionary Alliance deeply treasures these roots and desires to fulfil its mandate to preach Christ wherever He is not named. While there are historic connections to the holiness movements of the 19th century and the charismatic movement of the early 20th century and to various revival movements as well, the primary connection of the Alliance is with the electrifying missionary movement of the past 150 years. Two major missions, The Evangelical Alliance Mission (TEAM) and the Africa Inland Mission (AIM), spun out from the Alliance as have a number of smaller organizations. Many of these work in partnership with the Alliance to accomplish specific ministries.

In Canada, churches were first planted as people clustered in order to express their passion for missions. Soon this turned into an evangelistic thrust. Church planting in Canada as well as overseas is a renewed commitment today. We are trusting God that 72 new churches will be planted in Canada by the year 2012, with many of them

being among the people who are newly coming to Canada as well as among First Nations people.

How is this vision crystallized? We felt led to express our vision as a prayer:

*O God, with all our hearts we long to be:
a movement of churches
transformed by Christ,
transforming Canada and the world.*

For us, transformation does not mean Canada will become some sort of theocracy. Rather, transformation means the glory of Christ will again be seen and acknowledged by the people in this country and, in ways not totally envisioned, the culture will reflect Christ's glory. For that to happen we fully recognize our own personal need to be transformed so that each of us might be a person daily set apart for the glory of our Lord, a person living in ways that help others see Christ and not us. We long to be a people who both seek and experience the fullness of Christ through the indwelling Holy Spirit.

In returning to mission and holiness, the Alliance is also returning to humility and dependence. What was accomplished in the past had little to do with intelligence or resources; it had much to do with obedience. As we pray to be a transforming church, we recognize that other churches will also be channels of God's grace. We pray that a number of church communities will be used in even greater ways to point Canada back to God. But as a family of churches, we want to be obedient ourselves, to be used of God as He desires.

We will stand with, encourage and co-operate with all God's people as they also move forward to make Christ known where He is not known, as they let His glory shine, as they allow themselves to be transformed by Christ, transforming Canada and the world. ■

For us,
transformation
does not
mean Canada
will become
some sort of
theocracy

Franklin Pyles is president of The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada. This column continues a series by affiliates of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. For a list of affiliates, see www.evangelicalfellowship.ca/affiliates.

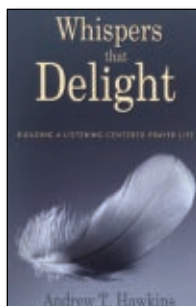
WHISPERS THAT DELIGHT: BUILDING A LISTENING-CENTERED PRAYER LIFE

Author: Andrew T. Hawkins

More than a few Christians will confess to a less than satisfying prayer life Andrew Hawkins may have just the remedy to breathe fresh life into our communication with God.

Drawing from two time-tested practices of the Church – the traditional four-fold order for corporate worship (gathering, word, response, dismissal) and the *lectio divina* (reading, meditation, prayer, contemplation) – Hawkins has created an amazingly simple yet profoundly rich pattern for cultivating a “listening-centred prayer life.”

His pattern is easily remembered by the acronym PARE: Preparation, Attentiveness, Response and Enjoyment. To “pare” is to cut off or pare away something, and Hawkins believes this is an excellent concept when applied to prayer: “The need to pare away the superficial things which occupy our minds screams at



Word Alive, 2008. 176 pages. \$14.99 (paper)

us when we make an attempt to quiet ourselves to listen to God.”

Following his outline, readers will discover the value of preparing through praise and confession. In fleshing out the section on attentiveness, Hawkins reminds us that our God is a God who speaks, who desires to communicate with His children and, though God can and has communicated in various ways, His common avenue of communication is through Scripture. The chapter on Scripture meditation is, in my view, the heart and soul of hearing the voice of God in prayer.

As we hear from God, we respond to Him in both prayer and daily activities. How we live is a critically important part of a listening-centred prayer life. And (as those who experience this kind of prayer learn) genuine listening-centred prayer results in the sheer enjoyment of being in the presence of God.

Eminently practical, biblically rooted and historically sensitive, *Whispers That Delight* will reward careful readers with an achievable path to experiencing God in daily

MUSIC REVIEWS

HOLY GOD

Artist: Brian Doerksen

This album won Brian Doerksen a 2008 Juno Award for Canada’s best contemporary Christian album. It is an epic journey of the Creator’s relentless pursuit of His creation, treating timeless spiritual themes with musical variety and artistic collaboration.

The cosmic context is established in a string “Invocation” by producer Phil Janz, a cross between a festival overture and a movie soundtrack. Both the longing of God’s heart for His Bride and Doerksen’s own pastoral heart for the Church is clear in “Song for the Bride.”

The album is threaded with exotic instruments like the didgeridoo, dumbek, zurna, mouth harp and Tibetan bowls that provide a rich global tapestry of countermelodies and rhythms. They may also imply that access to the Holy God is for all tribes and nations.

As in many previous Doerksen recordings, there are many collaborators and guests including Paul Baloche, Brenton Brown, Doerksen’s father and the Ambassadors quartet, and also Larry Nickel, Doerksen’s high school music teacher. (Nickel conducts his own choral composition “Trinity.”) Numerous duets provide colourful texture and soul.

Some listeners may find *Holy God* long and somewhat overworked. The album’s appeal is for those who are willing to follow Doerksen in this dramatic yet intimate expression of worship. The contrasts of musical styles that provide accessibility for all,



Integrity Music, 2007. \$21.99.

the colourful lyrics that describe God as a romancer and the prophetic nature of Doerksen’s music – all serve to demystify the notion of an austere and distant God. Not that the justice of God is overlooked on this album: the lion’s mighty roar is punctuated by spectacular drumming by Phil Robertson.

The resounding theme of this musical experience is God’s love ultimately finding us. The songs reflect the mercy of a loving Father and call, no, cry for a response. –BEV FOSTER

EXIT STRATEGY OF THE SOUL

Artist: Ron Sexsmith

Ron Sexsmith, a mainstream singer-songwriter based in Toronto, has earned no shortage of accolades. Paul McCartney, Elton John, Bono and Chris Martin of Coldplay have all lined up to praise his work. *Exit Strategy of the Soul*, his ninth studio album, will no doubt continue to strengthen his loyal following.

Produced by Martin Terefe (KT Tunstall, Jason Mraz), *Exit Strategy* was recorded in London, New York, Nashville and Havana. It features drums by Neil Primrose of Travis and a song (“Brandy Alexander”) co-written with Feist, a Canadian now internationally known for her song “1-2-3-4.”

Instrumental tracks combining piano, violin, cello and soothing vocalizations open and close the album. Ron Sexsmith has a distinct sound, reminiscent of the gentle turning of a carousel. The addition of Cuban horns on *Exit Strategy* adds something



WEA Music, 2008. \$12.99

prayer. I highly recommend this book. Excerpts available at www.listeningprayer.net.

—DAVID DANIELS

VULNERABLE COMMUNION: A THEOLOGY OF DISABILITY AND HOSPITALITY

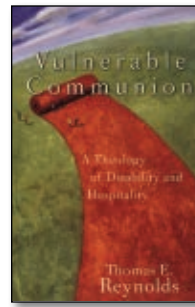
Author: Thomas E. Reynolds

This book is an astounding, expressive and deeply profound examination of the stigmatizing effects of disability in society and the church.

Its author, Thomas Reynolds, teaches systematic theology at Emmanuel College, a seminary in Toronto for The United Church of Canada. Reynolds is also the father of a disabled son and clearly knows the stigma that society and the church attach to an individual and family not considered “normal.”

The question Reynolds seeks to answer is simple yet profound: “What can happen in our churches and in our daily lives when we encounter not only people with disabilities but also other people who are different in some way or another?”

Reynolds intersperses his personal experience amid some



Brazos Press, 2008. 256 pages. \$28.99 (paper)

very abstract philosophical discussion, although he clearly means it to be theological. The book is deep, academic and at times redundant, requiring slow and methodical reading.

Reynolds leaves no stones unturned in his “focus on disability and the human vulnerability it so powerfully manifests. Why? ... because disability is an often overlooked and contested ‘site’ that opens up a range of possible resources and interdisciplinary approaches to the vulnerable and relational character of human existence, bringing to the fore issues of difference, normalcy, embodiment, community and redemption. For this reason, disability has theological power.”

This book is a great resource for churches, clergy and those who work with disabled people. It’s a timely and excellent piece on a much neglected subject. It is thorough, unrelenting and convincing in its arguments. However, it is quite vague theologically and the author’s biblical interpretation could be considered questionable. Be ready to read it more than once.

—R. WAYNE HAGERMAN

majestic. Sexsmith has a Bob Dylan-like approach, using familiar phrases such as “thoughts and prayers” in a chorus and following them with brilliant poetic verses.

“This Is How I Know” is nothing if not a testimony of faith, with lyrics such as “our trials are not in vain ... we’ll rise and love again.” Faith themes appear in many Sexsmith albums but never so strong as here. Whether sending “a message to the great unknown,” tending the “garden of our soul,” asking “Lord ... lend me your ear” or telling of “a voice that has softly whispered to my soul ‘Do not be afraid,’” Sexsmith expresses a sensitive faith that is widely available to all creation. “Brighter Still” is the most wonderful expression of this faith and an outstanding track in a very solid collection.

“Soul” in the album title and as a descriptor of Sexsmith’s work is apt for both. Listeners longing for music with spiritual depth reminiscent of Bruce Cockburn and the lyrical skill of Dylan will be thrilled with Ron Sexsmith.

—HENRY VANDERSPEK

GREATER THAN THE SONG

Artist: Paul Turner

Praise and worship has become so popular that some of us are afraid listeners are ending up worshipping the songs, the performances and the experience instead of the One we claim to be praising. So it’s a relief to find an artist who writes: “A simple song, traditional or contemporary, can never describe the greatness of our God. He transcends genre and preference – He is so much greater than any song!”

This thread of reverence and humility runs throughout this

beautifully crafted collection of worship songs by Paul Turner, pastor of worship at Emmanuel Baptist Church in Barrie, Ont., lending the project an authentic maturity.



David C. Cook Distribution, \$17.99 (CD), \$12.99 (MP3)

Recorded and produced by British Columbia’s Philip Janz, the disc features polished performances and plush orchestration with rich choral and string arrangements. Turner’s writing measures up to the excellent production with catchy, singable melodies sure to become congregational favourites.

The disc offers several upbeat praise songs such as “Our Jubilee,” co-written by Janz and Brian Doerksen, and the passionate “Forever God.” Doerksen further lends his support to the project on a wonderful duet, “Shepherd of Heaven.” (Watch them perform it at www.paulturnermusic.ca.)

Most compelling are the tender moments of his moving ballads, “Counting” and the haunting “Near to the Cross.” In his liner notes, Turner gives us a glimpse into his own personal journey, highlighting some of the stories and inspiration behind the songs, notably his young daughter’s recent diagnosis of autism. His willingness to be transparent with his own struggles lends a powerful vulnerability to the performances, giving them a greater accessibility. This is certainly the case in a poignant version of Doerksen’s “Father, I Want You to Hold Me,” which Turner sings with his wife, Angela.

In the huge sea of praise and worship discs, this project certainly shines as one that Canadians should be proud of. *Greater Than the Song* is a passionate offering from a man who beautifully demonstrates his heart’s desire to glorify God.

—ALI MATTHEWS

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The position involves developing and teaching leadership courses at the master's level and in the Doctor on Ministry program, mentoring emerging leaders, and writing and publishing in the field of leadership. The successful candidate will provide oversight of the Tyndale Centre for Leadership in its mandate to foster leadership excellence in churches, Christian organizations and the marketplace.

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Tyndale invites qualified candidates to apply for the position; Canadian citizens and permanent residents will be given priority. The successful candidate will subscribe to Tyndale's Statement of Faith and Community Standards. Letters of application should be accompanied by a curriculum vitae, a statement of the candidate's philosophy of Christian leadership, and the names of three references. The search committee will begin its review of applications immediately. Projected start date is July 1, 2009.

Interested candidates should submit documentation in confidence to: **The Search Committee for the Chair of Leadership, c/o Ms. Tina Kim, Assistant to the Dean, Tyndale Seminary, 25 Ballyconnor Court, Toronto, Ont. M2M 4B3. Fax 416-226-9464. E-mail: tkim@tyndale.ca**

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Do you have a Bachelor of Theology degree (one that specializes in music/creative arts would be ideal) and a minimum of 5 years in a pastoral role? www.uxbridgebaptist.com

This may be your calling! Interested candidates should submit a resumé via email: Attn. Peter Graham, uxbap@uxbridgebaptist.com. See "Job Opportunities" at www.baptist.ca.

High School Teacher

Nanaimo Christian School, located on the central, eastern coast of Vancouver Island, seeks applications for a full-time high school teaching position with the following specialties: Biology, English and Musical Theatre. Grade 9 assignments are science and math. Resumés and or expressions of interest are requested. Please contact: The Hiring Committee, admin.ncs@shaw.ca. Phone: 250-754-4512. Fax: 250-754-4271.

Worship Pastor

Southview Church, located in the city of Calgary, Alberta, seeks a proven leader with the maturity and experience to lead a growing congregation of 1,600 comprised largely of young families in corporate and individual worship. This person is first and foremost a servant leader with a passion to know and

glorify God. He/she finds joy in equipping others for ministry and in unleashing the church to be "throughout-the-week" worshippers. Key qualifications are a heart for God, artistic and leadership gifts and administrative skills. Please send resumés to barb_harvey@southviewchurch.com.

Pastor of Worship Ministries

We are a large evangelical church in Ottawa seeking a Pastor of Worship Ministries. Please email search@metbiblechurch.ca for more information.

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Leading Christian ministry seeks proven fundraiser to help lead in change and growth

Yonge Street Mission in downtown Toronto has been on the front lines of Christian service and outreach since 1896. YSM has earned its reputation as a consistent innovator of programs such as health care for street youth, computer education for school children, parenting classes, housing and several employment initiatives.

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For a complete position description visit: <http://ysm.on.ca/jobs.php>. Please do not contact YSM directly. Inquiries, and letters of application with resume can be directed to KMA Consultants Inc. Apply by e-mail to: applyysm@kmaconsultants.ca or by fax to 416-469-9622.

A not-for-profit Christian faith community, YSM works to counter the causes of long-term and cyclical poverty, to mitigate the impact of poverty on individuals, families and neighbourhoods, and to assist people and communities in transforming their own futures. YSM serves everyone who comes for assistance regardless of colour, culture, economic status, gender, religion, sexual orientation or social condition. With 120 staff and 3,000 volunteers, YSM welcomes everyone who needs help: families new to Canada, the unemployed and working poor, homeless youth, disabled and elderly adults, teenagers and young children.



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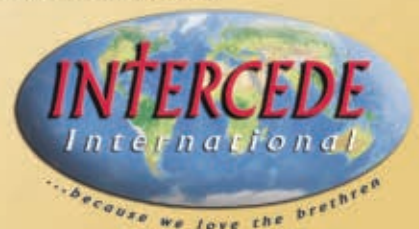


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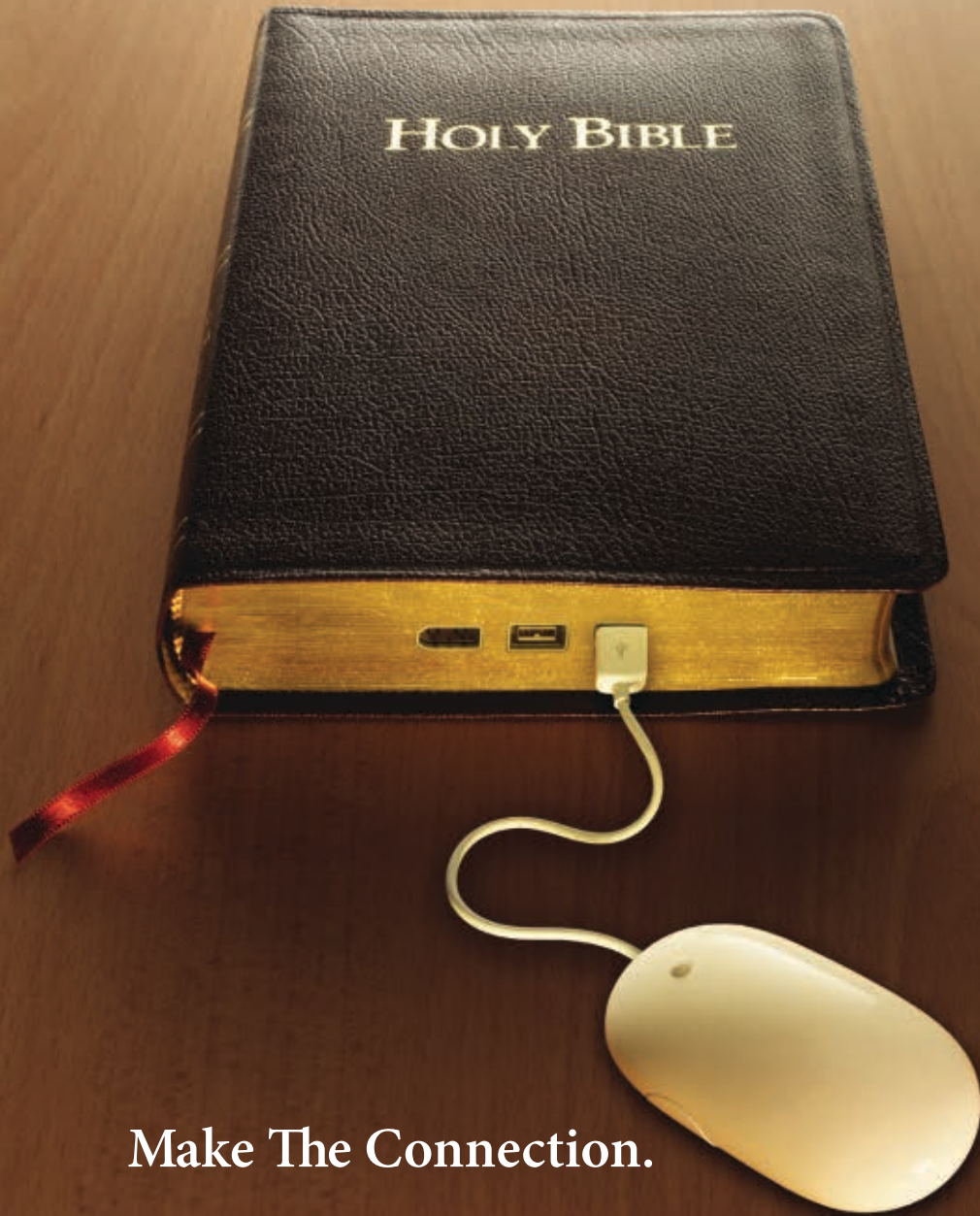
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Christmas at Ottawa Innercity Ministries.

Photo courtesy Ottawa Innercity Ministries



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