

Faith Today

THE MAGAZINE OF THE EVANGELICAL FELLOWSHIP OF CANADA
To Connect, Equip and Inform Evangelical Christians in Canada

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2010
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Roots & Wings

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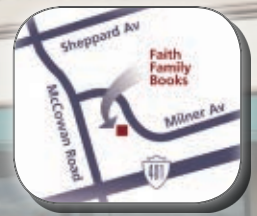
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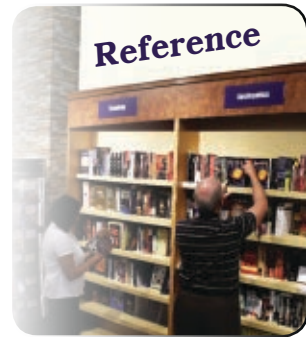
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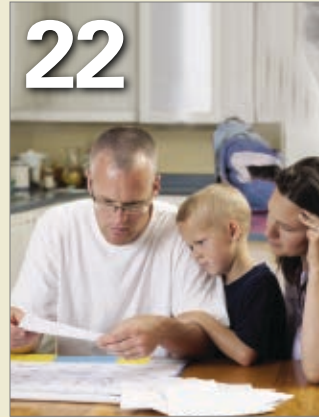
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Colliding Cultures

Centring on Christ as our plumbline can help us deal with new challenges

Are you wondering what's different about this issue of *Faith Today*? It's our new design! It gives you a new reading experience. We haven't moved things around, but we have refreshed colour, type and space to make it easier for you to read and enjoy each article. Try also viewing our digital version, where background light will enhance the colour and clarity. While you are there, email an article to a friend or access the FT archives. Try it at www.faithtoday.ca/digital. Access is free for subscribers; visitors can view a sample.

Print, digital, Facebook – what's next? We're living in a world where opportunities to communicate have increased. Recently, The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, our publisher, kept followers abreast of an important court intervention by sending "tweets" on Twitter and postings on Facebook. In real time, we could let supporters know what was being said.

New technology can be a challenge, but increased communication means more opportunities to work together. Canada is known for its multiculturalism, and churches are becoming more intercultural. Our cover story, "Roots and Wings" by Jeff Dewsbury, profiles the Filipino Church in Canada and its impact on the Christian community. It is especially interesting for me as my husband and I have been attending a neighbourhood church where many congregants come from the Philippines as well as other cultures. We can attest to their commitment to evangelism as well as their warmth.

Christians are rethinking how they spend and save money. The economic recession has been an eye-opener for those who believed they had safely invested. "Careful Investing" by Emily Wierenga will challenge us further. While investments may be safe, have we investigated their impact environmentally and socially? Read this and think about how your faith and finances align.

Colliding cultures bring other challenges. Secular universities insist on the freedom to debate and speak on controversial issues, but a "no limits" approach does not entirely fit with the mandate of Christian universities and colleges. In his article, Al Hiebert, chair of Christian Higher Education Canada, asks "Who defines academic freedom?" The answer is a crucial one for the future of our country because colleges and universities influence the deepest beliefs of their graduates.

The space between us keeps diminishing more with each day as the capacity to communicate increases. With it comes the challenge of interrelationships and colliding cultures. Our biblical vision of God's call to all people can equip evangelical Christians to bridge gaps, share cultures and find ways to communicate a shared understanding. With God's help, we will have a great deal to offer. **FT**

GAIL REID is managing editor of *Faith Today* and director of communications for The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.

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Legalizing Prostitution

Re: *Human Trafficking* (Nov/Dec 2009)

I agree wholeheartedly that we “also have to start, as Christians, doing more” to fight human trafficking. “Not only the words; it has to be the deeds...What do you do with the darkness? You reveal it.”

As you may know, Canada’s *Criminal Code* provisions on prostitution (operating a bawdy house, living off the avails, etc.) are currently being challenged

in both Ontario and British Columbia. If the sex-trade workers in

these cases are successful in having the provisions struck down, the consequences will be dire.

Legalizing or decriminalizing prostitution in other countries has resulted in, among other things, an increase in sex trafficking and forced prostitution. A coalition of Christian organizations recently intervened in the Ontario case, providing arguments in support of the constitutionality of the existing legislation. Current law does much to protect the human dignity of victims of prostitution and the health, safety, welfare and morals of society.

A decision has not yet been released in the Ontario case but is anticipated within the next six months. The British Columbia challenge is now under appeal.

Faith Today readers who desire to answer the call to action can begin by praying for the decisions in these cases as well as for those already involved in prostitution. They can also support the government’s position to uphold [both]the existing laws and those organizations already engaged in this issue in Canada. Finally, it is critical that readers become educated on this issue so that they may be able to minister to those in need, in particular those who are victimized by the process.

Thank you for sharing the burden for those involved in prostitution and sex trafficking.

STEPHANIE LUCK,
Research, Director of Operations
Christian Legal Fellowship
London, Ont.

Dalai Lama

Re: *Religion Watch* (Nov/Dec 2009)

What’s wrong with Buddhism? Author and English professor Joyce Carol Oates sums it up well in *The Journal of Joyce Carol Oates 1973–1982* as she speaks of “The Orient’s holy men & their visions of the One; the perfect Buddha mind; a vast galaxy into which sufferings & imperfections are tossed. A kind of indifference, contempt for what exists. Cynicism. But its outward face is benign and holy.”

Further, she says, “I don’t want to drift into that not-caring state of mind I was in . . . as a result of Zen meditation. . . . As if one were dead. Living, dead. Dead, living, awake. Eternally



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-  Davis Omanyo
Regional Leader, East Africa, CRWRC
-  Dr. James Rusthoven
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awake. Such is the blessing and also the curse of 'enlightenment.' "

GALE WHITE
Toronto, Ont.

New Haiti Charity

Re: *Global Village* (Sep/Oct 2009)

Anyone concerned about the desperate need in Haiti and feeling helpless about it needs to know about a very special event coming to Toronto on Sunday, January 24.

Haiti Partners, a new charity, will host an evening with Tony Campolo, [with] music from the University of Toronto Gospel Choir and the Canadian launch of Kent Annan's book *Following Jesus through the Eye of a Needle* (InterVarsity Press).

Not simply a fundraiser (tickets are from \$5 to \$15), this evening is designed to help find ways to make a difference in the world, instead of just feeling bad.

For more details on the 7:00 p.m. event at Bayview Glen Alliance Church, 300 Steeles Ave.,

contact haitipartnerscanada@gmail.com.

DONNA-JEAN BROWN
Toronto, Ont.

Salvation and Hell

Re: *The Benefit of Doubt* (May/ Jun 2009)

There seems to be a lot of doubt about God but none about John 3:16 ("...whoever believes in him [God's son] shall not perish but have eternal life").

Before John 3:16 there lived on this Earth millions of people, and as God loves us all despite our failings, I cannot believe that God would condemn those millions to hell.

Also, there are millions who lived and are living now since John 3:16, and I can't believe God would condemn them all to hell either.

This makes me doubt that believing John 3:16 is the only way to heaven.

I have seen this question answered in writing by a theologian and it was full of Christian bureaucratic gobbledygook.

I have seen on television a respected evangelist minister asked this question and he mumbled something and got away from it as fast as possible.

There must be an answer of some sort for this.

HOWARD SMITH
Toronto, Ont.

Editor's note: Readers are encouraged to discuss such issues with a pastor. Some Christian bookstore owners recommend *What About Those Who Have Never Heard?: Three Views on the Destiny of the Unevangelized* (John Sanders, ed., InterVarsity, 1995) and *Who Can Be Saved?: Reassessing Salvation in Christ and World Religions* (Terrance Tiessen, InterVarsity, 2004).



Sheila Visser



David Adcock

Appointed: Shaile Visser as national director of Alpha Ministries Canada, the organization behind the Alpha Course, an introduction to Christianity offered in more than 3,000 churches in Canada so far. Visser succeeds Susan Cockburn, who moves to lead the British Columbia region of Alpha. Visser has held international leadership positions with Alpha in the Workplace and Global Alpha Training. Before joining Alpha in 2003, she worked for eight years with the Women in Leadership program at Power to Change.

Appointed: David Adcock as CEO of Emergency Relief and Development Overseas (ERDO), the humanitarian agency of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. Kelvin Honsinger, the previous

head of ERDO, becomes director of international programs. Adcock has previously served as COO at Yonge Street Mission, worked with World Vision Canada's Canadian programs, and offered pastoral care in several Pentecostal churches.

Resigned: Jon Ohlhauser as president of Prairie Bible Institute in Three Hills, Alta. He had championed a proposal to move part or all of the school about 120 km to the larger town of Drumheller, but the board of governors rejected the plan in October. A search for Ohlhauser's replacement is underway.

Appointed: Darren Pries-Klassen as executive director of the Mennonite Foundation of Canada, a public charitable foundation that promotes stewardship education and provides fund management. He succeeds Erwin Warkentin, now director of strategic initiatives at Canadian Mennonite University. Pries-Klassen will work in St. Catharines, Ont., while the head office remains in Winnipeg, Man. A certified financial planner, he was originally hired in 1998 to open the Niagara office.

Appointed: John Torrance as interim executive minister of the Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec (CBOQ), effective September 2009. He succeeds Ken Bellous, who served as head of this group of 360 churches for more than a decade. Offices are in Toronto.

Resigned: Bob Beasley as CEO of Back to the Bible Canada, an international media ministry founded in Nebraska in 1939 and known for its current American president, Woodrow Kroll. Beasley joined the ministry in 2003 and launched its national radio program *Words from the Heart* in 2004. Canadian offices are in Chatham, Ont. A search for Beasley's replacement is underway.

Awarded: Joshua Seller, worship leader at Harvest Bible Chapel in Oakville, Ont. The Canadian Bible Society chose his composition from 350 entries in its new annual Scripture Song competition, a partnership with the Gospel Music Association Canada. Hear "Song of the Angels" at www.bible-society.ca. Seller wins a free CD recording session.

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Canadian Women Use Hobbies to Serve the Poor



Catherine Trafford-Welk, co-founder of Jabez Blanket Ministry, found a way to help orphaned children in the poorest countries.

We may think of craft bees as a throwback to the past, but women today are still using hobbies to minister to those most in need.

Catherine Trafford-Welk and Sharon Trafford-James founded Jabez Blanket Ministry International to do just that (www.jabezblanketministry.org).

Trafford-Welk wanted to help orphaned children in the poorest countries, but didn't

TWU Celebrates First Crop of MBA Students

Their timing couldn't be better. In a post-Enron, post-Bernie-Madoff era, the first-ever MBA graduates from a Canadian Christian university received their designations in November.

At a time when oaths of ethical conduct at business schools are in fashion (Harvard's MBA grads pledge to "serve

the greater good"), at Trinity Western University's (TWU) School of Business, students learn that the highest goal of business is to serve others.

"It has to do with a belief that in business you're providing value for value in an exchange of some kind," explains Mark McKay, associate dean at TWU's School of Business. "And providing service to others is going to pay off. It's going to provide a profit."

TWU MBA grad Tony Lapointe says his MBA "means I am able to refine and use different skill sets in a variety of contexts that ultimately help people help people. It also gives me an opportunity to reflect Christ in settings that would not normally be exposed to God's love and grace."

TWU launched their MBA course in August 2007. Through a 22-month blended-format program (classes take place on campus during the summer and online during the rest of the year), students can choose from three



know what she could do from her home in Killaloe, Ont. God prompted her to use her leftover yarn to make a tangible difference.

She and her sister crocheted afghan squares and encouraged their friends to do the same. They pieced the assorted squares into blankets.

Thousands of women have since put "compassion into action," says Trafford-Welk, by knitting and crocheting blankets with scraps that would otherwise be thrown away. The colourful creations are tucked into "backpacks of hope," together with a teddy bear and school supplies, and donated to any missions team that requests them.

"There's something about using the work of one's own hands," agrees Elizabeth Wray of Belleville, Ont., who has organized her own knitting parties for abandoned or orphaned children in Kenya. Wray has shipped three tons of donated yarn to a home there and hopes to launch several knitting micro-businesses.

A less obvious opportunity arose when a member of their team noticed sanitary supplies for women were sadly lacking among the poor. A team gathered back in Canada and held "the strangest sewing parties ever," as they assembled hundreds of flannel and fleece sanitary pads. "It's great to give money," says Marilyn Grimmell, who has participated in the sewing projects, "but it's so wonderful to be able to use the crafts we love, too!" FT

—SHEILA WRAY GREGOIRE

streams: entrepreneurial, non-profit or international business.

At a total cost of about \$30,000, a TWU MBA isn't cheap, but McKay insists it's good value. "We're a great deal," he says, "because we're leveraging our existing overhead; we're not building a new school." Not yet, anyway. There were 14 students in the first graduating class, but McKay says, "Our target long-term is somewhere around 100 students graduating in any given year." FT

—PATRICIA PADDEY

Not Mission Trip as Usual

Bolivia has an extremely high rate of sexual violence against women and children. International Justice Mission Canada (IJM) is doing something about it.

When Nancy Allen, an assistant pastor from Edmonton, Alta., went on an IJM mission trip last year, she shared her story of abuse with a group of 64 Bolivian pastors and 86 leaders from 61 churches. They were moved and determined to take action.



Challenging Bolivian churches to become safer places for children: Participants meet at the IJM retreat.

The participants were on an IJM retreat, led by six Canadians who specialized in theology, law and medical practices related to the topic of sexual abuse. The retreat challenged Bolivian churches to become safer places for children by examining their attitudes and practices. Thirty-one of the churches expressed interest in a six-month IJM training course that will equip them to provide healing for abuse survivors.

IJM was started in 1997, in response to a study that uncovered overwhelming abuses of power by police and other authorities reported by 40,000 missionaries and other workers from 65 organizations around the world.

IJM Canada, which focuses its work in Bolivia, was established in 2002 "to educate, empower and engage Canadians in the pursuit of justice for the oppressed."

In an effort to help transform the notoriously corrupt Bolivian justice system, the team of six Canadians, led by Ontario Supreme Court Justice Kenneth Pedlar, provided four days of training to police officers, prosecutors, judges and other professionals who deal with child abuse cases.

"I think there are few organizations that do true structural change. In medicine, I learned years ago that to really change things, you have to do preventative work as well. It's doing the upstream work. And that's what IJM does so well," said Dr. Leslie Damude, a family physician from London, Ont., who also participated in the trip. FT

—SANDRA REIMER

All athletes are disciplined in their training.

They do it to win a prize
that will fade away,

but we do it for an
eternal prize.

[1 Cor. 9:25 NLT]



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Break Dancing in the Sanctuary?



Pastor Youngdo Kang (second from left), and other members of the hip-hop church Ill Breaks Crew, regularly meet at Tim Hortons.

Ill Breaks Crew, an outreach to hip-hop lovers, is bridging the gap between Jesus and a generation of neglected music lovers.

Founder Youngdo Kang, until recently family life pastor at Bramalea Baptist Church in Brampton, Ont., says the outreach – which held its first meeting in May of 2009 – has been on his heart for awhile.

“This is a group of people that needs to know Jesus, and don’t have many avenues to hear about Him,” says Kang, who served at Bramalea for three and a half years. “I like hip-hop, and I’m a pastor, so I thought, ‘Why not try to put them together?’

“It [hip-hop] started off as social conscience music, used to express the sadness and hardship of living in the ghettos,” explains Kang. “The four artistic elements of hip-hop are the MC, DJ, graffiti artist and break dancer. These are usually thought of as bad things, but some of their good aspects are community, creativity and uniqueness – things that aren’t unlike what a church is.”

So far, Ill Breaks Crew consists of nine young people from Bramalea who appreciate the symbolism and sounds of hip-hop. Meeting every Wednesday at a local Tim Hortons, the group discusses various artists, swaps CDs and studies the

Bible. The need that Kang says exists in the hip-hop community has encouraged him to expand the ministry and develop the Church of City Lights.

“One of our main focuses is to outreach those in the hip-hop community,” says Kang, 34. The group has started handing out samples of hip-hop created by Christians, and is planning an outreach concert for Easter.

“A lot of young people don’t know a world that hasn’t had hip-hop in it. Meanwhile, most [hip-hop lovers] don’t feel welcome in churches, so we need to intentionally reach them.” **FT**

—EMILY WIERENGA

Mom Succeeds in Global Fundraising Effort

Ann Voskamp and her six children, ages three to 14, were among the 1,000 riders at the 2009 Ride for Refugees in Waterloo, Ont.

With 94 online supporters paving the way, Voskamp raised the second highest amount in this year's global ride, with a total exceeding \$7,300.

"As Canadian farmers, we may be experiencing a very bleak financial situation," says Voskamp, a home-schooling mother from Listowel, Ont., "but even the worst economic situation for most of us in Canada is still infinitely better than displaced individuals who have lost their homes and, in horrific cases, have watched the brutal abuse and even murder of family members."

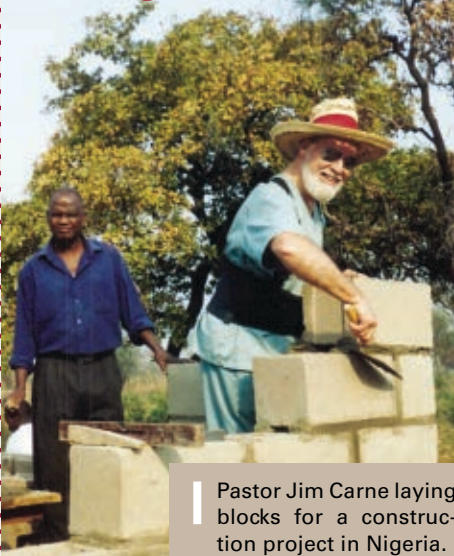
Voskamp and her family were inspired to do the ride after reading Isaiah 58 each day for a month. "The Ride for Refugees was our way to respond to the call God has for his people to share and provide for the poor," Voskamp explains.

In spite of terrible weather, the family biked a collective 60 km. "One of the children on our team said, in the midst of the hail, 'It may be hard for us – but it's harder for the refugees!' " reports Voskamp.

Initiated in 2004 by Brian Carney, development director for International Teams Canada, the ride has grown from 20 local participants to 6,000 worldwide. Occurring annually across Australia, the United States and Canada, close to \$2 million has been raised to date.

Funds are split between the preferred refugee ministries of the riders and the work of International Teams, a Christian mission

Retired Pastor Has Lofty Goal



Pastor Jim Carne laying blocks for a construction project in Nigeria.

Jim Carne never aspired to be a pastor. "I've always just wanted to help people," the 79-year-old says.

Carne became a believer at 12 through a Free Methodist church-plant near Hamilton, Ont. "I've always felt God detoured to find me," explains the great-grandfather. "I am the product of an outreach ministry, and outreach has been my passion ever since."

After marrying his high-school sweetheart, Lorraine, Carne spent 31 years ministering in the Niagara region through the Free Methodist Church, and 13 at an Evangelical Missionary church in Auburn, Ont.

Carne's congregations have all expanded rapidly, but not on account of his sermons – dynamic as they are. It's his involvement

with the community that has made the difference, he says.

"My ministry verse has always been Paul's statement – 'I am made all things to all men that by all means I might save some.' "

Over the years, Carne has assisted farmers with their chores, repaired cars for people who could not afford a mechanic, and driven transport trucks.

Despite retiring at the age of 67, Carne continues to minister as an interim pastor in Ontario, a chaplain for international cruises and a construction worker for Haiti's Mission of Hope.

"I've always had a focus on world ministry," he states. "The local pastor's involvement should not stop short of the Great Commission."

Carne's passion for outreach sends him to Haiti on missions each January, and it recently inspired him to start learning 15 new languages while tutoring 150 students through the website My Happy Planet.

"I wouldn't be doing anything like this except for the sense of God's direction," says Carne, who resides on a 49-acre farm near Clarksburg, Ont., with his wife. "I hope to spend the rest of my life loving people into the Kingdom." **FT**

—EMILY WIERENGA

organization, to relieve the physical and spiritual needs of underprivileged people.

"I can envision raising tens of millions of dollars and impacting hundreds

of thousands of refugees. I can see it," says Carne. "I believe this vision is true to the heart of God. After all, His Son was a refugee once." **FT** —EMILY WIERENGA

About 1,000 riders took part in the Ride for Refugees in Waterloo, Ont.





Taking “Christian” Out of Christian Ministry

Canadian religious charities that serve the general population face a major challenge in the Ontario case of *Heintz v. Christian Horizons*

A characteristic of Christian evangelical ministries is that we serve others regardless of their faith. Canada does well at accommodating religious diversity, historically among various kinds of Roman Catholics and Protestants and more recently among people of many religions. One key to this success is widespread respect for the freedom of people of faith to individually and collectively enter the public square with their religious identities intact. Historically we have not been required to deny or sever the integral connection of our belief and practices when serving others.

But I write this while attending the Ontario Divisional Court, where we find ourselves presenting arguments to try to preserve this connection. Several groups – The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, the Canadian Council of Christian Charities and the Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops – are intervening with Christian Horizons to challenge a problematic Human Rights Tribunal decision.

The Tribunal ruled that if Christian Horizons wants to serve non-evangelical clients, it must stop requiring its staff to adhere to an evangelical statement of faith and lifestyle policy – this for a ministry that has served mentally challenged persons for more than 40 years by providing excellent care and nurture in group home settings.

At one point in its judgment, the Tribunal even advanced a head count approach, suggesting that if the majority of those served by an organization are people of many faiths, then the organization cannot require its staff to be of one faith. Under such thinking, the only way for an organization to preserve its evangelical makeup would

be to restrict its service to other Evangelicals.

Imagine an inner-city mission conducting a religious test on clients to ensure against serving too many non-Christians. Or a relief organization responding to a famine asking the hungry to form separate lines to receive food and prioritizing those who are Evangelicals. What could be more contrary to the teaching of Jesus!

This ruling would force secularization. The Tribunal is essentially saying Evangelicals should not be able to join together to form a community or ministry and serve others as a corporate act of worship and obedience to God.

Part of the backdrop of this case is the waning public understanding of religious communities in Canada. A presumption of the Tribunal’s ruling is that the linkage between faith and practice is not essential to the service provided by Christian Horizons. Thus it presumes severing the faith that animates practice from the expression of that faith in service to others will not undermine the impulse for caring for others.

Ironically, all sociological studies corroborate that those who regularly attend places of worship are the volunteer and charitable core of Canadian society. Christian faith in action does matter – as a group, we are a core component of Canada’s social capital.

Many Canadians affirm core Christian beliefs and yet differ in their opinions on how these beliefs should be worked out in actions. There seems to be a growing presumption in Canadian society that it is unimportant for belief and conduct to be integrated – and that this presumption should be accepted by all. But it is more consistent with the Canadian approach to affirm the ability of a religious organization to preserve its integrity by prescribing lifestyles and conduct that match the beliefs animating the organization’s mission.

As Christians our task is not only to defend the freedom of religious organizations but also to help people understand the integral connection between belief and practice and bear witness to the blessing of an integrated life that recognizes the Lordship of Christ.

In a culture characterized by self-interest and in which people separate what they claim to believe from daily life, being part of a community that strives for an integral expression of belief and conduct is a vital witness. **FT**

BRUCE J. CLEMENGER is the president of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. Read more columns at theEFC.ca/clemenger.



Together for influence, impact and identity

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 theEFC.ca.

Armenia: Challenged by Independence

You can't argue with Armenia's Christian pedigree. This country bordered by Turkey and Iran was the first ever to officially adopt Christianity (in 301 A.D.). Its unofficial national symbol is even older: Mount Ararat, the supposed docking pier for Noah's Ark after its arduous 150-day voyage.

Today, an estimated 94 per cent of the Armenian population still links itself with the Armenian Apostolic Church, which traces its origins to a preaching tour by two of Jesus' disciples, Bartholomew and Thaddeus. This ancient church appears to have moved well into the current century with its Facebook page and regular Twitter updates.

Armenia easily captures the imagination. Its landscape is stunning, its art beautiful, its carpets rich and colourful, its poetry long and its architecture fascinating.

Other Middle Eastern countries may vie for the title of "civilization's birthplace," but Armenia was clearly a cradle where civilization spent some of its infancy. Armenia's history also includes centuries of being conquered by the Roman, Byzantine, Arab, Persian and Ottoman empires.

In the early days of the First World War, Armenia was crushed by what is known – at least unofficially so far – as one of the world's first genocides. More than one million Armenians are reported to have died under the heavy hand of the Ottoman Empire.

In more recent years, Armenia was swallowed up by the Soviet Union, from which it gained its independence in 1991. The Soviet years were hard on the country's churches – today there may be only 300 Armenian Apostolic churches to serve the country's 3 million people. There are also a small number of Protestant Evangelicals in the country, perhaps 10,000. The World Evangelical Alliance has national affiliates in neighbouring Turkey, Iran and Azerbaijan, but not yet in Armenia.

Border disputes still cloud Armenia's relationships with Turkey and Azerbaijan, hampering peace and restricting economic growth in the region. (Turkey's leaders have always denied that the Ottomans attempted genocide.



Armenia's border dispute with Azerbaijan is not fully resolved.)

Turkey and Armenia signed an accord in October 2009 to establish diplomatic ties and re-open the border they closed in 1993. But large and economically important groups of Armenians living abroad strongly oppose the accord.

Armenia has evolved into a free market economy. The 2009 Index of Economic Freedom ranked Armenia as the 31st freest economy in the world – ahead of 25 European countries – thanks to its flexible commercial regulation, low tax rates and few restrictions on foreign investment.

Unfortunately, there have been many speed-bumps on the road to capitalism, and life remains hard for the majority of the population. High rates of unemployment (about 31 per cent) and poverty (somewhere between 26 and 50 per cent) make it difficult to flourish, especially during the long and brutal winter season or the hot summer. Malnourishment is common.

Unicef reports that it is families with children under five that comprise almost 60 per cent of the poor in Armenia. Education is legally compulsory to the end of Grade 11, but nearly one-quarter of children drop out by 10th grade, locking them further into poverty's grip.

Nonetheless, Armenia is a regular destination for tour companies catering to Christians with a love of history and others who appreciate the beauty of a nation still becoming. **FT**

KAREN STILLER is associate editor of *Faith Today*.



Armenia Fast Facts

Full Name: Republic of Armenia

Population: 3,245,900

Area: 29,800 km² (11,506 sq. miles), landlocked and mostly mountainous

Capital and Largest City: Yerevan

Religions: Armenian Apostolic 94.7%, other Christian 4%, Yezidi (monotheism tinged by nature worship) 1.3%

Ethnic Groups: 97.9% Armenian, 1.3% Yazidi (Kurdish), 0.5% Russian, 0.3% Other

Life Expectancy: 70

Literacy: Most adults can read and write in Armenian (96%) and in Russian (76%)

GDP per capita: \$5,972

Diaspora: About 3,000,000 ethnic Armenians live in Russia, France or the United States.

(Sources: CBC Newsworld; CIA World Factbook)

Prayer Points

- Pray for the education system, especially the way that poverty is raising the dropout rate.
- Pray for an increased distribution of wealth and opportunity.
- Pray for continued healing and forgiveness over past oppression, invasion and massacres.
- Pray that the people of Armenia would find faith and life in their historic church, as well as opportunity for growth in newer expressions of the Christian faith.

Canadian Connections

- World Vision has worked in Armenia for 20 years. Canadians support 3,500 children there in various health, education and development programs. World Vision donors worldwide help another 24,000 children in Armenia. www.worldvision.ca
- The Church of the Nazarene has six churches in Armenia led by pastors with a vision to spread the gospel. www.nazarene.ca

See a more detailed version of this article at www.evangelicafellowship.ca/globalvillage

Micah Challenge Hires Co-ordinator

Robyn Bright is the new national co-ordinator for Micah Challenge Canada, a national faith-based anti-poverty network in which the EFC is a partner.

Bright comes to the EFC from Parliament Hill, where she worked as an adviser on poverty, peace-building and environmental issues for nearly seven years.

The EFC hosts the Micah Challenge national office in its Ottawa Centre for Faith and Public Life.

Bright met with MPs throughout November and December to ensure that global poverty issues are on the agenda when the G8 and G20 leaders meet in Canada in June 2010. She is also preparing for the 2010 global Micah Challenge campaign "10.10.10," which will see 10 million Christians from around the world praying together and talking action to alleviate poverty in October of next year.

The World Evangelical Alliance is a key partner of Micah Challenge International, with Micah Challenge active in 40 countries around the world.

Act on Euthanasia Bill

A private member's bill that seeks to decriminalize euthanasia and assisted suicide is scheduled to have its second hour of debate on Feb. 2 and second reading vote in the House of Commons on Feb. 3.

The EFC's euthanasia webpage will help you learn more and take action. Read about Bill C-384. Watch the EFC's short informational video. Download a sample letter that you can send to your Member of Parliament. Visit theEFC.ca/issues.

Support Affordable Housing

The EFC's Don Hutchinson and Julia Beazley appeared before a House of Commons committee Nov. 5 to support a private member's bill that proposes the development of

a national affordable housing strategy (Bill C-304). Read the submission *Moving Forward Together on Affordable Housing* at theEFC.ca (search term "affordable").

Presidents Day a Success

Each fall, the EFC holds a gathering of more than 100 ministry leaders, drawn from its affiliated denominations, ministry organizations and educational institutions. The October 2009 event, hosted by EFC President Bruce J. Clemenger, was held in Montreal and focused on ministry trends, challenges and celebrations in Quebec.

Glenn Smith, executive director of Direction Chrétienne, introduced and facilitated panel sessions that provided an overview of the province's Protestant and Catholic churches.

Other presenters included Geoff Tunnicliffe, international director of the World Evangelical Alliance, who spoke about the varied work being undertaken by the WEA in recent months.

Participants also celebrated the 45th anniversary of the EFC with past EFC presidents Brian Stiller and Gary Walsh.

Up to the Minute Updates

By Don Hutchinson, EFC vice-president

In September the EFC's Centre for Faith and Public Life (CFPL) began using new technologies to keep supporters more up-to-date, and the benefits had already become very obvious by the December court hearings in the *Heintz v Christian Horizons* case.

If you go online to theEFC.ca and follow the links to the CFPL Twitter feed or the CFPL blog, you will see what I mean (anyone can view them – you don't need to sign up or log in), but I'll also take a minute to explain here how they may benefit you.

While CFPL staff have been posting informative "webitorials" (online editorials) each month for the past few years at www.christianity.ca, our new blog and Twitter feed allow us to better engage with you on issues of law and public policy on a *daily* basis. This conveniently allows you to check in with our work on your schedule, and allows the quick sharing of information among many EFC supporters in urgent situations.

Since the blog debuted in September, we have posted an average of three new articles per week. Topics have included abortion, euthanasia, freedom of religion, human trafficking, pornography, poverty and prostitution.

Often what we do at the blog is provide current updates on bills we're supporting or opposing in Parliament, as well as on courtroom activity that's shaping the

MORE COMING EVENTS

Details at theEFC.ca/events or call 1-866-302-3362

- **EFC Christian Leaders Connection Seminars:** Christian leaders in the Church and in business can get a better understanding of how to engage in a secular Canada through these one-day seminars presented by EFC staff. Register now at www.evangelicalfellowship.ca/clc for Edmonton (Jan. 19); Calgary (Jan. 21); Toronto (Jan. 25); Belleville, Ont. (Feb. 16); Otterburne, Man. (Mar. 25); Caronport, Sask. (Mar. 26-27); Ottawa (Apr. 13).
- **Rencontre au sommet:** A French-language-only gathering of Christian workers spending 48 hours listening to God, praying and sharing, with no agenda. Near Quebec City, Jan. 25-27. Visit <http://rencontreausommet.fr.gd>.

Free Video Clip on Trafficking

The EFC has released a three-minute video clip to inform and alert individuals, congregations and youth groups to the issue of human trafficking around the world. Feel free to use the clip in your church or ministry gatherings: theEFC.ca/humantrafficking. The page also allows visitors to order copies of the new EFC booklet *Not So Ancient: Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery*, which includes questions for group discussion.

Pray for Future Missionaries

Urbana 2009 was set to highlight the current global issues most pressing to the theology and practice of Christian missions. More than 20,000 attendees were expected in St. Louis (Dec. 27-31, 2009) for the 22nd such student missions conference since 1946.

Canadian Leads World Evangelicals

Geoff Tunnicliffe, international director and CEO of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), has accepted

the invitation to serve in his role for another five years following the conclusion of his first term of service in 2010.

Tunnicliffe, of Delta, B.C., is also the EFC's director of global initiatives.

The WEA ties together more than 420 million evangelical Christians. Its mission is to foster Christian unity and provide a worldwide identity, voice and platform to evangelical Christians.

Under Tunnicliffe, the WEA has welcomed new groups into its constituency including the Council of Evangelical Churches in the Holy Land, Christian Council of Korea, the Kosovo Protestant Evangelical Church and the Evangelical Alliance of Azerbaijan.

The WEA has also launched an initiative on peace-building and reconciliation, a task force on human trafficking and a leadership development institute for its 126 national alliances.

EFC president Bruce J. Clemenger also serves with the WEA as secretary of its 13-member International Council. **FT**

present and future of our religious freedom.

Readers can join the discussion by posting comments on the blog for other readers to see. (Instead of visiting the blog regularly, you can also sign up to get blog postings instantly by email – just enter your email address in the blank on the right-hand side.)

Twitter is something different again. It allows us to send you a message of 140 characters or less (called a "tweet"). As we scan the media, we often tweet several times each day, including links to news stories that you'll want to read and perhaps respond to, either through letters to the editor or submitting an e-comment onto a news site.

At the landmark Christian Horizons court case in December, we were able to bring this new Twitter technology to an "old tech" setting: surrounded by pens and paper, I was "live tweeting" the proceedings in the courtroom from my Blackberry during the hearing.

Here's a brief reminder of the basics of the case: Christian Horizons serves developmentally disabled residents in Ontario. After a former employee filed a discrimination complaint, a Human Rights Tribunal ruled that Christian Horizons cannot restrict its hiring to Christians, even though it is a Christian organization. The tribunal even said the ministry's Christian Lifestyle and Morality Statement created "a poisoned work environment."

If this ruling is allowed to stand, Christian churches, homeless shelters, aid agencies and other ministries that serve the broader Canadian population may not be able

to keep their faith-based requirements for employment, at least those based in Ontario. As an intervenor in the case, the EFC presented crucial supporting arguments aimed at protecting all Christian charities.

Here are the kinds of info-bits I tweeted from my Blackberry®: First, from announcing the panel of judges:

- Heintz v Christian Horizons hearing begins @ 10 today. Will start tweets with HvCH to make it clear they're re this case. 7:31 AM Dec 15
- HvCH - Scheduled panel of Divisional Court judges: Justice John Jennings, Justice Sid Lederman & Justice Katherine Swinton 7:35 AM Dec 15

Second, noting arguments of legal counsel:

- HvCH -A Miedema for CH- beliefs & adherence to lifestyle policy essential to form & quality of service delivered by CH as a faith community 2:52 PM Dec 15
- HvCH -P Jervis for EFC- SCC has said there's a constitutional right to form religious communities -set beliefs, practices & member standards 10:14 AM Dec 16
- HvCH -I Benson for ACBO- Canada is not separation of church & state like USA, but cooperation of the two with mutual respect for jurisdictions 2:14 PM Dec 16

I also reported on questions the judges asked.

Fortunately, my thumbs were not worn out from playing video games but well trained from prior email experience :-)

The EFC will continue to look for ways to keep you current and provide you with the opportunity to work with us presenting biblical principles on matters of law and public policy. **FT**

Roots

The Filipino evangelical rooted back home and in

Fred Sebastian jokes that when he left his home in Manila two decades ago for balmy Thunder Bay, Ont., it was to pursue his “involvement in journalism. I was delivering newspapers,” chuckles the pastor, who now heads Church of the Living Hope in Winnipeg. Like many of his Filipino countrymen and women, Sebastian came to Canada to find a new life unavailable back home. But those opportunities weren’t simply limited to employment and education. Sebastian had bigger things on his mind.

He went on to work as a dietary aid and a shipper/receiver before pastoring a church full-time, but he credits those early working environments as important training grounds for his ministry in Canada. “I was going from a city of 20 million to one less than 100,000; there was a lot to learn about life here,” he says.

Sebastian’s story is common among Filipinos. He moved to Canada to work and send money back home, and in the process learned about his new country from the ground up.

As a collective, Filipinos have formed an identity in Canada that is relationally focused, eschewing individualism in favour of community. At the same time, Filipino-Canadians have easily integrated into the multicultural framework of this country, all the while maintaining strong connections to their homeland. It’s a balancing act few cultures are able to negotiate with such ease.

Keeping the Balance

For one, their community strongly identifies with its roots without sequestering themselves to one end of town. As one pastor told *Faith Today*, “Filipinos do not tend to cluster like some nationalities have. They don’t make their own ‘neighbourhoods’ in cities – they blend in with the majority of their adopted society.”

While there are pockets of Filipinos throughout Canada – including a congregation of Evangelicals in Yellow-

Fred Sebastian preaches at Church of the Living Hope in Winnipeg, where he serves as pastor.

and Wings

**Church is strong, warm and solidly
Canada. Canada is the richer for it.** *By Jeff Dewsbury*

knife – Toronto and Vancouver are home to the two largest communities. In total, there are more than half a million Filipinos in Canada, and the majority of them call themselves Christians.

According to a Statistics Canada report in 2007, “Almost all Canadians of Filipino origin belong to a Christian faith. In 2001, 81 per cent said they were Catholic, while 15 per cent belonged to either a mainline Protestant denomination or another Christian grouping. In contrast, only a relatively small proportion of the Filipino community, three per cent, reported they had no religious affiliation.”

Though they are, by far, the statistical minority, Filipino Protestants are enthusiastic evangelists. The main focus of their efforts are Filipino Catholics, especially those who grew up with the brand of patriarchal Catholicism prevalent in the Philippines, where priests can even maintain a proprietary use of the Scriptures.

“We have a 55-year-old man in our congregation who moved here [from the Philippines], had attended church much of his life, but had never opened a Bible before,” says pastor Raymond Torres. “Now he is devouring it. God put in our hearts these people when we planted this church. People who are asking what a relationship with Jesus actually means.”

Torres, who divides his time between a full-time dental practice and pastoring Praise Christian Fellowship church in Burnaby, B. C., says Acts 2:42 (“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer”) served as a foundational verse at the inception of the church, which currently meets in the gymnasium of a local school.

“When I was raised Catholic, my parents taught me that born-again Christians were fanatics,” says the pastor, who immigrated to Canada with his wife and children when he was 32 years old. His conversion to what he describes as a “living faith” is the background he relies on as he meets others (often recent immigrants to Canada) who have grown

up attending church as a ritual. “When we show our brothers and sisters the truth about what it means to be in an actual relationship with Jesus, it is so exciting.”

Deep Roots

While many Filipino Evangelicals left their Catholic roots behind when they came to Canada, it’s fair to say the community as a whole maintains more than just sentimental cultural ties to life back home. Ron de Villa – who does double duty as a pastor at Word Christian Fellowship in Richmond, B.C. and teaches business administration at Douglas College – says many in his community hold both Canadian and Filipino passports, allowing them to legally vote for presidents, senators and members of congress in their homeland. These close ties to the country continue into sports, politics and even entertainment.

“We still stay connected with Filipinos on the world stage,” concurs Sebastian, citing how members of the congregation get together in restaurants and homes to eat and watch welterweight Filipino boxing phenomenon Manny Pacquiao on pay-per-view. “The following day, I better speak about the fight from the pulpit or I’m not in tune with my people,” laughs the pastor.

Connections to the homeland go deeper than the public sphere, however. Most immigrants from the Philippines also hold strong personal devotion to their roots, often shown through generosity. According to the pastors interviewed by *Faith Today*, many Filipino Christians divide their tithe between the church they attend in Canada and one in the Philippines. And those same people also support extended family back home.

Unity

That type of loyalty also plays a role in a broader context, as Filipinos connect their faith-based networks (here and abroad) to work together for common causes. Benjamin Mapa is the senior pastor of Christ Centered Alliance Church

in Toronto. The 48-year-old is one of the founding members of the Filipino Ministerial Fellowship (FMF), a group of 30 pastors spanning a broad cross section of denominations – including Pentecostal, Foursquare, Baptist, Christian and Missionary Alliance, Anglican and Methodist – in the Greater Toronto Area.

Mapa says the pastors address issues such as church hopping, an area of concern to many in the community. But they also work together to promote large prayer and relief events, in one case raising \$15,000 by organizing a concert to benefit victims of last fall's typhoon in the Philippines.

Approximately half of the FMF's members are bi-vocational, merging their work as engineers, doctors, warehouse workers and business people with pastoral service in a local church. This busy networking style of evangelism and church leadership fits well with the strong emphasis on relationships and fellowship in the community, say many of the pastors, who seem to have a bottomless well of energy and enthusiasm to lend to their roles.

"We practise faith in the marketplace," says Mapa. "Gone are the days when we preach on Sunday and then stay home to pray. We are no longer to stay in our cocoon. We now have to fly."

The collective unity of pastors meeting and praying with one another has been so effective that the group started the Association of Filipino Pastors in Canada (AFPC), a similar nationwide initiative, in 2009.

A Diaspora With a Mission

Dr. Sadiri "Joy" Tira is the international co-ordinator for the Filipino International Network (FIN), which he describes as "a catalytic movement of Christians committed to motivate and mobilize Filipinos globally to partner for worldwide mission."

Perhaps more than anyone in Canada, Tira has studied the roots and subsequent effects of the Filipino diaspora. The pastor – who immigrated to Canada in 1981 and planted one of the country's first evangelical Filipino churches in Edmonton – points out that there are nearly eight million Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) worldwide. It is such a substantial force that the government of the Philippines acknowledges that the funds those workers send back home (to the tune of \$14.4 billion USD in 2007 alone) keep their economy afloat.

"These funds not only support the Philippine economy, but also supplement the financial activity of the Philippine Church," says Tira. "In recent years, many Filipino diaspora

congregations have initiated focused missions activities and church planting initiatives in the homeland. The financial contributions of the Filipino diaspora congregations vary from scholarship funds for Bible school students, church planting movements, construction and reconstruction of church facilities, and funding of orphanages."

Evangelical fervour for their first culture doesn't overshadow their significant roles in other countries, however.

Tira says Filipinos can be characterized as "adaptable, acceptable and accessible" people who are ministering in the world's mega-cities, in small towns on the Canadian Prairies and in the North, in myriad cross-cultural ministries, on cruise ships and oil tankers and, perhaps most noticeably in Canada, in vocations that primarily employ women. "There is a unique social aspect to the Filipino woman's role in Canadian evangelism," says Tira, noting that many OFWs in Canada are women under the age of 35 who are service workers, nurses and caregivers. "They have a vital role in fulfilling the Great Commission. These women have privileged access to the homes of unchurched people and families, and they are active witnesses of Christ in their spheres of influence."

Rosemarie Garcia, a financial analyst for the City of Toronto and a pastor at Jesus Reigns International Inc. Church, says a big part of her ministry is helping Filipino women reach out in their workplaces. "They sometimes experience prejudice when they are not given the option of practising their chosen profession here," she says, noting that one woman in her congregation works as a lab technician, even though she is a certified pediatrician in the Philippines. "I keep emphasizing that they need to be the hands, eyes and feet of the Lord here – where they are – not necessarily in the profession they had back home."

Communication Between Generations

While there doesn't seem to be one big issue that divides young and old, there are subtle cultural shifts between the way things are done back home and the way the emerging generation sees the world. The main difference cited between first generation Canadians and successive generations is the way the groups view authority. Those born in the Philippines have an ingrained deference to their elders, while Canadian-born Filipinos are more likely to develop their own opinions and openly question the status quo. "The younger generation in Canada is being taught to be more expressive," says Sebastian. "They learn to ask 'Why?' which can sometimes be considered disrespectful to those who aren't used to that."

Twenty-one-year-old University of Manitoba microbiology student, JP Adiong, says those his age want to talk through things more than their parents do. "If an older



Sadiri "Joy" Tira: Filipinos can be characterized as "adaptable, acceptable and accessible."



Clockwise from top: A mission team from Church of the Living Hope gathers before leaving on a short-term mission trip to Tijuana, Mexico; food and hospitality are some of the hallmarks of the Filipino community; Ben Mapa, senior pastor of Christ Centered Alliance Church in Toronto, leads a protest on Parliament Hill in defence of traditional marriage.



person has something to say, they often keep it to themselves. They avoid confrontation," he notes. "They're not as expressive as the younger generation...and there is a gap of interaction between the two. The youth are rarely involved in events with the older people."

Tira says the full effect of a gap between second and third generation Filipino Canadians is still to come, since influxes of Filipino immigrants didn't start in Canada until the 1960s. "The fact is that most ethnic Filipino churches are just beginning to work with this issue," he told *Faith Today*. "While the first generation Filipino-Canadians are linguistically adaptable (most services are held in English even in first generation churches), and are culturally adaptable, the succeeding generations of Filipinos do present some challenges to the ethnic Filipino-Canadian churches. Styles in decision-making are

markedly different, so this affects church management, and there are shifts in communication style."

If They Don't Eat, They Don't Meet

Yet, one thing is for certain. Whatever the topic, however it is expressed, it will most certainly be discussed over a table full of food. Hospitality is one of the biggest hallmarks of the Filipino community and it is unanimous among pastors that part of Sunday worship is sharing a meal at church after every service and at almost every other event. "If a Filipino pastor is gaining weight, it's a sure sign that he's doing his job," says Torres. "If a congregation is looking for a new building, the first question is 'Is there a kitchen?' No kitchen? No church," laughs Napa. **FT**

JEFF DEWSBURY is a freelance writer in Langley, B.C.

Careful Investing

Economic recessions get us thinking about our savings and investments. They're also an opportunity to reflect on how well these things truly reflect our Christian principles.

By Emily Wierenga

When it comes to the economic recession, people think about three things: debt, debt and more debt, says Lorne Jackson of Ottawa, founder of Advisors With Purpose, a Canada-wide network of Christian financial advisors.

"Government, corporate and personal debt – everywhere you turn, everyone's spent more than they've made."

In fact, many observers say that our tight economic times are the result of poor investments. Jackson warns that the problems will only increase until North America learns to invest more wisely.

Is the Bible a good place to look for wisdom about investing? It includes more than 2,000 references to possessions and finances – and many of them hinge on the idea of stewardship, of recognizing that God owns it all, Jackson explains.

A Christian approach to money and investing doesn't involve asking "How much of my money do I have to give to God?" Instead, Jackson suggests, it means asking "How much of God's money does He want me to use for myself?"

"God knew that, if taken in the wrong context, money could appear to provide for us everything He is supposed to," says Jackson. "But it fails to provide these things in the end."

"We are managers of what God has given us," agrees Karen Bjerland of Faithlife Financial, a not-for-profit investment and life insurance company based in Waterloo, Ont. (www.faithlifefinancial.ca). "We have to be responsible." God's people need to think of themselves less as consumers and more as conservers.

Applying stewardship in a world where the average global wage is three dollars per day is difficult, adds Gary Hawton, founder of Meritas Mutual Funds of Kitchener, Ont., a joint venture of three Mennonite institutions (www.meritas.ca). "Globalization has left people with so little that in their lifetime, they'll earn less than my investments lost during last fall's market corrections."

"So how do we respond?" he asks. "Do we give everything away? How do we put our faith where our money is?"

RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENTS

The answer, Hawton argues, lies in using our finances to give a voice back to the voiceless. In other words, to invest in companies striving to make a difference, both environmentally and socially.

Socially Responsible Investments (SRIs) are those that keep this question in view: Am I honouring God's creation with my finances?

Hawton elaborates: "Are my invest-

ments creating widows and orphans, or helping them? Are my investments taking advantage of disadvantaged children, or lending them a hand?"

One good way to try to answer that question is by going to someone whose job it is to know – someone like Michael Jantzi of Jantzi-Sustainalytics in Toronto (www.jantziresearch.ca).

"We track the environmental and social performance of companies which investment managers are looking to invest in," explains Jantzi, 45, who founded what was then called Jantzi Research.

"How do you know which values are more environmentally and socially responsible? That's where we fit into the equation. That's the core. We're on the research level."

Having grown up in a Mennonite household, Jantzi says he was raised to be concerned about social justice. "These types of issues which we track every day were a part of the fabric of my





Are our investments taking advantage of disadvantaged children or lending them a hand? Inset: The number of child labourers in the world is six times Canada's population.

MAIN PHOTO: WWW.DESIGNPICS.COM INSET: KAY CHERNUSH FOR THE U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT

everyday life."

Finding himself attracted to the business world, Jantzi says the light bulb went on in 1989 when he learned about SRIs. "As soon as I heard about them, I knew. If we're going to change corporate behaviour, do it through the markets."

Money talks, says Jantzi, and companies listen. "If we can impact how investment money flows to companies, then we can impact their actions and bring corporate responsibility to the agenda."

No one is perfect. Similarly, each company has its flaws. Jantzi-Sustainalytics rec-

ognizes this, and therefore supports those looking to minimize their adverse impact.

"It's about making sure the water we drink and the air we breathe are healthy," he says. "We're looking for companies that understand that, as well as those that operate according to the Golden Rule."

In short, he says, a responsible company is one that pays attention to a broad range of stakeholders – environmental, human rights, employees and communities – not just the shareholder. "If corporate management pays attention to these broader stakeholder interests,"

he adds, "that's good for the shareholder and good for the bottom line."

ALIGNING FAITH AND FINANCES

As a result of abiding by socially responsible guidelines, companies experience a more productive workforce, less turnover, less absenteeism and more business. "It's about common-sense business," says Jantzi. "The opportunity to align faith values and economics is a powerful thing in its own right. The fact that you can make money at the same time is a no-brainer."

Wendell Schlumberger, senior vice

president of FI Capital (www.ficapital.ca), a division of FaithLife Financial, agrees. "Both FaithLife Financial and FI Capital, through our two SRI funds, believe that environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG) issues can affect the performance of investment portfolios," he says, "and that companies that incorporate ESG considerations into their business model and operations represent more sound long-term investments."

Much of the SRI movement was catalyzed by the Christian community back in the 1970s with the Task Force on Churches' Corporate Responsibility (one of several task forces connected with the Canadian Council of Churches, which all came together to form the KAIROS network).

But despite those venerable church roots, there are still a lot of Christians today who are comfortable with a large disconnect between their finances and their faith, Jantzi observes.

"They tend to think, 'I'm going to invest as much money as I can and then donate through philanthropy,'" he says. Often that means wreaking as much havoc as possible through investments, and then giving back to charity. "They don't think that through their investments they might be supporting companies which are causing the problems in the first place."

Jantzi's job is to help people connect the dots – to recognize how their investments will ultimately impact the world. "But then when you point out these in-

consistencies and people choose to ignore it – that's what I find frustrating."

Hawton agrees. "A lot of God's money is invested in ungodly companies," he says. "Christians need to stand up to their financial planners and say, 'It's not just about how much money I make, but how it's made.'"

Too often, he says, believers get caught up in numbers, when in fact we're called to a higher standard than anyone else: to be leaders in the area of finance by bringing a compassionate perspective to it.

TRUETITHING

This, adds Hawton, is where the Church needs to take a stand. "Growing up, I remember many messages where stewardship was about 10 per cent of my income, but rarely did it become about my retirement money. And rarely did it talk about the other 90 per cent."

We've separated our beliefs from our finances, he laments, and this is something which needs to be remedied. With the number of child labourers in the world being six times Canada's population, something is wrong, says Hawton. "We're completely out of step with our Messiah in terms of His views on money and what it can do."

According to Jackson, the average

Canadian gives 2.3 per cent of his income to charity, and 9.8 per cent to interest on consumer debt. "So we Canadians are tithing – but to the wrong god. The Bible says we can serve God or money – it looks like we're serving money."

John Horwood, an "Advisor With Purpose" employed by the Toronto branch of Richardson GMP (www.richardsongmp.com), says we can improve the

situation by thinking more clearly about what money is – and what it isn't. "We have a responsibility to provide for our families, but if we hug money and don't understand its true purpose, it becomes an idol."

As Christians, explains Hawton, we need to search the Scriptures and try to determine, 'Are there products on the shelves which my beliefs say I shouldn't buy?' If so, figure out who makes that product and avoid that company.

"We can bring some balance back to the world of investment – a world that gets fixated on numbers only. We need to help the corporate world ask the harder, more important questions like 'What was the true cost of this product?'"

The economic recession is an opportunity for Christians to express economic faith, he says; to re-evaluate needs and wants, and to become salt and light in the financial world.

"I would hope that every person sitting inside a church would say, 'No; just because it's permissible doesn't mean it's beneficial. I need to grab hold of that, and care.'" **FT**

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EMILY WIERENGA is a freelance writer in Blyth, Ont. Advisors With Purpose, a network mentioned above, also serves supporters of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada who may want advice about creating a God-honouring legacy or writing a will. For details contact the EFC at 1-866-302-3362.

Nancy Nason Clark

Building Bridges to Overcome Domestic Violence

By Patricia Paddey

It's a sad, often unacknowledged reality that domestic violence exists in Christian homes in about the same measure that it exists in the general population. Nancy Nason Clark has been studying this reality for two decades – a new edition of her book with Catherine Clark Kroeger, *No Place for Abuse: Biblical and Practical Resources to Counteract Domestic Violence*, will be released by InterVarsity Press later this year – and she still feels called to do something about it.

Nason Clark is chair of the department of sociology at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton. For more than 20 years she has worked at the cutting edge of research into how faith communities, especially evangelical ones, deal with abuse in the home.

It's work that is neither easy nor popular. Longtime friend and co-author Catherine Kroeger says, "Sometimes it's disappointing that the results [she uncovers] aren't as rosy as we'd like them to be. But on the other hand, they're honest. She's telling the truth."



And the truth Nason Clark has revealed is complex. While women of faith aren't any more vulnerable to abuse than those in secular society, when they are abused, they are more vulnerable.

Nason Clark sees two reasons for that increased vulnerability. "They're even more likely to think they've promised 'forever.' And if they go to their faith community for help and that help is not forthcoming, they are more likely to blame themselves."

WEB-BASED PROJECT

One of Nason Clark's current projects, called RAVE (Religion and Violence e-Learning), includes a website that's breaking new ground in connecting families of faith impacted by abuse with the help and resources they need to make the abuse stop.

Visit www.theraveproject.com and you'll immediately be welcomed by Nason Clark or, rather, by a full-body, miniature audiovisual recording of her. Dressed in a grey, two-piece suit, she stands screen right. "Welcome to the Rave website," begins the recording. "My name is Nancy Nason Clark and I'm *delighted* that you've chosen to come and visit us."

The image is attractive, the voice warm and sincere. It is appropriate that Nason Clark should be the spokesperson here because such "bringing together" is not only what Nason Clark does, it is also how she defines herself.

"We're constantly building bridges," she explains. "We're building bridges be-

tween the social worker and the police officer, between the Church and the shelter, between remote or rural areas and urban areas, and between the survivor and those who would attempt to help her.

"So I'm a bridge-builder. Sometimes that's a very comfortable role, and sometimes less so."

DISAPPOINTMENTS

Nason Clark is not a woman who shares intimate thoughts readily. Ask her personal questions and she responds with professional answers, diverting the conversation away from herself and onto her work, a subject she's clearly passionate about.

But ask her to explain why it has been "less than comfortable" to act as a bridge-builder and you catch a glimpse of what must have been a somewhat disillusioning realization. "For me, one of the disappointments is that our faith communities have been very slow to come to the collaborative table," she says. "We don't really want to recognize that domestic violence is in our own backyard."

She made the decision to become a follower of Jesus when she was very small and has never seriously wavered from that early choice. "My own spiritual journey has been pretty consistent," she explains, quickly adding the qualifier that she would like to be "stronger and more faithful" to all the things she is called to do. Still, she cannot identify a single rocky period in her personal walk with God.

Her relationship with the Church has been another matter. "There have been times when I've been very saddened by the contemporary evangelical church," she admits, "and I have asked myself and others hard questions. But in terms of my relationship with God, that hasn't been the case."

At 52, such consistency adds up to decades of unwavering belief, a foundation that has allowed God to use Nason Clark as a sort of "prophet" for our time, according to Kroeger.

"The role of a prophet is to see a social evil, bring the Word of God to bear upon it and demand appropriate action," says Kroeger. "She is able to definitively and conclusively show that abuse exists in the Church and that we need to do something about it. 'You don't do something about it if you don't believe there's a problem.'"

EQUIPPING THE CHURCH

A member of First Wesleyan Church in Fredericton, Nason Clark speaks warmly of her own "very supportive, vibrant faith community," but she is interdenominational in her work. She has made it her goal to educate and equip the broader Christian community to respond in appropriate ways.

This goal is shaped partly by the needs uncovered in her research. Churches of all stripes have shown reluctance to engage on the issue of domestic violence. Nason Clark's research (particularly one study of 300 Atlantic Baptist and holiness pastors) suggests only eight per cent of religious leaders feel equipped to respond to the issue.

There is also some good news from her research. Although critics suggest women are afraid to seek help from religious leaders, in fact almost all pastors report they have experience responding to domestic violence. Pastors who have received training about domestic violence do respond helpfully to such situations and are well poised to work collaboratively in their communities to reduce domestic violence. And research shows that men who act abusively can be enhanced on their journey towards justice,



accountability and change by a religious leader who walks alongside them.

Nason Clark has also authored or edited eight books and many articles. She has served as president of the Religious Research Association and president of the Association for the Sociology of Religion. A frequent speaker, she travels extensively.

"She's willing to go anywhere in the world to share her message," says Kroeger. "Her passion for her work takes her to all kinds of inconvenient places. I've seen her survive on very little sleep and in very uncomfortable situations, all so she could bring her message about stopping domestic violence."

Nason Clark is married to Dr. David Clark, a clinical psychologist and depression researcher. They met as students at Houghton College in New York in the 1970s and have been married for 32 years. Together through years of graduate studies and postgraduate work, travel and building two demanding careers, they've also built a close, supportive family life, one that continues to give priority to their two grown daughters.

Nason Clark says it is the refuge provided by her close family that offers respite from the tragedy she often encounters in her research, and allows her to do her sometimes torturous work.

But, says Kroeger, family is not what drives her. "First, I would say it's her Christian commitment. But, second, I suspect it's her desire to bring relief from suffering and to make the world a better place."

And it is also Nason Clark's conviction that faith communities have a unique role to play in the healing journey of survivors and in calling to accountability those who have been abusive. That gives her the moral courage to keep calling the Church to become involved.

"We need to make our churches safe places to talk about domestic abuse," she says. "Where better to look for healing and help?"

And yet she admits the work has often caused her to wonder where the Christians are. "How can there be so much

How Can a Church Help?

Helping abused women and their children is a valuable way churches can serve their communities. How?

- Research your community's resources to identify needs and potential resources. Who is already working locally to stop violence and meet the needs of those who have been abused? What is the greatest need? What can your church offer: Meeting space? Communications vehicles? Volunteers?
- Interact with secular caregivers to find common ground. Start by focussing on shared vision. Then, identify the unique contributions different perspectives bring. Celebrate diversity of talents, viewpoints and training. Explore how those gifts can be harnessed to provide the best service possible in the community.
- Be a ready and receptive church. Ensure church leaders know the phone numbers and Internet addresses of the nearest women's shelters, and post them in the women's restrooms in the church. Make it clear the church will support victims through the process of seeking shelter. Consider starting a support group for women who have been victims of abuse.

Adapted from www.theraveproject.com, an initiative that seeks to bring knowledge and social action together to assist families of faith impacted by abuse, and to educate churches and clergy on the best ways to assist victims and stop abuse.

pain? And how can we appear so absent?" she asks.

"I've called that a 'holy hush' in some of my writings, where we have swept the issue of domestic violence under the proverbial church carpet. And yet I believe there is a rumbling in the church closet

and a shattering of the silence. And that rumbling is getting louder all the time."

No doubt thanks in large measure to the work of Nancy Nason Clark. **FT**

PATRICIA PADDEY of Mississauga, Ont., is a contributing writer at *Faith Today*.

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Dealing With

Student DEBT

Advice from Canadian students who studied in the United States

By *Stephanie Tombari*

Many students' joy at graduating with their bachelors degrees is tempered by tens of thousands of dollars of debt, but it doesn't have to be that way.

Gerta Kits never had any student debt. "I paid for my undergrad partly myself by working full-time in the summer and a few hours a week during the year, got several small scholarships, and my parents made up the difference," says Kits, a PhD student at the University of Alberta and a graduate of The King's University College in Edmonton. Because of her high undergraduate grades, her master's degree and doctoral education have been fully funded by scholarships from the Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) of Canada.

Even some Canadians who studied in the United States, where schools are generally more expensive, have managed to avoid major debt.

"I started saving for college when I was in Grade 8," says Emily Clarke, a graduate of Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, Ill. "I have three sisters and knew my parents would not be able to pay for all of us. I

figured if I could pay for myself, it would relieve some of the burden. I put money into a savings account and trusted that God would make it stretch. He did."

Though Clarke chose Moody because it offered a program in electronic media and ministry, there was another benefit that helped keep her debt-free: Moody is in the enviable position of having donors who pay for student tuition.

"Moody is unique because it is tuition-paid," explains Clarke, who worked parttime during school to help cover her \$11,000 annual living costs. "The screening process is intense; only about 400 students are admitted every year. For most schools in the States, it will cost a lot more."

Karen Bokma can attest to that. "The big-

ger issue for me wasn't the actual tuition because I got a good scholarship and some financial aid. But when I was going to school, the exchange rate was in the mid- to low-60s," recalls Bokma, who graduated from Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich., in 2002. "What it added up to was often between \$1.45 to \$1.55 CDN for \$1 US."

A year's tuition at a Canadian school ranges from \$2,500 to \$13,000, which does not include accommodation, food and other living costs. In the United States, tuition might range from \$8,000 to \$30,000 per year.

Despite the higher costs of attending university in the United States, Canadian students still choose American schools for different reasons, whether it's for campus



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size, reputation or the type of academic programs they offer.

Ashley Tamminga took a gap year prior to studying medieval European history at Calvin College to save for tuition and living expenses, but two car accidents during that same year absorbed most of her savings. Though her parents were financially capable of assisting with her education costs, Tamminga never expected it.

"I got a lot of OSAP [Ontario Student Assistance Program], and I got money from [the] Christian Economic Assistance Fund (CEAF)," explains Tamminga, who graduated in 2007. CEAF is a non-profit organization that loans money to Ontario residents in need of financial support for Christian education, including day school and university.

But when her mother was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, it became nearly impossible for Tamminga's parents to help with her education. "I did a lot of crying at the financial aid office," she recalls. "It's

really unfair that I couldn't get financial aid. I asked if it's just assumed that parents are paying for their kids' university education. They said 'Yes it is, at least at this school. It's a parent's job.' "

Tamminga finally got some surprising good news when she finished Calvin. CEAF forgave 95 per cent of what she'd borrowed. "I felt like jumping up and down," she remembers. "It felt like huge grace, because at the same time I was confronting the OSAP loan, which was about the same as what CEAF had given me. So to have 50 per cent of my total debt forgiven felt pretty great."

FIRST-HAND ADVICE

"If I could change one thing about the financial landscape of my university years, I would have been less anxious about money," says Tamminga. "I did lay awake many a night worrying about how to make my next rent payment or tuition installment, but every time I hit



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rock bottom something miraculous happened. But then again, I wouldn't have been aware of these blessings if I hadn't been so desperate in the first place."

"Apply for as many scholarships and bursaries as possible," Kits recommends. "High grades do help with the financial side of things, so do your best. Plan to work full-time in the summer. And you obviously shouldn't choose what school to go to based on tuition, but if you can go to a less expensive one that's just as good, why not?"

"Be wise with your money," advises Clarke. "Sometimes you have to make sacrifices. Occasionally you have to say "no" to going out for dinner or to buying something new. You can have fun, but spend with moderation. I am glad that I spent a few years being wise rather than spending two to five years paying off student loans. Now the money that I have is mine to spend where I want it."

Bokma worked 25 hours a week through her undergraduate career, but still won't have her student debt paid off until 2011, nine years after graduation. "I wish I would have had more saved, but I'm not actually sure that would have been an option," she says. "I don't regret the student loans I took out to pay for school.

Would I have loved to do it all debt-free? Absolutely. But I wouldn't have been able to afford university without debt, so I look at it as the better option." **FT**

STEPHANIE TOMBARI of Burlington, Ont., is a contributing writer at *Faith Today*.



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Who Defines Academic Freedom?

Let's agree that all colleges and universities are biased and that their "world views" influence the way graduates see the world.

By Al Hiebert

Should college and university students be free to think, say and do whatever they want? Within legal limits, of course.

The first response of many Canadians is a quick "yes." But in some ways, it's not that simple.

Should a professor at an evangelical university be free to publically argue that Jesus was just a man and not God? Should a Christian prof at a secular university be free to argue that non-Christian religions are fabrications unsupported by historical evidence, even

when large parts of the student body are devout Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims?

Should a student at a Christian school be free to argue for and live out a lifestyle that demonstrates contempt for all limits on sexual liberty?

How do schools deal with such issues, often labelled as issues of academic freedom? And more to the point, how does a Christian school remain Christian while doing so?

WHAT KIND OF FREEDOM?

The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) defines academic

freedom in a 2005 document as "the right to teach, learn, study and publish free of orthodoxy or threat of reprisal and discrimination."

It's pretty obvious that "freedom from orthodoxy" is not what Christian schools are after.

Yet in the past year, CAUT has challenged several of them over their "faith test," the common practice of requiring employees to promise not to advocate against certain core Christian beliefs or lifestyle requirements.

This looming showdown would not be necessary if everyone were to agree

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to a slightly wider definition of academic freedom. Consider for example the perspective of the Association of Universities and Colleges in Canada (AUCC):

It is essential that universities have the freedom to set their research and educational priorities. How the members of universities will teach and impart skills, conduct research and the pursuit of knowledge, and engage in fundamental criticism is best determined within the universities themselves. It is here that academic freedom, in its collective form of institutional autonomy, can ensure freedom of inquiry for individual faculty members and students.

Last October, these issues of academic freedom were discussed by the board of Christian Higher Education Canada,

an association of 35 evangelical colleges, seminaries and universities. Not surprisingly, the board expressed its preference for the AUCC perspective.

Jonathan Raymond, president of Trinity Western University, observed, "CAUT is simply out of step with higher educa-

tion in North America."

When CAUT representatives visited Canadian Mennonite University recently in Winnipeg, an amicable two-hour conversation led university president Gerald Gerbrandt to urge CAUT to sponsor a conference on the place of faith-based univer-

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sities in a pluralist liberal democracy.

Since then Trinity Western, which is based in Langley, B.C., has offered to sponsor an academic conference that would open more public dialogue on these issues – and it has invited CAUT to participate. The proposed conference would focus on best practices in Canadian higher education generally, including a discussion focused particularly on academic freedom at faith-based universities.

BIAS A PROBLEM?

The need for more public discussion on these issues is evident in a 2007 Ipsos Reid national study of 7,800 people.

It showed that most Canadians assume Christian higher education is biased.

Fair enough, in one sense. Canadians should expect that an avowedly Christian institution with a mission, a statement of faith and a code of conduct would respect such stated convic-

tions (even if CAUT seems to think it shouldn't).

But what about bias at secular Canadian universities? Yes, there are evangelical Christian faculty who work at such schools. But they generally find themselves vastly outnumbered by faculty who hold to secular convictions such as these:

- Democracy requires that faith convictions embracing a supreme being, divine revelation, an afterlife, divine

Schools Get Unprecedented Funds

Millions of dollars of new federal government funding suggests increasing societal respect for Christian colleges and universities.

By Alex Newman

An unprecedented move by the federal government has richly benefited several Christian universities and colleges in Canada.

Recognizing that knowledge infrastructure is crucial to Canada's economy, the federal government's Knowledge Infrastructure Program (KIP) funded \$2 billion to public and private colleges and universities for improving facilities and infrastructure, particularly in the areas of science and technology.

For Christian universities, "It's a historic change, and nothing short of amazing," says Justin Cooper, president of Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ont., which received \$2.9 million. The funds will help cover costs of increasing research and energy sustainability initiatives across campus.

Educational funding is a provincial mandate, and Christian universities generally aren't eligible, so they welcome the change. (Alberta and Manitoba are the exception: private colleges there have long been eligible to receive about half what a public

institution might get for capital costs).

Christian universities that benefited from KIP include: Redeemer and Tyndale University College and Seminary in Ontario; Trinity Western University in British Columbia; The King's, Concordia, Canadian, St Mary's and Ambrose University Colleges plus Newman Theological Seminary in Alberta; Providence College and Seminary and Canadian Mennonite University in Manitoba; and Atlantic Baptist University in New Brunswick.

Thanks to Canada's diversity, faith on campus is becoming more prominent in the media, and the culture at large, because "students bring their faith to school," says Jonathan Raymond, president of Trinity Western, which received \$2.6 million from KIP. Though TWU is predominantly Christian, other faiths are represented as well.

When it comes to funding, Raymond believes "faith-based education gets an ambivalent embrace in the general public, government and among higher education circles," although he has seen some changes

in perception.

Historically, the perception of Christian universities is as teaching institutes rather than research facilities, says Harry Fernhout, president of The King's University College in Edmonton. In addition to upgrading computer and science facilities, the nearly \$1 million KIP funds will help increase its public profile so that people realize "we do real research in real labs."

Fernhout is not alone in believing this change of perception is due to the calibre of education and the consistently high student rankings.

"There seems to be an ongoing recognition of high quality at Christian universities, in part because of the student ratings," notes Raymond. "It results in an emerging strong profile and respect for the university, so when you get funding, no one is particularly surprised."

Universities increasingly use student surveys because of the potential boost to enrolment. For the past 18 years, the national magazine *Maclean's* has excluded Christian universities from its annual student

moral norms and supernatural events must be excluded from the public square.

- Whatever happens must be accounted for by natural causes only, as science/reason requires.
- Freedom means support for the politically correct agenda, including a woman's right to choose abortion and various kinds of same-sex activism.

Such convictions have dominated

rankings survey. This year, however, the magazine published results from the independent Canadian University Survey Consortium that includes Christian schools and in which several, including Redeemer, Trinity Western and Tyndale, scored very well.

The *Globe & Mail* newspaper also does a survey – this year grading 53 universities on a number of key criteria by surveying 38,000 Canadian university students about their experiences. Again, Christian universities ranked high (see www.globecampus.ca/navigator).

Maclean's concluded that “smaller universities significantly outperform larger universities.”

Fernhout agrees: “Smaller works better because it's easier to build a community.”

But he also says that Christian higher education can go one better: “To be part of a community that affirms you as a person and a person of faith is a critical part of the Christian university experience. We talk about transformative education – that includes looking at the whole person, looking at all dimensions, dealing with a person as a person of faith and forming them in that regard.” **FT**

ALEX NEWMAN of Toronto is a contributing writer at Faith Today.



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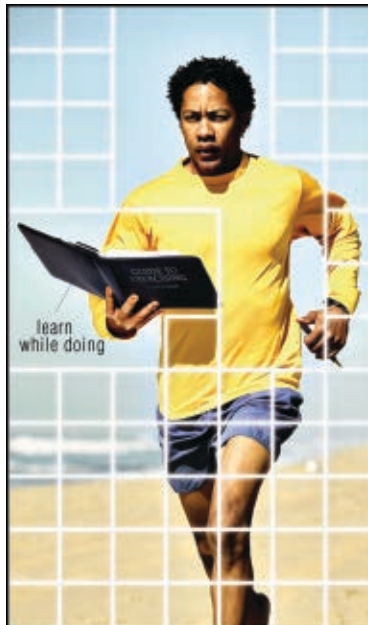
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public education at all levels for at least a generation. In such an environment, it should be no surprise to find some academic leaders inclined to dismiss Christian scholarship – and perhaps to question the very legitimacy of Christian colleges and universities.

But, thankfully, there are academic leaders who have a better understanding of these issues.

John Stackhouse of Regent College has taught at secular and religious institutions. In a forthcoming *University Affairs* article, he points out that faculty at Christian schools are not alone in experiencing pressures toward conformity – pressures that threaten academic freedom.

At secular universities, Stackhouse says, teachers feel pressured “to conform to the preferences of one’s departmental superiors who will be deciding on one’s tenure and promotion, to the

fads of one’s discipline and to the priorities of granting agencies.”

Stackhouse calls on the wider academic community to consider that “there is something very good about an institution that fosters a community of scholarship in which a range of basic ideas can be taken for granted as incontestable and then other ideas can be explored together on that basis.”

In his *University Affairs* article he adds: “What CAUT cannot expect, however, is for confessional universities to act exactly like secular universities.”

LIMITATIONS EVERYWHERE?

The issue is a crucial one for the future of our country because colleges and universities influence the belief systems of their graduates.

One study suggests that more than half the students who called themselves “born-again” Christians going into pub-

lic colleges and universities rejected the term by graduation and had not attended church for over a year.

At Christian institutions, this apparent loss of faith only affected one to three per cent. (The study by Steve Hendersen looked at 16,000 students in 133 schools.)

Many proponents of the CAUT definition of academic freedom may see these numbers as good, as a sign that public schools are helping students move beyond irrational religious beliefs.

But Christian philosophers argue that this change among students is not due to a relaxation of restrictions, but rather a replacement of one world view by another.

Basically it comes down to the idea that students have a choice between higher education with a Christian bias or with a secular bias.

Let’s all agree that it’s impossible to

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have higher education free of bias, both in principle and in practice.

Agreement on this point would allow all Canadians, religious or not, to affirm the 17,000 Canadians each year who freely prefer to sharpen their minds with those who confess Jesus as Lord, though they may freely disagree on other matters.

For further discussion, see www.faithtoday.ca/academicfreedom. **FT**

AL HIEBERT, PHD, is executive director of Christian Higher Education Canada, an association of 35 colleges, universities and seminaries affiliated with The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.

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■ **Christian Studies International Opportunities overseas**

Christian Studies International (CSI) provides opportunities for Christian academics to teach overseas in public universities and colleges. CSI is the Canadian affiliate of the International Institute for Christian Studies (IICS), based in Overland Park, Kansas. Together, these two organizations have placed dozens of Christian faculty members at post-secondary institutions in developing and former communist countries, where they are able to provide students with an education that is rooted in a Christian worldview. Currently, openings exist in many countries and in a variety of disciplines.

CSI professors make a tremendous difference in the lives of hundreds of students overseas. Professors teaching with CSI must raise some of their own support for travel as well as partial salary. Often, the host university provides some salary, housing and other amenities. CSI will assist the professor in raising the necessary funds from churches, friends and supporters. Donations for this purpose are channelled through CSI, which provides tax receipts.

People with the appropriate academic qualifications who are interested in making use of this opportunity to bring the good news of the gospel in places where this may seldom be heard should consult the CSI website at www.christianstudiesinternational.ca, or contact CSI at csidesk@telus.net.

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It was quite a year for Taylor College and Seminary; 2009 was marked by a major restructuring process, including layoffs and the decision to sell 80 percent of the campus. One year later, significant progress has been made toward renewal.

Taylor Seminary moved ahead with program changes, an alliance with Carey Theological College, and a joint TESOL initiative with Vanguard College; there is also a renewed commitment to spiritual formation and field education. New initiatives in online learning and intensive courses are opening up learning opportunities to students in different places – even different countries.

Taylor has also launched a new branch of service, the E P Wahl Centre, which offers non-credit training. The response to the first workshops and lectures has been heartening.

The crisis of last year brought the Taylor community together in new ways. There is a renewed vision and passion to serve students who want to contribute to positive change in the world, and the number of inquiries from prospective seminary students is up significantly.

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World Faiths: Responding With Love

Many Evangelicals worldwide are looking forward to the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization this October in Cape Town, South Africa. Here's part three in a *Faith Today* series looking at seven of the major issues to be discussed.

How to reach out to the peoples of other faiths with the redemptive love of Christ has been a key focus of the Lausanne movement since Billy Graham, John Stott and 2,300 other evangelical leaders from 150 countries met for its first congress in 1974.

That meeting has helped inspire many other conferences and symposiums to strategize about evangelizing the three billion people who have not yet heard the message of salvation even once in their life time. Lausanne has also published many "Occasional Papers" discussing effective evangelism (www.lausanne.org/documents.html).

At the same time, the world has been witnessing an unprecedented receptivity to the gospel among people of other faiths over recent decades. One of the

great examples is among Muslims. For centuries, Muslims were not open to the message of salvation. Many Muslims had unfairly negative images of Christians and had confused perspectives on the Christian faith as a result of the long and complex history of Christian-Muslim interactions. Most Muslims had never encountered the biblical Christ or heard the gospel message clearly.

But the landscape of religion worldwide is changing significantly in our lifetime. For the first time in history, Christianity and Islam are dominating the global scene with a total population of 3.6 billion people (2.2 billion Christians and 1.4 billion Muslims). Christianity and Islam are reshaping the social life of central Asia, south-east Asia and Africa. Christianity and Islam will mostly likely dominate the world scene in the 21st century, and both religions will gain converts from among other religious traditions.

Advancements in communication technology together

with unprecedented human mobility have enabled new levels of interaction among world populations. Even people in politically and religiously restrictive countries have unprecedented access to information and various media channels.

Through satellite TV and the Internet, millions of people worldwide have access to the message of the Christian faith in more than 60 languages. In the Middle East and North Africa millions of Muslims have turned to Christ during the last two decades.

Islam is also gaining new grounds in every continent through media, migration and economic advantages. The numbers of Muslims have tripled in Europe and North America, so that today France is 9% Muslim (4.5 million), England 8% (4.6 million) and the United States around 5% (15 million).

The global Church is called to witness to the good news of God's salvation to all nations and people groups. Communicating the gospel to people of other faiths requires genuine understanding of their worldview and a

desire to reach to them in concepts and terminologies that make sense in their own contexts.

Building personal relationship and trust are essential in any effective communication of the gospel. The gospel of salvation is a holistic gospel. It is about forgiveness of sin and liberation from the bondage of death. It is about proclaiming "freedom for the prisoners and recovery

of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4:18-19).

But trust is not easy to build today, when tensions between different ethnic and religious groups are increasing around the globe. Witnessing to the gospel today means witnessing in a context of violence.

The Church needs to stand under the cross as it ministers to the world. The Church is not only called to celebrate in worship and to grow in fellowship, it is also called to participate in Christ's suffering and to grow in maturity. When the Church proclaims the gospel of salvation, it also participates in Christ's suffering. Missions in the age of violence require a significant challenge: it includes the enemy in its responsibility.

We need to remind each other that the Church's effective witness does not come out of social privileges and institutional structures. Instead it comes out of openness to the work of the Holy Spirit who leads, encourages

Reaching out
to people of
other faiths depends
on the leading and
convicting of the
Holy Spirit.

The Lausanne organization

offers several excellent articles on witnessing to Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and other groups (including "nominal Christians" among Roman Catholics, Orthodox or Protestants). These "Lausanne Occasional Papers" are available free at www.lausanne.org/lausanne-occasional-papers-lops.html.
—WW

and strengthens the Church in its life and mission. It is the work of the Holy Spirit that enables the Church through its obedient missionaries to proclaim that "Jesus is Lord."

Reaching out to people of other faiths does not depend in the first place on the power of convincing and the ability of arguing. It primarily depends on the leading and convicting of the Holy Spirit. To acknowledge that Jesus is the Son of God is not the work of "flesh and blood" but a gift from above (Matthew 16:17). "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord'

except by the Holy Spirit."

A new era in evangelism has started. Today, millions are coming to Christ as a result of the foundations begun through radio, satellite TV and Internet ministries. The Holy Spirit is working in their lives to open their eyes to know the real Christ.

But media ministries are not sufficient. One of the key tools the Holy Spirit uses to influence people to accept Christ is Christians living within view, as light and salt in the world. Many converts speak about the influence of a Christian believer on their lives, a person who demonstrates love and reconciliation.

We live in a postmodern era characterized by fragmentation, alienation, dislocation, refugees, religious warfare and unprecedented violence. While contemporary secular nation-states have little or no power to bring healing, restoration or justice, the issue of reconciliation has come almost uniquely to the forefront

of private and public life. The world is hungering for, and talking about, "reconciliation" at all levels.

The utmost calling of the Church today is to reconcile people to God and to one another. Christ's redemptive love starts with the personal experience of reconciliation, but moves to wider circles that involve reconciliation with other people and communities. The salvation that Christ offers is not limited to the private salvation of the individual soul, but is a holistic salvation that embraces social life as well as religious life, our private as well as our public life, the present as well as the future. God is reconciling the world in Christ (2 Corinthians 5).

If God's plan, what theologians call the *Missio Dei*, is about the purposes and activities of God in and for the whole universe, then reconciliation is the centre of it. Reconciliation is the beginning of the new creation, not its final goal. God's plan for reconciliation is a cosmic plan. At the centre of God's reconciliation is the redemption of humanity. Through resurrection, Christ reconciled the world to God and reconciled communities and people. God's reconciliation in Christ is also extended to all forms of alienation, brokenness and destruction caused by sin. It includes nature and the whole universe (Romans 8:19-21). God is reconciling "to himself all things, whether things on earth or in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross" (Colossians 1:20).

The Scriptures conclude with a wonderful eschatological image of restoration and healing: "Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal. . . . On each side of the river stood the tree of life. . . . And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of nations" (Revelation 22:1-2). **FT**

WAFIK WAHBA is associate professor of global Christianity at Tyndale Seminary in Toronto. Join the global conversation leading up to Cape Town 2010 at www.lausanne.org/conversation.



CHRISTIAN LEADERS CONNECTION

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River Park Church Medicine Hat, Alberta

PHOTO: LARRY ENSLEN

“The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew and act anew.” Abraham Lincoln’s words reflect the emerging passion of River Park Church in Medicine Hat, Alta., to connect with its neighbours and to see them become vibrant followers of Christ.

History Becomes His-Story

This congregation, planted by German immigrants more than 100 years back and now with the Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada (EMCC), experienced a gradual decline over the years. Not long ago, members wondered if it was time to close the doors.

But more recently many are beginning to feel that “God called us to this community for a reason.” The neighbourhood has many low-income, high-needs people, many single parents, many people receiving social assistance, some relying on alcohol or drugs just to survive.

Over the past few years this faith community has been shifting its mindset from “us” to “them” as the congregation follows God’s call to be intentional about reaching out to their neighbours. Now the congregation of 60-80 regular worshippers is experiencing growth (www.riverparkchurch.ca).

Willing to Love. Existing to Serve.

The private school across the street rents River Park’s basement five days a week and sometimes uses the church sanc-

Called to its community for a reason, River Park Church recently hosted an on-site community BBQ.

tuary for special programs. Collaborative conversations are emerging around future possibilities for co-operative building expansion. In the public school, where a couple of River Park ladies help children learn to read, Pastor Larry Ensen was invited to talk with the school principal and social worker about various approaches to community transformation.

As Ensen and the congregation refreshed their vision and motivation, River Park has drawn alongside a larger congregation named The Dream Centre, which co-ordinates a co-operative food distribution ministry with other churches in The Hat. Food from Calgary is distributed monthly to 100 homes as relationships are building and family needs are revealed. About 10 members from River Park participate.

Authentic Care

Sixty families from the food distribution program were invited to River Park’s Christmas Banquet, strengthening relationships between neighbours and congregants. Members researched children’s names, ages and interests in advance. Others shopped or assembled hampers; some cooked or served meals; many visited with invited guests. Each guest family received a food hamper, children’s gifts and additional vouchers.

The church also seized the Medicine Hat Stampede and Exhibition as another opportunity. It invited neighbours in a several block radius to a free BBQ. About 160 people attended, 75 per

cent of them non-members. Lots of young families had fun together, accomplishing River Park's intention to love their neighbours with no strings attached.

Whispering Pines is a camp funded by eight EMCC churches in southeast Alberta. River Park sponsored seven children from their Kids' Klub to summer camp, connecting with these families in a deeper way.

Each event is building a foundation of care and concern for the community, a ministry that Enslin emphasizes is an "emerging" passion. "We continually ask the Lord, 'Where's the next opportunity?' and are excited to see Him leading us one step at a time."

Unconditional Jesus-Love

Even though this heart for the community is a new vision, neighbours already refer to River Park as "a place you can get food and clothes when you need

them." One week seven people showed up saying, "Hey, I heard you can get food here." It's a safe haven for those experiencing tough times.

One disenfranchised man was invited to help set up the portable baptismal tank. As they worked together, discussing who was to be baptized, he asked, "What about me? I've been attending this church since Christmas." Enslin talked to him further about the meaning of baptism before he shared

his warm testimony with the congregation, explaining how God is speaking into his life.

Another day, to Enslin's surprise, a woman known to be addicted to crack and sexually promiscuous arrived at the church asking if she could pray in the sanctuary. "I want to pray for my friends who don't know they need Jesus. I want to pray for their pain." God is using all sorts of people to affirm His love.

God is using
all sorts
of people
to affirm
His love

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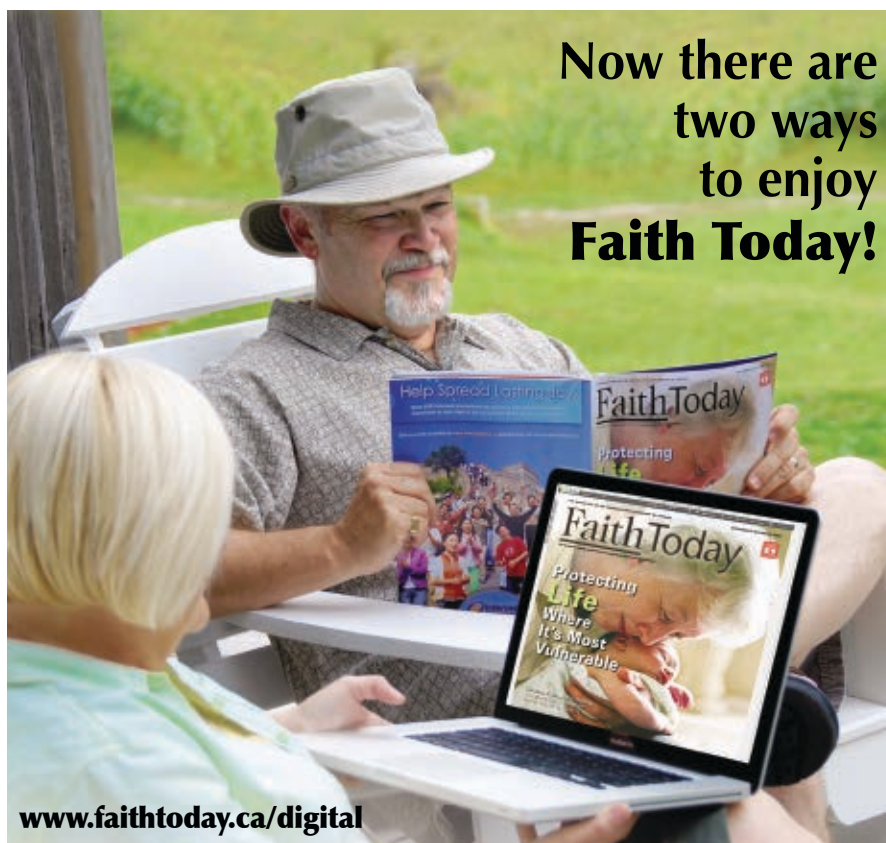
"It's easy for a church to slide into the comfort zone of the 'same old' programs," states Enslin. But in the last few years River Park has become more intentional about finding ways to connect with their neighbours. Living a Life on Loan was a six-week teaching series to help care groups grow in their vision to touch their neighbourhood individually and collectively.

Enslin says, "We want God's compassion for our community to impact each member's decisions 24/7 without ideas and decisions initiating from the pastor." From sermons to small groups to action in the community, many in the church are becoming catalysts, prodding others to open their eyes to the harvest in this southern Alberta neighbourhood.

What Enslin describes as a "dark community" doesn't make it easy. There's lots of theft, stabbings, even murder in the neighbourhood. River Park's goal is to dispel darkness with the Light as they seek to bring transformation, creating a safe neighbourhood for all. Working cooperatively through their small groups will strengthen them and guard against burnout.

River Park invited representatives from city hall to discuss challenges in the city with a 30-year strategy for the neighbourhood. Resources on community transformation were shared and a vision laid to establish community centres that will give meaningful opportunities to those who are caught up in crime.

River Park's primary ministry is to their community, secondarily to their city, and thirdly to the world. "And of course, inwards as well as outwards," summarizes Enslin. **FT**



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CHARLENE DE HAAN is a freelance writer in Toronto. She is also manager of educational services for The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. River Park Church is an affiliate of the EFC. Read all the profiles in this ongoing series at www.faithtoday.ca.



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Norman Dabbs (left), Canadian missionary in Bolivia



A Canadian Evangelical Martyr

Seventy years ago, Norman Dabbs accepted God's call to mission work in Bolivia. Sixty years ago, he became the first Canadian Baptist to be killed doing such work overseas. His legacy is an inspiring example of courage and service, and has contributed to a partnership that still exists today between McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, Ont., and a Bolivian seminary.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE CANADIAN BAPTIST ARCHIVES

“Someone may yet have to give his life for this work.” These words were spoken by Norman Dabbs, a Canadian missionary in Bolivia, to his wife Lorna in May of 1949. Three months later, he and seven Bolivians did just that.

Before going to Bolivia, Dabbs graduated from McMaster University in Hamilton, Ont. He pastored a few churches before settling in Bracebridge, Ont., in the late 1930s. In June 1939, he attended his denominational convention, where a missionary's speech sparked his interest in foreign missions. Later that summer, another missionary, Earl Merrick, challenged Dabbs to consider Bolivia. Dabbs was suspicious of a conspiracy. “Did the mission board send you?” he asked Merrick.

But after encouragement from his wife, Dabbs accepted the opportunity, landing in La Paz in 1940. For the next eight years, he planted churches, taught in schools and pastored. In 1949, he dedicated the new church building in Ururo as his last task as pastor before accepting the principal's position at the Baptist school in Cochabamba.

Although aware of the volatile situation in the rural areas, where Baptists were often considered importers of a foreign religion, he accompanied some Bolivian pastors on an evangelistic visit of a rural community. Early August marked a national holiday and the workers enjoyed their time off by drinking. The Bolivian Evangelicals wanted a Christian presence in the communities, where the fiestas included quasi-religious ceremonies.

They travelled in an old pickup truck

from Ururo to Melkamaya, a tin-mining community nestled in the western mountains between La Paz and Oruro. They arrived late in the afternoon and set up to show slides on the side of a white-washed house.

As evening fell, about 40 people watched the slides and listened to Dabbs and his companions tell the story of the life of Christ. During the meeting, a stone hit the wall beside the Bolivian teacher. He ignored it and continued the story. After another stone fell, he saw a stone- and axe-wielding mob of 300 descending on the small group. The evangelists attempted to escape in their truck, but the sabotaged engine sputtered and died. The crowd pelted the truck with rocks, killing Dabbs and his companions.

The Canadian Baptist newspaper described the circumstances surrounding Dabbs' death as an “admixture of passion, stirred by drunken rioting, and of hateful prejudice, fomented among unlettered natives by unscrupulous agents of class and religion.” The language may have been flowery, but it is correct to point out that his death was at the epicentre of a “perfect storm” of circumstances.

Social and economic unrest characterized Bolivian society in the mid-20th century. During the Second World War, the demand for tin was an economic boom for the country. This demand waned in the post war years, throwing the industry into turmoil. The miners felt the full force of the depressed metal prices and launched a series of violent demonstrations.

Add to the atmosphere of labour un-

rest an annual August festival partly dedicated to appeasing Tio, the devil in the mine, who was responsible for all mine accidents. Their lives – both literally and economically – depended on pleasing the devil. They poured alcohol onto the ground in front of Tio's image and also consumed large amounts of it in his honour.

Religious rivalry between evangelical missionaries and local Roman Catholics provided the final factor. Bolivia was officially a Roman Catholic country. In fact, fewer than 40 years prior to Dabbs' mission work, it was illegal to be part of any other church. Many rural parish priests still considered “the evangelistas” intruders into their rightful territory – trying to draw people away from the church.

An evangelical pastor of the major town near Melkamaya was arrested for causing an uprising among the natives. During his time in jail, he heard a church official say, “These evangelists are devils and the sons of devils, and to kill them is in no sense a crime.”

It didn't, then, take much to get a mob of miners, already fearful for their livelihood and afraid of the devil in the mine, to take out their anger on people they were told were working for the devil – the group of Baptists teaching a different gospel.

Dabbs weighed the consequences before responding to God's call. Let's remember his courage. **FT**

DAVID DONALDSON of Guelph,

Ont., is a former research assistant at the Canadian Baptist Archives housed at McMaster Divinity College.



Lutheran Regrets

The latest major church apology can inspire people of all faiths to consider doing likewise.

Last November, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, the largest Lutheran group in the country, announced a big apology. The council of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) has approved a statement seeking forgiveness and reconciliation from Anabaptists, the minority group in the Protestant Reformation. The LWF is expected to adopt *Action on the Legacy of Lutheran Persecution of Anabaptists* at its world assembly in Germany in July. Mennonites, the largest Anabaptist group, have already signalled their readiness to reconcile.

Two responses come to mind. First, applause: Lutherans have looked in the mirror of history and repented. Good for them. Lutherans had already acknowledged the anti-Semitism in Luther's later writings. Good for them. The other response? Curiosity. Why did the apology take so long? Is it that difficult to realize that killing other humans is contrary to the gospel? Anabaptists were being killed in their first generation (1525-1565). By 1660, Amish and Mennonites had *Martyrs Mirror* to read along with their Bibles.

Sadly, Lutheran persecution of Anabaptists is only one example of Christians *not* turning the other cheek and *not* loving their enemies. Ironically, this tragic part of Church history is largely the result of church bodies (Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant) abandoning Anabaptist emphases on peace and love firmly rooted in the New Testament. After Constantine wed church and state, the sword was too attractive to resist. With hindsight, the Anabaptist alternative deserves more praise than it has often received.

One good thing about the Lutheran apology is that it is part of a trend. For example, Pope Paul VI and the Patriarch of Constantinople met in 1965 to rescind mutual excommunications between Rome and the Eastern Orthodox. From 1996 to 1999 about 3,000 Christians participated in a series of Reconciliation Walks from Germany to Jerusalem to apologize to Muslims and Jews for the evils connected to the Crusades that began nine centuries prior. Canada's United Church made a public apology in 1998 to Natives over the residential schools debacle. Pope John Paul II issued his famous Lenten apology, *Memory and Reconciliation*, in 2000.

Granted, some Christians worry about apologies. It makes "us" sound weak, especially in relation to apparent

Muslim aggression. The same point was made against a major speech by Barack Obama in Cairo last year.

Even so, the burden of proof is on Christians to obey the overt teaching of Jesus about seeking forgiveness and pursuing peace. These are not only Anabaptist ideals.

Further, there is supernatural power – not weakness – in the way of the Cross. I learned this first-hand in 2002, just after 9/11, when I travelled in Lebanon and Syria and saw the open doors created for top Muslim leaders by Reconciliation Walk pioneers.

One can hope for other apology miracles as we enter the New Year.

- Will the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses apologize for deaths caused by their ban on blood transfusions?
- Will New Age leaders, including Oprah, apologize for their endorsements of the false theories of *The Secret*? The so-called Law of Attraction – whatever happens to us is what we really want – is not true, and belief in that law hurts people. (On this, check for news on James Arthur Ray and sweat lodge deaths.)
- Will Buddhist leaders in Sri Lanka apologize for their abuse of power against the Hindu minority?
- Will Mormon leaders acknowledge the role of their top leadership in the Mountain Meadows Massacre in 1857? (On this, see research by Will Bagley.)
- Will fundamentalist Christians apologize for being too grumpy and narrow on things that do not matter?
- Will hardcore Hindu leaders apologize for persecuting Christians in India?
- Will right-wing Jewish thinkers apologize for not granting Palestinian Christians and Muslims adequate freedoms in the West Bank and Gaza?
- Will leaders of Hamas apologize for trying to destroy Israel?
- Will leaders of the Christian Science movement apologize for deaths related to their implicit denial of medical care? (Mary Baker Eddy taught that disease and death is unreal. Hence, one needs to be cured of false belief rather than real sickness.)
- Will Muslim leaders in Saudi Arabia apologize for not allowing freedom of religion?

It would be a pity if these groups did not take to heart the best parts of recent church apologies. **FT**

JAMES A. BEVERLEY is professor of Christian thought and ethics at Tyndale Seminary in Toronto.

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Secular and Christian Education

Let's get past the stereotypes in education

We Canadians must count ourselves extraordinarily blessed by the range and quality of colleges, universities, seminaries and other kinds of higher education in Canada.

We Canadian Christians do ourselves and our children a disservice if we perpetuate stereotypes that divide higher education. In particular, we must get past the view that “secular = bad” and “Christian = good,” or vice versa. Both kinds of schools offer worthy educational experiences for our youth – and increasingly the not-so-young – as well as employment experiences for our scholars.

I feel particularly strongly about the subject because I have been blessed richly by both kinds of institutions. After graduating from Ontario public schools, I attended Mount Carmel Bible School in Edmonton, a small Christian Brethren institution. I then went to Queen's University to study history. Following that, I went to graduate school in theological studies at Wheaton College and then at The University of Chicago.

My oscillation between Christian and secular institutions continued as I taught first in the history department of Northwestern College in Iowa, a Calvinist school, and later in the religion department of the University of Manitoba (*not* a Calvinist school). For the last dozen years, I have been teaching at a Christian graduate school here in Vancouver.

I have had good and bad experiences in both kinds of places. I have experienced extreme intellectual narrow-mindedness at both. I have experienced curiosity, diligence, creativity and courtesy at every one of these schools. And I have had my career threatened by authorities in both kinds of institutions who disliked what I was saying about some matter of public or scholarly importance. (I'm glad to say that I was also supported by authorities in both kinds of places so that my career did not, in fact, drop dead as some wished it would.)

It seems patently foolish to me, therefore, to extol the

virtues of one form of education at the expense of the other. Public institutions offer great blessings: a stimulating exposure to different and even provocatively upsetting points of view; freedom to think and say what one likes without fear of what one's parents or pastors will say; and good practice in negotiating many of the challenges of contemporary Canadian society in microcosm.

Christian institutions offer great blessings of their own: a clear and godly frame of reference in which to both study and mature; colleagues who share one's Christian faith and can be counted on to “get” what one is coping with; and synergy in study and research as people who share a range of basic assumptions can work together on further questions of significance.

Neither form of education, to be sure, is heaven on earth. Secular universities don't just stimulate; sometimes they shock, and without any redeeming educational benefit. Secular universities also exert ideological pressures of their own; pressures to conform to the reigning ideology of a particular professor, or department, or discipline – or dormitory.

Christian schools have their own respective disadvantages. They can be boring, as everyone thinks too much alike. They can be irritatingly restrictive, as the personal predilections of a professor or dean or president become holy law within their purview. And they can use spiritual language to mask economic or political or psychological pathologies.


So neither form of education is perfect. And neither form is diabolical either. Indeed, neither can offer what the other one does. So both are valuable and both deserve public support.

Indeed, they deserve *Christian* support as we both make shalom with our fellow human beings in public schools and serve with our fellow Christians in distinctive, but complementary, Christian institutions. Let's knock off the stereotyping, and instead celebrate – and, when necessary, keep criticizing – both good gifts of God. **FT**

I have had good and bad experiences in both kinds of places

JOHN STACKHOUSE holds the Sangwoo Youtong Chee Chair of Theology and Culture at Regent College in Vancouver. His most recent book is *Can God Be Trusted? Faith and the Challenge of Evil*, 2nd edition (InterVarsity).

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