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JULY/AUGUST 2011



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**Called to
International
Adoption,**
p. 24

**Christian
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p. 33



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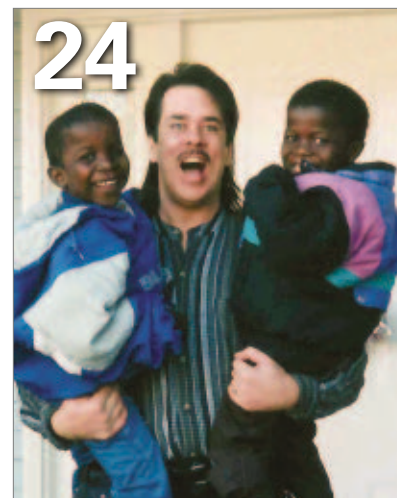


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We never imagined *Faith Today* could be read by millions – but you can be part of making this happen. This special issue of *Faith Today* is not just for subscribers – it is free to all! That's right. For the first time ever, you can share it with every single email contact you have, and post a link for viewing by every Facebook friend. You can "tweet" them (on Twitter) to give them a chance to view what you find valuable. In today's world we have new ways to reach out beyond our circle of friends. Let's see how far and wide we can share the thought-provoking ideas in this issue!

Our cover story "How Evangelicals Can Change the World With Social Media" by Mary Lou Harrison will provide tips on how you can proclaim the gospel through Facebook and other online tools. Also, it will introduce you to those who have discovered how to succeed in taking their activism online.

Through these social networks, the average person's potential for influence has continued to expand over the last decade. Harrison gives a perfect example. Recently a Grade 7 student in Canada gave a school speech on abortion. Her mother posted it on YouTube to share with her friends. Now it's been viewed by more than 1.1 million people. Whether you are 10 or 100, you can use such tools to reach out to others who could benefit from hearing your faith story and the concerns God has placed in your heart.

Faith Today has addressed the problem of pornography among Christians in past issues. Our new feature "The Bod-

ies in My Head" by Renée James focuses on the struggle of Christian women in particular. This addiction is loaded with shame and most often highly charged due to widespread misunderstanding. As with all addictions, porn users have most often been introduced through innocent situations or relationships but progressed to the point of being out of control.

Fortunately, there are Christian ministries challenging this growing problem. They say healing begins with recognizing its seriousness and choosing to seek help. Our sidebar "Twelve Reasons to Give Up Porn" can help struggling Christians take that first step.

Finally, should parliamentarians talk about their faith? In his column "The Canadian Way," Bruce Clemenger questions the media's criticism of the parliamentarians who did not openly share their evangelical beliefs during the federal election. Unlike other countries, he points out, Canada's approach has always been a robust non-sectarianism in which no single set of doctrines, religious or secularist, is imposed. He argues a non-sectarian approach does not presume religious neutrality. In fact, it understands that religious neutrality is as fleeting as journalistic objectivity.

Enjoy these articles and others, then share them freely. And let us know what you think at editor@faithtoday.ca or at www.facebook.com/faithtoday. **FT**

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

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Trumping the Religious Freedom of Parents?

A case coming up in the Supreme Court should be on the prayer lists of all Canadian Evangelicals.

By David F. Stebbins

The Supreme Court of Canada will soon be asked to rule on a case that could have far-reaching effects on both parental rights and religious liberty. A variety of Christian churches are still being actively in the Christian education program of Quebec's Education Act (CEA) as well as the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (CFR).

The case involves the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (CFR) and the Education Act (CEA) of Quebec. The case is about the right of parents to have their children educated in a religious school.

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David Stebbins, the EPC's general legal counsel, says the case involves the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (CFR) and the Education Act (CEA) of Quebec. The case is about the right of parents to have their children educated in a religious school.

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Professor Stackhouse is a fine commentary. But what would be useful is a survey of churches and members, asking if the churches tithe their revenue and support missions. Are the members tithing or not, and in addition giving offerings to Christian ministries to support the poor and needy? The Bible says sow and you will reap – and God never has a crop failure. I think that some pastors don't teach prosperity and blessing out of fear, ignorance or blind acceptance of poor and unbiblical teaching. It's a huge sadness that many churches and ministries live way below God's intended favour and provision. Christians in a prosperous country like Canada need to be reminded of Ezekiel 16:49 [which names the sin of Sodom as being "arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy"].

Charles Runolfson
Ottawa, Ont.

Keep Kids in Biased Courses

Re: Trumping the Religious Freedom of Parents? (May/June 2011)
We live in a secular society. Asking that Christ not be treated in school curricula alongside other religions is a mistake. It implies to our children that the schools and our government only teach true things. They do not.

The fact is, our schools and teachers, as competent as they may be, offer our kids only partial truths about the world, and sometimes even little lies. A school that teaches nothing about Christ is just as wrong as one that teaches Christ and Mohammed are equally important historical figures or mythical characters.

Christian parents should teach against both lies – but most do not. As Christians we need to raise our children to understand that our faith will always run against the philosophies of this and every age.

Pulling our children out from informative (though biased) courses, even at a young age, helps nobody. Let them encounter the world; teach them a Christian worldview at home. Our children are encountering the world as it is; give them the proper lens to see it through.

Dominick Gagne
Abbotsford, B.C.

Mission Needs Theology

Re: Hinge (May/June 2011)
Thank you to Arnold Neufeldt-Fast for his reflections. There is tremendous value in the church recognizing a theological basis for its missional intent in the doctrine of the Trinity. So many today rush to address practical needs and matters of social justice without giving due considera-

tion to the theology that must drive this. Thank you for the instructive, theologizing words.

Kelly Carter
Calgary, Alta.

Investigations Inappropriate

Re: Christ & Culture In Canada (May/June 2011)

I appreciate John Stackhouse's attempt to find common ground in the CAUT versus Christian universities debate. However, he misses the very important point that CAUT is a membership organization. All faculty associations of secular universities are members of CAUT. But the faculty associations of Christian universities are not member organizations of CAUT. So, what business is it of CAUT to "investigate" Christian universities?

Janet Epp Buckingham
Ottawa, Ont.

Sow and You Will Reap

Re: Christ & Culture In Canada (Mar/Apr 2011)
"Get Out the Chequebook" by

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Brian C. Stiller

APPOINTED

Brian C. Stiller to a five-year term as global ambassador of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), an organization including 128 national alliances representing 600 million believers worldwide. Stiller recently retired as president of Tyndale University College & Seminary, and previously led Youth for Christ Canada and The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC). The newly created role will assist the WEA secretary general (the EFC's Geoff Tunnicliffe)

in engaging with the Vatican, the World Council of Churches and international forums such as the United Nations.

AWARDED

Faith Today was the best magazine of its kind in 2010, according to the Canadian Church Press, an association of nearly 100 Canadian periodicals. The CCP Awards, handed out at a convention in Chicago at the end of April, ranked *Faith Today* first in the category "General Excellence – Denominational and Interdenominational Magazine." It also awarded a third place in the Feature Articles category for "Throwing an Olympic-Sized Outreach" by Karen Stiller.

James I. Packer, 84, of Vancouver, with this year's Leslie K. Tarr Award for outstanding career achievement in Canadian writing and publishing. He is the author of *Knowing God* as well

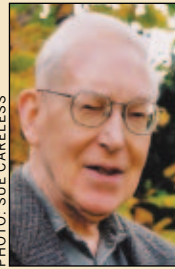


PHOTO: SUE CARELESS

James I. Packer

as many other writings, and is a professor of theology at Vancouver's Regent College. The award, presented by The Word Guild, has also gone to authors Leslie K. Tarr, Jean Little, Rudy Wiebe and Janette Oke, among others. Dr. Packer has been a senior editor at *Christianity Today*, general editor for The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, and active in the Anglican Church of Canada as well as the movement Evangelicals and Catholics Together.

RENAMED

Speroway is the new name for Feed the Children Canada, a Canadian Christian charity founded in 2004. *Spero* is Latin for "hope." Speroway works to alleviate poverty and distribute medicine, food and education in Canada and worldwide. Offices and president Ken Dick are based in Guelph, Ont.

RESTRUCTURED

Circle Square Ranch, a network of youth camps formerly managed by Crossroads Christian Communications, has been transferred to Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship of Canada. Crossroads has operated the camps for 30 years (recently three camps closed, reducing the number from eight to five) but wants to focus on its media ministry. It gave the camps to Inter-Varsity, which already operates five of its own known as Pioneer Camps.



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Click the "Share" button in the frame above so your friends on social networks such as Facebook can read some award-winning articles. Or use "Share" to create an email message inviting friends who may not be on a social network. "Share" also lets you Create a Link – giving you the right digital address for copying into blogs and emails.

Your friends, family and colleagues will enjoy this special free access, courtesy of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. The cover story is full of interactive and educational links about how to use social media for social good, and there's lots more. Thanks for passing it on!

Great Flicks to Watch This Summer

Which five films from the past 30 years do you think every Christian should watch this summer? *Faith Today* asked film critic Bruce Soderholm of St. Catharines, Ont., for his list. Readers who have other suggestions can share them at www.facebook.com/faithtoday.

- *Chariots of Fire* (1981) came out of nowhere to claim four Oscars including Best Picture. A lush period piece surrounding the 1924 Olympics, *Chariots* marked the resurgence of the British film industry. Ben Cross is superb as an ambitious runner at Oxford who will do anything to win. The feel-good performance here, though, comes from Ian Charleson as Eric Liddell, a gifted but unorthodox runner with strong scruples who must sort out whether or not his pursuit of athletics is at odds with his missionary calling. What emerges in the resolution of Liddell's inner conflict is the wonderful suggestion that God is more concerned about who we are than what we do. Rated PG.
- *Places in the Heart* (1984) is another blast from the past. Sally Field took home her second Oscar playing a young widow in Depression-era Texas who's struggling to keep her land. Flanked by Danny Glover and a young John Malkovich, Field's performance is compelling – as is the story despite its cliché-like premise. From the ringing chords of the hymn “Blessed As-

urance” in the opening frames to the moving communion sequence in its dénouement, this film is a parable of grace. Nominated for seven Academy Awards. Rated PG.

- *Shadowlands* (1993) is a fact-based drama that explores the relationship between Christian intellectual icon C.S. Lewis and American poet Joy Gresham. Hopkins is at the top of his game playing the Oxford academic whose sensibilities are shaken by the novel sensation of falling in love. The story comes by its tearjerker moniker honestly, but melodrama it is not. Lewis' carefully constructed view of God is challenged to its core by his experience of pain. People of faith will be challenged to balance their views on God's benevolence with the uncomfortable truth that love and suffering are necessarily two sides of the same coin. Rated PG.
- *Life Is Beautiful* (1997) is a tour de force for Roberto Benigni (Oscar for Best Actor) and set in Second World War Italy. This film will pave the way to foreign film viewing for those who may be otherwise intimidated because of its balance of side-splitting humour set in tandem with the depiction of the most non-comedic event imaginable: the



Holocaust. The importance of family is highlighted here, woven together with winsome romance and sacrificial parental love. Rated PG-13.

- *Amazing Grace* (2006) is an 18th-century period piece focusing on the efforts of a young Evangelical, William Wilberforce, to use his influence as an MP in the British House of Lords to abolish the slave trade. Rich in historical detail, the film casts Ioan Gruffudd (TV's Hornblower) as a very likeable Wilberforce, with great supporting roles provided by Albert Finney and Michael Gambon. *Amazing Grace* is a reminder that challenging entrenched social evils requires individual sacrifice, diplomatic skill and lifelong perseverance. Rated PG. **FT**

–Bruce Soderholm

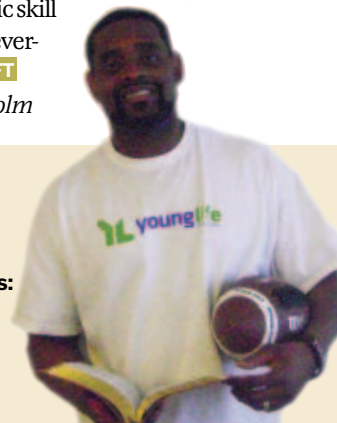
Former CFL Player Starts New Game in Alberta

Why is a charismatic 35-year-old American athlete hanging around schools in Calgary? For Eric Riddick, it's all about love. The love of football brought him to Canada to play for three years in the Canadian Football League; love for the Canadian he married kept him in Canada, and love for students will keep him involved in Christian ministry in Calgary for the foreseeable future.

As area director for Young Life Calgary Centre, Riddick

has the opportunity to apply what he considers the best strategy for influencing students for Jesus Christ: building relationships. “It’s relational. We go into the schools, do lunchroom supervision, take kids out for lunch, invite them to camp.”

Building relationships with students: Eric Riddick.



Sparrow's Hope Creates Home for Abused Women



PHOTO: EMILY WIERENGA

I Oscar and Irma Kryger created Sparrow's Hope, a "quiet, peaceful country setting" for women and children fleeing abusive situations.

Sparrow's Hope is a temporary, safe place for women and children fleeing abusive situations, opened by Youth for Christ in Westlock, Alta. "Our goal is to have a quiet, peaceful country setting for people to clear their heads

as much as possible, so they can make wise decisions for their future," says Irma Kryger, house parent, along with her husband Oscar.

With local RCMP receiving upwards of 80 domestic abuse calls per year,

there's no doubt of the need. The home's six rooms were renovated for the women, with security bars fitted into 30 windows. Furniture and children's ware were donated, and volunteers recruited and trained. A crisis intervention worker and executive director were hired.

Meanwhile, the Krygers, parents to four and grandparents of 10, have hosted their first guest.

"Arriving at Sparrow's Hope in the wide-open country, snow piled in ditches so high you couldn't see over them, I knew that this was where my healing would continue," said the visitor. "I have truly come to believe that faith, hope, perseverance, love and understanding are so much a part of what it takes to open up your heart."

Kryger, a veteran of 20 mission trips to Mexico to train young women in tailoring, hopes to continue to teach sewing, as well as provide devotions, lessons in nutrition, budgeting classes and a listening ear for Sparrow's Hope residents. "I've always had a nice stable husband and family," says Kryger. "I can't imagine, when that's violated, how lost and hopeless you'd feel."

And while her husband Oscar, a welder by trade, serves behind the scenes, his heart beats equally as strong for those who are hurting. "We pray this is just a stepping stone to get to know the Lord," he says. "There is only one way to happiness, and the answer is God." **FT**

—Emily Wierenga

He also coaches track and field and football.

Even though he no longer plays professional football, he still speaks sports, referring to the Apostles as "coaches" for early Christians. "I think strategically; that's how I'm wired. I can see how things work together. That's my gift," says Riddick.

When he finished his last season in professional football with the Calgary Stampeders, his first thought was to become a pastor and preach from a pulpit every Sunday. Riddick earned a degree in religious studies from Rocky

Mountain College, then became involved in the New Life Centre ministry through Calgary's Centre Street Church. "I started going into the community, downtown with the homeless. I realized it wasn't the theology, it's how you live, how you treat people," says Riddick.

He is content that God has brought him from North Carolina to Calgary, except for the cold and snow. That's what it takes to serve God in Canada: His word in your heart and a shovel in the trunk. **FT**

—J. Paul Cooper

Churches Join Forces to Fight Homelessness in Calgary



Volunteers built a playground at Acadia Place for children living at the building in fall 2010. (Inset:) Acadia Place is an affordable housing complex for families in southeast Calgary.

One of the largest ecumenical efforts in Canada to combat family homelessness took place last spring, when KAIROS Calgary partnered with the Calgary Homeless Foundation (CHF) to raise funds for Acadia Place, CHF's affordable housing

complex. In March, 130 churches representing 10 denominations announced their decision to advance CHF's ten-year plan to end homelessness by paying down the property's \$3 million mortgage.



"The partnership is two-fold," says Andrea Ranson, vice-president of communications for CHF. "First, KAIROS Calgary has a goal to raise \$1.5 million toward this mortgage so that rents will be lowered for those most in need. Second, [it] is going to provide volunteers to help with building projects and tenant support."

KAIROS Calgary points to 2008 homelessness statistics which reported 4,000 people sleeping on Calgary's streets per night as its inspiration for action. "This is our compassionate response," explains Geoff Zakaib, chair of the KAIROS Calgary group behind the project.

Area congregations are planning concerts and silent auctions in addition to sending in individual donations. "Our hope is that, by the end of

the year, we will have at minimum raised \$1.5 million," says Zakaib. The funds raised will help reduce rents on a sustain-

Former Pro Boarder Heads Home to Quebec

When Paul Hardy, a former professional snowboarder and surfer, became a Christian in 2000, the one thing he asked of God was not to send him home. Hardy had moved from Quebec to B.C. at the age of 19. Eleven years later the founder of Revive International, an evangelistic ministry with the mandate to "revive the hearts of believers," found himself back in Quebec City, leading evangelical Christians from across Canada in a prayer revival for his native province.

"A cry in my heart has been rising strongly for the past few years," says Hardy, 37, who organized and spoke at this year's Revival Quebec in June. "It's the cry of a lost land and an unreached people."

In spite of crosses, angel statues, beautiful old churches and streets named after religious heroes, the faith that once lived in Quebec is dead, he believes. Fear and hurt from religion has made cemeteries of cathedrals, and with just 0.5 per cent of its population self-describing as born-again

able basis for the neediest at Acadia Place.

The churches involved are also committed to providing tangible support for tenants. They have already built a playground for children at Acadia Place. And when a flood damaged nine of the units in

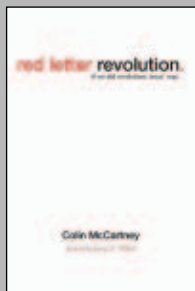
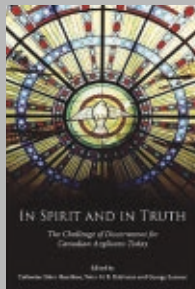
the buildings in February, volunteers from the churches helped the tenants move to temporary accommodations. "It's our responsibility as Christians to take care of those less fortunate," says Zakaib. **FT**

—Emily Wierenga

Recommended Resources

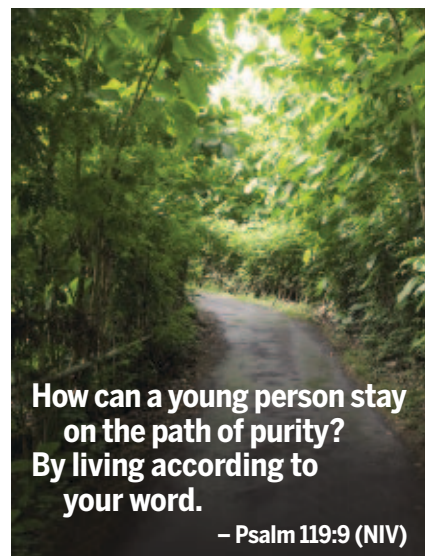
The editors at *Faith Today* share some recent books that caught our eyes.

- *In Spirit and in Truth: The Challenge of Discernment for Canadian Anglicans Today* by editors Catherine Sider Hamilton, George Sumner and Peter Robinson (Regent College, 2009). Essays explore doctrine and its development, what it means to be Spirit-led, what is holiness and similar topics. Aims to offer guiding principles by which the church may move forward in a time of serious disagreement.
- *Leaders Who Shaped Us: Canadian Mennonite Brethren 1910-2010* by editor Harold Jantz (Kindred, 2010). Looks at 25 leaders who made lasting contributions to the culture and ethos of the Canadian MB Church.
- *Red Letter Revolution: If We Did Revolutions Jesus' Way...* by Colin McCartney (Castle Quay, 2009). Focuses on the words of Jesus and challenges readers to respond to the poverty, racism, economic disparity, violence, classism, sexism and all other forms of injustice and oppression all around us like Jesus did. Author is head of UrbanPromise Toronto, a faith-based charity.
- *The Renaissance: God in Man* by editor Ted Byfield (SEARCH, 2010). The latest in a colourful and engaging 12-volume series (titled "The Christians") written for a popular audience. These coffee table books are produced by an Alberta charity now accepting orders for a volume on the Reformation era (www.thechristians.ca).
- *The Voice of a Writer: Honoring the Life of Katie Funk Wiebe* by editors Doug Heidebrecht and Valerie Rempel (Kindred, 2010). Looks at an influential Saskatchewan columnist who wrote in Mennonite Brethren magazines in the 1960s to 1980s and taught English at Tabor College in Kansas. **FT**



Canadian Foodgrains Bank Has Major Impact in 2010

Canadians donated \$9.1 million to Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFB) last year, the charity announced recently, including 19,523 tonnes of foodgrains worth \$4.8 million and \$4.3 million in cash. The Foodgrains Bank, a partnership of 15 churches and church-based agencies working to end global hunger, includes several affiliates of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. The CFB reports over 200 growing and community projects are slated to raise funds for the Foodgrains Bank this coming year. www.foodgrainsbank.ca **FT**



How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word.

— Psalm 119:9 (NIV)

WWW.DESIGNPICS.COM

Christians, Hardy says Quebec is now one of the world's most unreached people groups.

"There needs to be an awakening in ourselves to send and equip missionaries, evangelists and preachers into our own country, and to reach Quebec like never before," says Hardy, who partnered with his home church, Christian Life Assembly in Langley, B.C., to found Revive International in 2009.

"The purpose of the conference is to gather prayer warriors and intercessors to join us and pray, and do street evangelism, so we might see revival become a reality," says Hardy, one of four speakers alongside Pastor Jean Turpin of

the Ottawa Centre Réveil Church and Normand Charlebois, director of CJYC Quebec, a Christian youth convention.

Committed to returning to his home province twice a year from now on to organize evangelistic meetings, Hardy hopes this will be the first of many revivals in a city where suicides, abortions and divorce are breaking nationwide records.

"We will one day see greater miracles than the Book of Acts," he believes. "The French people are a passionate [group] of people. Passionate for the wrong things right now, but I believe that passion will be used for a mighty move of God." **FT**

—Emily Wierenga



The Canadian Way

Canada handles the intersection of faith and politics differently than Britain, France or the United States.

The issue of religion rarely surfaced in the recent federal election, a change from previous elections. When it did make news, it was usually prompted by media commentators raising the issue.

There were bright spots in the coverage. The National, the CBC TV evening news program, profiled the *Elections Kit* released by The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC). In this segment explaining how religious groups engage during elections, viewers learned that the EFC is not a single-issue organization, that we cover a breadth of issues and work across party lines.

Perhaps this is an indication of the media's willingness to explore what it means to be Canadian, to be religious and to be a voter or a citizen running for political office.

Party leaders and many other politicians regularly attend religious services and festivals of a variety of religions, but very few say much about their own religious beliefs.

Contrast this with American candidates for public office: for them not to speak about their own faith or not to have photo ops attending their preferred place of worship raises suspicion.

It is characteristically Canadian for our politicians not to wear their religion on their sleeves and instead to publicly reach out to a variety of religious expressions. It's a manifestation of a long-standing non-sectarian approach to religion that distinguishes Canada from Britain, France and the United States, the three countries with the greatest historical influence on our country.

Our Canadian ancestors did not presume faith should be privatized and kept out of the public square (France), nor did we have a state church (Britain), nor do we have a constitutional separation of church and state (United States).

A non-sectarian approach accepts that religions influence all aspects of life including the political – that

religion does have political implications – and hence non-sectarianism seeks fairness in accommodating these expressions.

A secularist approach, by contrast, seeks to limit religious expression to the private sphere and asks people to check their specific religious beliefs at the door when entering the House of Commons or engaging in public dialogue about law or public policy.

Canada's federation was forged in the political dynamics of the French Catholic and English Protestant reality that required anyone who would be prime minister, whatever their first language or denominational allegiance, to be seen as someone who could mediate between these "two solitudes" and be able to accommodate the aspirations of both.

Not only did Canada develop without a constitutional doctrine of the separation of church and state as in the United States, the Canadian constitution provided for the funding of minority religious schools: Catholic schools in predominately Protestant Ontario and Protestant schools in Catholic Quebec. Further, consider our social services sector, where Canada's largest provider besides our governments is The Salvation Army.

Canada's approach has been a robust non-sectarianism, where no single set of doctrines, religious or secularist, would be imposed.

At the same time, a non-sectarian approach does not presume religious neutrality or that the public square can be neutral. Rather, it recognizes that a plurality of worldviews shapes and guides the actions of citizens.

The political world and the broader public realm are shaped by this doctrinal diversity. The goal is not to sanitize statecraft from this plurality, but to accommodate diversity and its expression in the fairest ways possible. In such a context political leaders are expected to be even-handed, fair and just in their dealings with everyone.

What we need is more constructive exploration of the intersection of faith and politics in Canada, and more reflection on how Canada is distinctive from other countries in how this has been expressed.

When political leaders are reluctant to talk about their faith, it doesn't necessarily indicate a hidden agenda or prove they consider their faith to be a private matter with no public consequence.

It might simply mean they understand what previous Canadian leaders learned about giving leadership in a plural and non-sectarian Canada. **FT**



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.

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

The EFC Buys New Office

The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) has leased office space in Markham, Ont., for more than 25 years, but those offices will be moving to a purchased space in nearby Richmond Hill this fall. Purchasing instead of leasing will reduce expenses and build equity. New contact information will be released shortly. Donations to support this stewardship initiative are welcome at theEFC.ca/donate or 1-866-302-3362.

Defending Religious Freedom

The EFC intervened for the first time in French before the Supreme Court of Canada in May. The case, *S.L. v. Commission scolaire des Chênes*, deals with the right of parents to determine the religious and moral education of their children. Quebec introduced a mandatory curriculum on Ethics and Religious Culture in 2008. The EFC supported the right of parents to withdraw children from courses that contradict their religious beliefs. The court decision is expected sometime between November and February. Learn more and watch a short video at theEFC.ca/SL.

Evangelist Network Changing

Equipping Evangelists (E²) is a ministry network that supports local churches to be outward focused by developing their “evangelist” capacity. In recent years, as E² operated on the EFC’s ministry partnerships platform, it has developed numerous local-church evangelism networks. E² is headquartered in Burlington, Ont., under a leadership team including director Merv Budd and national network director Paul Simons.

E² is now moving to the administrative and communications platform of Threshold Ministries (formerly Church Army). Find out more, including how to start an E² network in your area, at www.equippingevangelists.com.

Understanding Gendercide

The EFC released a discussion paper entitled *Gendercide and Sex-Selection: Does It Happen in Canada?* in June. It’s free online at theEFC.ca/gendercide.

“This is a tragic practice with a worldwide impact,” explains Faye Sonier, EFC legal counsel.

The natural human birth ratio is 106 males to every 100 females. However, recent census data from China reveal a birth ratio of 124 males to 100 females (for the years from 2000 to 2004). Increasingly unbalanced gender ratios are also emerging from India, South Korea, Taiwan and Yemen. Research is also finding unnatural ratios in several Canadian population groups.

“Unborn female children are being aborted in preference for male children primarily because of the elevated status of men and a preference for male heirs in several cultures,” explains Sonier. The EFC report includes testi-

monies from Canadian health clinic workers who share accounts of women being coerced by family or community members into aborting baby girls.

Sonier also advises readers to search online for a 2010 feature “The Worldwide War on Baby Girls” in the *Economist* and a 2011 *Maclean’s* cover story, “The Women Shortage.”

Group Discusses Adoption

The EFC convened a group last fall to address the need of an estimated 30,000 Canadian children and youth waiting for a forever home. The National Adoption Strategy Working Action Group, comprised of Christian organizations actively involved in promoting adoption and foster parenting, met again in June. Learn more from a 2010 *Faith Today* article at theEFC.ca/FTadoptionissue.

CBC Responds to EFC Complaint

The EFC filed a complaint regarding blatant mischaracterizations of Evangelicals in an episode of *Enquête*, a TV news program from CBC/Radio-Canada. Evangelicals were portrayed as having privileged access and excessive influence with Canada’s current government. The CBC has responded and the complaint process continues. Details and updates at theEFC.ca/enquete.

The EFC Marched for Life

More than 13,000 people gathered on Parliament Hill in May for a rally in preparation for the National March for Life through the streets of Ottawa. The EFC’s VP Don Hutchinson and Legal Counsel Faye Sonier were both featured speakers at this year’s event. In addition, Sonier emceed the evening’s Rose Dinner banquet. View pictures and video at theEFC.ca/MarchForLifePosts.

Egypt’s Christians Persecuted

In February, 17 days of protest brought about the fall of the Mubarak government and inspired hope around the world for democracy and religious freedom in Egypt. Recent attacks on Coptic Christians are confirming fears that Egypt’s transition may actually be cause for great concern to believers in Egypt, according to a recent EFC religious liberty alert. Read more at theEFC.ca/alerts.

Human Trafficking Conference

EFC staff spoke on prostitution and human trafficking at the Let There Be Light: Social Justice + Human Trafficking Conference in May at The Salvation Army Citadel in Kingston, Ont. Also speaking were Victor Malarek (W5), Commissioner Christine MacMillan (International Social Justice Commission), Superintendent Marty Van Doren (RCMP) and Justice Kenneth Pedlar (Ontario Superior Court). Learn more about the issue at theEFC.ca/humantrafficking.



Theology Crucial in a Changing World

By Aileen Van Ginkel, Alan Hirsch and Cameron Roxburgh

In a world of constant change, it's vital that our theology is Trinitarian and that we don't limit our idea of Christ only to His 30-some years on Earth.

An Interview With Alan Hirsch and Cameron Roxburgh

Prior to the EFC-sponsored Hinge Conference last November, the EFC's **Aileen Van Ginkel** interviewed two of its keynote presenters, **Alan Hirsch** and **Cameron Roxburgh**. Here are some segments of this conversation. Find more Hinge Conference resources at the EFC.ca/hingesessions.

Alan Hirsch is the founding director of Forge Missional Training Network (www.forge.org.au) and author of *The Forgotten Ways* (Brazos, 2007), a key reference for missional thinking. Originally from South Africa, he lived in Australia for many years but now lives in Los Angeles.

Cameron Roxburgh is pastor of Southside Community Church in Surrey, B.C., and leads Forge Missional Training Network Canada (www.forgecanada.ca) and Church Planting Canada (churchplantingcanada.ca).

Aileen: The Hinge Conference on Church and Mission is all about understanding the changes taking place in our ministry context that prod us to revise our thinking and ministry methods. How would you describe the most significant changes?

Alan: [In North America and many other places] we find ourselves in a genuinely missional or missionary context where the church must adopt crossculture missionary methodology to engage meaningfully with the culture. We no longer operate in the context where the Christian church is the predominant religious institution in society. This necessitates a major shift in our way of thinking about the church and theology.

Cam: We need to recognize too that the rate of change is phenomenal right now. And it's happening within the church as well. I'm excited and optimistic about the unrest many people are experiencing. Many are coming to the point where they're tired of following a namby-pamby Jesus, where everything is nice and suburban. Instead they want to follow the radical call of Jesus. What we're seeing is the grey moving more towards either black or white. The in-between just doesn't seem viable anymore. This feels difficult, awkward and scary at first, but as we look behind us it will become clearer that this is a kind of refining we can get excited about.

Aileen: The Hinge Conference program starts by paying attention to theology (how we think about God), then to missiology (how we think about our part in God's mission), and then ecclesiology (how we think about the church). Why is this order in the missional church conversation important?

Cam: It's crucial to work our thinking in this order because we unfortunately have done things backwards. We ask, "What works in the church?" And then, "How do we attract

people to grow?" And then, in effect, "How do we reinvent God to fit our image?"

Regardless of how we live, we bear witness to the God we believe in. We must get our theology right, based on a proper understanding of both Christ and the Trinity.

When it comes to missiology, we flow out of our understanding of who God is to ask the question, "What is God up to?" And therefore, in relation to ecclesiology, "What does He invite us into?"

Some say, "We give the people what they want and that's how we grow the church." But this is exactly the wrong way to go about it.

Aileen: Our views of who we say Jesus is are crucial to missional church thinking. Why is this?

Alan: We need a thorough, robust Christology [understanding of Christ] that emphasizes more than just Christ's work of salvation. Often the pre-existence of Christ is acknowledged, but it hasn't saturated our imaginations. Yet it's a central element of the revelation of God in Jesus. It's all too easy to lose the impact of the Incarnation on our theological perspectives as well as on our missiology.

Another point to be made is that Christology is critical to our understanding the Kingdom message. We need to understand Christ as Lord of creation and truly an agent of creation. **FT**



Alan Hirsch and Cameron Roxburgh.

AILEEN VAN GINKEL is vice-president of ministry services at The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada and facilitates the development of several EFC ministry networks and partnerships.

Evangelicals Need Not Apply

By Don Hutchinson

Exactly when did it become okay in Canada to discriminate against people on the basis of religious belief? Despite the best efforts of religious freedom activists, unfair discrimination over religion seems a continuing – and expanding – challenge. Here is a sample of some recent “probably didn’t make your evening newscast” encounters.

Aeroplan, the bonus points child of Air Canada, has a program that allows people to donate their points to a “pool” for charitable purposes. Until a letter from The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC), the application form noted that evangelical religious causes were not eligible. Groupe Aeroplan replied noting that they had addressed our concern by amending the document to make *all* religious causes ineligible. Huh? In early June we were still awaiting reply to our follow-up letter which notes the

Canadian *Human Rights Act* forbids discrimination on the basis of religion in services made generally available to the public. (Also, please note our ad in this magazine inviting you to join the EFC’s Air Miles pooling account.)

The City of Moncton hosts an annual street hockey tournament. This year the location of the Moncton chapter of Hockey Night in Canada’s *Play On! 4 on 4* was moved to a portion of St. George Street that happens to be in front of a fairly large church that meets on Sunday mornings for Sunday School and a worship service. By the way, Highfield Baptist Church has been holding Sunday morning meetings since 1877! It took little negotiating to get the mayor and city staff to make provision for the street hockey players to engage in the traditional yelling of “car” for their Sunday games so members of the congregation could get to and from worship. City of Moncton representatives were genuinely concerned that the religious community be respected.


Sometimes, a potential grievance is simply an oversight. The Supreme Court of Canada has been clear on two relevant points: the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* applies to all levels of government, including municipal; and the *Charter*

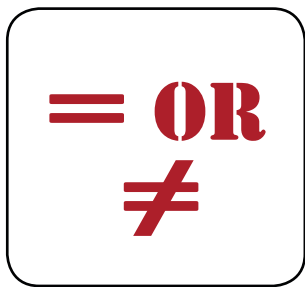
right to religious freedom includes “the right to manifest religious belief by worship” without undue interference from government-approved initiatives – such as a city-approved marathon run or street hockey tournament.

CBC Radio Canada aired an episode on its *Enquête* television program during the life of the most recent minority government. The portrayal of Canadian Evangelicals in the mini-documentary was simplistic, selective and biased. It promoted fear that scary, radical Evangelicals have privileged access to parliamentarians

and undue influence over the making of Canadian laws with Stephen Harper as prime minister. The story was poorly researched and reported. The EFC challenged both the lack of journalistic integrity in the story and the incendiary portrayal of an identified religious community. This was the prototypical negative portrayal

of Canadian Evangelicals described in David Haskell’s book *Through a Lens Darkly: How the News Media Perceive and Portray Evangelicals*. Here at the EFC we’re still wrestling it out with the CBC, a broadcaster that submits to no outside body and investigates its own complaints.

The EFC has appeared before the Supreme Court of Canada on more than 20 occasions and before numerous other courts across the country. We choose carefully. We make well-reasoned arguments. We engage in cases that will be of the greatest benefit. And, we make the point that in Canada’s free and democratic society, people and organizations of faith submit to a higher authority than government or the courts (and He calls us to submit to government and the courts!), and have the right to believe, share our beliefs and worship. And to engage in the public square on the same footing as all other Canadians. Evangelicals need not apply. We’re already supposed to be equal. 



What Can I Do?

(How can I activate myself to be a world changer?)



For current news reports and updates on issues of interest to Canadian evangelicals: <http://twitter.com/ActivateCFPL>



For our blog of current commentary on matters of law and public policy: www.theEFC.ca/activateCFPL



For background materials and reports produced by the EFC: www.theEFC.ca/socialissues



For helpful tips on praying, contacting your MP, petitions and more: www.theEFC.ca/takeaction



For more detailed statistics and EFC research: www.churchandfaithtrends.ca



For tips on useful statistics and EFC research: <http://twitter.com/EFCresearch>



For informative EFC videos on YouTube: www.youtube.com/user/theEFCca



For informative EFC videos on Vimeo: <http://vimeo.com/user969491/videos/sort:date>

DON HUTCHINSON is vice-president, general legal counsel, and director of the Centre for Faith and Public Life at The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.

How Evangelicals C

Nervous about dipping your toes in the deep waters of social media? Here's a peek into how some Evangelicals are taking their activism online, and how you can too.

By Mary Lou Harrison

Facebook, Twitter and YouTube changed history this spring – again – when the social media tools were used to organize demonstrations – some of which led to outright revolution – in the Middle East and North Africa.

With 500,000,000 Facebook users, that is one in 13 people on the planet, and with half of them logged in on any given day, it's easy to see the potential for spreading valuable information almost instantly, and organizing like-minded people for social change.

Here in peaceful Canada, Evangelicals probably won't be organizing for a political revolution anytime soon, but social media does provide a valuable and effective way to work for social good. From online experts, here are some ways to get started using social media for Kingdom work, and do it well. Be sure to take advantage of this special digital issue of *Faith Today* and click on the links throughout to see (and hear) first-hand how social media works and how it can be used for social change.

Start with your passion

For Shawna Howson, online activism begins with passion and integrity. The vlogger (video blogger) from Cambridge, Ont., suggests that Christians wanting to use online tools to make a difference in the world need to begin with an issue that touches them, one they know about and are comfortable with.

"You really have to be yourself and build an audience with integrity," Howson says. "You're trying to establish a conversation between yourself and the viewer."

In the summer of 2010 Howson and two other highly skilled young vloggers came to World Vision's attention. They were invited to visit Zambia, learn about World Vision's work, and create and post videos about their experiences.

Watch one of Howson's short trip videos to see her conversational style and how her interest in the subject resonates with viewers. With vlogging, watching is learning.

Howson is currently working on a new Internet video project called "Check Your Focus," sponsored by Crossroads Christian Communications Inc. (home of *100 Huntley St*). In a nod to the power of YouTube, the project encourages "good people" to make "good video content" and submit their videos online to be judged.

Another YouTube must-see is Toronto student Lia Mills, whose award-winning Grade seven speech opposition to abortion has now been viewed by more than 1.1 million people worldwide. Kimberly Mills made a video of her daughter's speech to share it with her friends, never anticipating the potential of YouTube and the online response it would eventually receive. "We stumbled on this by accident," she says.

Since uploading the video in February 2009, the mother and daughter team has gone on to make more, many in response to viewer's questions about abortion from the original. Lia, who just finished Grade Nine, says YouTube is great for people wanting to create change, "especially if the point they have to make is for people my age."

Lia's best advice for Evangelicals wanting to use this tool: "Tell God that you're willing. He doesn't

Can Change the World With Social Media





Shawna Howson: My rule is never to go much above four minutes, but it's all about pacing.

look at your age – I was only 12 when I made the first video – or if you're qualified. He looks at whether or not you're willing."

More and more churches and evangelical organizations have created their own YouTube channels to help build community, spread information

and spread the gospel, of course. Check out Toronto's The Meeting House on YouTube for inspiration.

Still unsure? Search "how to make a YouTube video" on YouTube, and five million hits pop up. Watch this one that came out on top for a quick overview.

Shawna's top tip: "My rule is never to go much above four minutes, but it's all about pacing."

Lia's top tip: "Think about the audience you're trying to reach. If you're offending people, they're not going to listen to you."

Kimberley's top tip: "If we could do it, anybody can do it. You don't need special equipment. Don't be afraid to just step out and make mistakes."

Facebook, Twitter & more

Ryan Sim, associate priest for entrepreneurial ministry at St. Paul's Anglican Church in Toronto, a large evangelically inclined congregation, leads workshops exploring the social media revolution and how it can be used to proclaim the gospel through Facebook and other online tools.

Sim emphasizes the use of social media "is mainstream and not peripheral." In other words, almost everyone is using it. Sim recommends "Social Media Revolution," a short online video worth watching for a quick tutorial on the power of social media, based on the book *Socialnomics* by social media guru Erik Qualman. Qualman compares television, which took 13 years to reach 50 million users, to the Internet (four years to reach over 200 million users) and Facebook with 200 million users added in less than a year.

To avoid the clumsy mistakes of posting in-

appropriate material, Sim encourages users to be thoughtful about what they are trying to communicate, and suggests people use the "living room test" to determine if something is suitable to be posted online or not.

It's as simple as it sounds: if you wouldn't say it in someone's living room, don't post it online.

The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) provides opportunities for Evangelicals to support their advocacy campaigns online, or use the resources they provide to add to their own postings on Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, blogs and websites. Remember, re-posting links is key to maximizing the power of social media. With a constantly updated website, Facebook page, public policy blog and three Twitter accounts to help people engage in political and social issues, the EFC uses social media tools they feel they can do well with to "cross-pollinate each other" for an even larger impact. Rick Hiemstra oversees the EFC's research feed and provides his Twitter followers with links to research that would be "a help to people who are in front-line ministry," most recently on subjects

like major economic trends, the Canadian census and more.

A recent EFC campaign invited Canadians to communicate their support for "Roxanne's Law," legislation which would make it a criminal offence to coerce or attempt to coerce a woman into having an abortion, by creating short videos for circulation to their Members of Parliament.

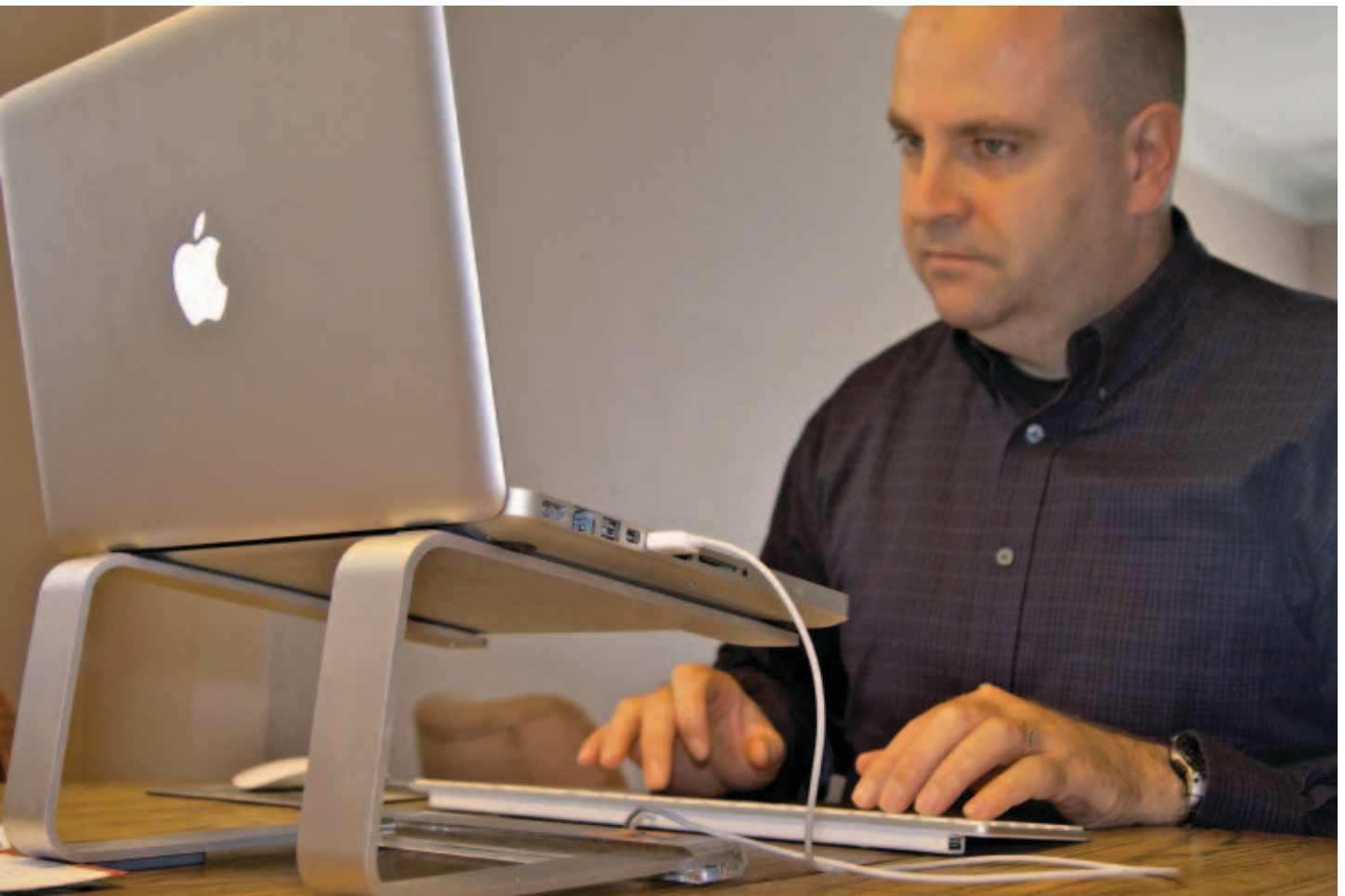
World Vision Canada is another organization with a very active online presence. Their social media tools, including an extremely active Facebook page, are used to encourage



Ryan Sim: No inside jokes, no Christianity, no complaining.

child sponsorship, build community and enable and empower Canadians to address the root causes and effects of child poverty. "My job is to help our supporters to the next level," says Cheryl Hotchkiss, World Vision advocacy campaign manager, and to help them "realize systematic and long-lasting change for children." Hotchkiss acknowledges that "the fastest and easiest way to communicate with people is online," especially in a Canadian context with our country's vast geography.

"The more people know, the more change can happen," says Hotchkiss. Social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter are "good tools to use," she says, "when they are part of a broader strategy." That broader strategy is important. "Social media sites like Facebook and Twitter are important tools in the change agent's tool box, but they aren't the



Darryl Dash: Just start and experiment. Most people who start blogging never keep it up, so if you keep going, you'll already have an advantage.

only tools organizations like World Vision use to make a difference in the lives of children living in poverty. We need a full toolbox to effect lasting change, like face-to-face meetings with Members of Parliament or radio ads, and we need to use all these tools wisely and strategically.”

Facebook offers a cause app that gives users an easy platform for a favourite cause on their Facebook page. And of course, becoming a fan of an organization, posting useful links and calling people to action are all part of the Facebook activist's toolbox.

Rick's top tip: “Get involved in an issue early on ... to have influence right at the beginning of an issue before it is ‘news’ picked up by mainstream media.”

Ryan's top tip: “Have your own ‘rules’ for things like Facebook.” Ryan's are: no inside jokes, no Christian-ese, no complaining and no wasted “airtime.”

The beauty of blogging

“Blogging can become a platform to advance the causes that are important to you and to find like-minded people who share your passion,” says Darryl Dash, avid blogger and pastor of Richview Baptist Church in Etobicoke, Ont.

“Because the Internet provides access to millions of people around the globe, it only takes a small percentage of these like-minded people to translate into an online community.” Dash acknowledges the arrival of Facebook and Twitter, and their use for personal updates, has changed the nature of blogging. “Blogs have become more like online magazines about people's personal passions,” he says. Dash still likes the longer form of blogging and advises newbie bloggers to “try out different ideas and see what reaction you get.” A successful blog, he says, is “a strange combination between your passion and what resonates with other people.”

Dash started blogging about eight years ago and his blog has evolved over time. Currently, he is most likely to be addressing “the intersection of life and faith as a pastor.”

Dash recommends using WordPress, beginning with the free version and moving to a more sophisticated, paid version as you grow. Another option is Blogger, also free and easy to use.

YouTube can help with blogging with how-to videos readily available.

Check out this site – yes, it's someone's blog

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– for a partial list of Canadian Christian bloggers you might want to read for inspiration on how to use this form of social media.

Like all social media, most blogs do not stand alone, but are enhanced or promoted using other online tools. “There is a huge intersection now between blogging and other social media,” notes Dash. “You can link your blog to your personal Facebook page so that new posts are shared on your wall.”

Write, vlog, tweet, blog and YouTube about the causes that move you, the beliefs you are passionate about, the faith you embrace – and who knows – the world just might begin to change.

Darryl’s top tip: “Just start and experiment. Most people who start blogging never keep it up, so if you keep going, you’ll already have an advantage.” **FT**

MARY LOU HARRISON is a freelance writer in Toronto.

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Called to International

Christians who have adopted children from overseas share their stories and remind us all of God's call to hospitality.

by Jeff Dewsbury

Jeremy Molnar just got married. Beside him at the front of the church on the big day were his best man and three groomsmen – all of them his brothers, one biological, three adopted. His parents, Roz and John, wore a special pride that afternoon. A pride unique to adoptive parents. It was easy to look back at the day – Christmas Eve 1995 – that Jeremy and James, then six and eight, arrived into their family from Haiti, and to see how they had formed the kind of bond that makes siblings stand up for one another on such a landmark occasion.

“Jeremy, to this day, has a shepherd's heart,” says Roz. “When they joined the family, he would shadow his younger siblings. He was their bodyguard. With the toddlers he would open up his arms and say ‘Come to Papa’ when they were crying and having a bad day.

And James, he always has a beat going. No matter where you're sitting, or what you're talking about, he's always keeping time.” One could debate, however, if that beat was the result of nature or nurture. The Molnars are a musical family who toured annually throughout the southern United States for weeks at a time when their eight children were growing up.

Like many adoptive families, the road to becoming parents to Jeremy and James was long, and there was a lot of soul searching. Roz remembers her prayer times nearly two decades ago when, as a young mom, she would put her kids to bed and be struck by a growing burden to adopt.

“That feeling was there for years, and I prayed about it the whole time, but John wasn't on board.

I'm a pretty persistent person and I begged him for years. I would ask God ‘What am I supposed to do with this?’ ” she says.

The answer eventually came when the Molnars became a weekend host family to two boys – Morris and Tadeo – who were touring with the African Children's Choir. In the times between their performances, John forged a quick bond with the boys.

When it came time for them to pack their bags and move on to the next gig, the boys were not interested in going. “I still remember very clearly Morris standing in the corner of our foyer saying ‘I won't go, Uncle. I will stay here with you and be in your family.’ ” remembers Roz.

The normally calm and collected

John had to struggle through the gut-wrenching motions of watching the boys get back on the bus, knowing Morris and Tadeo would not get to be part of a permanent family, something they so desperately wanted. He was wrecked for good. He finally understood what Roz was yearning for.

Adoptive parents talk of a growing sense of purpose and calling that seems to reveal itself over and over again.

Called to Adopt

Everyone's adoption journey is different. But those who believe in divine appointment uniting parents with children often talk about the same type of lingering yearning and resolve that struck the Molnars. Not a flight of fancy that eventually fades amidst life's distractions, but a growing sense of purpose and calling that seems to reveal itself over and over again.

Since 1995 Canadians have annually adopted in the neighborhood of 2,000 children from abroad. The most recent statistics (compiled by Citizenship

Adoption

John Molnar welcomes Jeremy and James (then 8 and 6) to their home on Christmas Eve 1995. (Inset:) Jeremy and James today.



and Immigration Canada) are from 2009, which show 2,122 children from other countries adopted into Canadian families. The countries are, in order, China (highest at 451), the United States, Ethiopia, Vietnam, Haiti, Russia, South Korea, the Philippines, Ukraine, India, Kazakhstan, Colombia, South Africa and Jamaica (lowest at 30).

The number of actual orphaned children worldwide is debated because the definition is different for each statistic. Numbers are as high as 120 million, but those – particularly UNICEF – who define an orphan as “a child who has lost one or both parents” cut that number down close to 20 million. That’s still a huge, almost insurmountable number when you consider a wealthy country like Canada only welcomes 2,000 of them a year – and the number of children worldwide needing homes continues to grow.

Many Christians who think of adoption as a calling generally also start from the premise that “this child needs a home,” not “this home needs a

child.” Such an approach is dramatically different from the many high-profile celebrity adoptions we see flashing across TV screens.

It also means these adoptive parents are much more likely to welcome a wider variety of children rather than trying to build a designer family.

A adoptive parents are much more likely to welcome a wider variety of children rather than trying to build a designer family.

A Lifelong Journey

Kendall and Tamara Schmitke of Owen Sound, Ont., welcomed their son Donovan from China into their family last spring. Donovan is now four years old and is an active pre-schooler whom they describe as gentle, extremely charismatic and goofy.

“Donovan has a way of making friends wherever he goes,” says Kendall, excited to share what he’s learned about his son over the past year.

Donovan’s adoption took less than two years because he was part of what’s known as the Waiting Child Program in China. Children classified as waiting are on the list because of mild or correctable ailments such as hepatitis B, facial birthmarks

Supporting a Miracle

The Christian community can be an invaluable support to parents who are adopting a child, according to several parents who have adopted from China.

By Melony Teague

Sometimes we look all over for signs and wonders, miracles or supernatural events to show us God is at work. All we need to do is look at a family who have adopted and embraced a child from a foreign country to see a miracle, the miracle of transformation that takes place as a family loves and accepts these little ones unconditionally.

This truth has hit home for me as I have seen a number of people adopt children from China. Since the People’s Republic of China introduced its “one child” policy in 1979, many Canadians have been adopting infants from China. The numbers have slowed somewhat since 2007 when China placed further restrictions on families wanting to adopt children internationally. In 2009, for January to September, there were 101 children adopted into Canada from China. According to Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 19 were boys and 82 were girls, the majority between the ages of one and four. Most came to Ontario and Quebec.

It might seem as if adoptive parents are doing a wonderful thing for their children, but in fact the parents feel as if they are the ones receiving the greater blessing, according to the ones I interviewed. Often the decision to adopt internationally is a literal “leap of faith,” but the parents say the rewards far outweigh any sacrifices they’ve made.

The bonding starts when prospective parents receive a photograph of and descriptive information about the child. To these parents, the moment they receive their precious child in their arms is very much like they have physically given birth to this child themselves.

After months of anticipation and waiting, parents are rewarded by holding their living, breathing child. The child, however, often goes through an initial period of mourning their foster parents or caregivers. They have formed a normal attachment to their old life, which is a positive, healthy thing, but then move

or, as in Donovan's case, a cleft lip and palate. In comparison, it's not uncommon for those trying to adopt "healthy" children from China right now to endure a wait of eight or more years.

Kendall, a pastor at Owen Sound Alliance Church, says his adoption journey started as a teen on a short-term mission trip to Thailand. The most vivid day was when they visited and held children in an orphanage. "It made a deep impact, and I remember telling God that if He wanted me to do something about this, I would someday."

However, as the years went on and the Schmitkes gave birth to their children, adoption became a distant idea to Kendall (though, as in the case of the Molnars, his wife continued to bring it up).

Then one day the pastor saw a photo on a website Tamara was viewing "and it all came flooding back. It was like smelling a perfume and all of a sudden reliving a memory inside. Something washed over me, and I instantly remembered that moment [in Asia]. I started crying and Tamara had to ask me what was wrong."

It's amazing how many people think about adoption and then drop it when they get pregnant."

When Donovan was three days old, he was left on the steps of a government building in the hope someone would find him. Kendall says someone took great risk to place him there, since disabled children without parents are "treated as castoffs" in China.

After administrators proposed Donovan to them, the Schmitkes, in an improbable turn of events, discovered he had been in the care of an orphanage run by International China Concern, a Christian ministry that cares for parentless children with medical

problems who would otherwise be left to what Kendall calls "very poor care."

Kendall was able to visit (with some restrictions) where Donovan spent the first three years of his life. "Being able to do that was invaluable to us," he says. "We were able to fill in a lot of gaps."

Tamara chimes in: "It's amazing how many people think about adoption and then drop it when they get pregnant. I guess for them it was Plan B, but it was Plan A for us. If you have love to give, there are kids who need it. But it's not

on to accept their new parents, sometimes within a few days or over a longer period. A healthy attachment is always grounded in empathy and care that allows the child to grieve during the initial transition period. Parents form a strong bond of love with their adopted child when they provide a safe and loving place during the transition phase.

Diane Rundle of Stouffville, Ont., and her husband adopted a girl in 2009 from Shaanxi province. She recalls that "The first few days were difficult. She began to accept Murray and even call him "Baba" (Daddy), but she did not accept me. She would cry out for her foster mama in the night. But in time she softened, and I did not give up. We feel so blessed to have her in our lives and in our family."

As believers we can play an important role in the lives of adoptive families, especially as they go through such ups and downs. Having a support system is an invaluable part of their journey. What can you do if you know a family who is going through or has been through this process?

*Provide prayer and emotional support, especially during the time of adjustment.

*Where parents are first-time parents, they appreciate practical help from other parents.

*Often churches have a shower to welcome the infant.

*Take the time to listen to their stories.

Adoptive parents are living examples of how God our Father, through Jesus, has adopted us by grace into His family. We see a reflection of how we have become part of God's eternal family as shown in Ephesians 1:4-5, "He chose us, in love he predestined us to be adopted through Christ in accordance with his pleasure and will."

Where children of adoption are being raised in Christian families, they are given the opportunity to find their own personal faith. Adoptive families give evidence of the very nature of God in so many ways. We discover that "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after the fatherless and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world" (James 1:27). Adoption is God's counter-cultural message to all.

Adoption and the transformation that takes place, the bond established between adoptive parents and their child, is nothing short of a miracle. **FT**

MELONY TEAGUE is a freelance writer and columnist in Richmond Hill, Ont.

a rescue mission. It's a specific call from God for your family."

Questions and Boundaries

Like most adoptive parents Jolie Lambkin says she and husband Andy didn't fully foresee the "depth of parenting" required to raise a child who joins the family this way, but they have experienced many unforeseen blessings through it all. The Lambkins, from North Vancouver, adopt-

ed their daughters Chanida (7) and Daow (3) from Thailand when the girls were two. The couple also have a biological son, Samuel (4).

In both Chanida's and Daow's cases, once the adoption was nearing completion, the couple flew to Thailand and spent a week getting to know each of their new daughters, learning about their emerging personalities and individual needs from the nannies working in the

foster homes where they lived.

"We learned as much as we could and found out as much of their history as we could so we could look at our girls and tell them with full confidence what we know," says Jolie.

When families adopt internationally, the people around them have a lot of questions, and they aren't afraid to ask them. Curious strangers have a logical jumping point because the kids and parents are usually from different races. The Lambkins experience the attention on a regular basis but, especially as their children get older, have made decisions about how they respond.

"Now that Chanida is in Grade 1, we try to help her figure out boundaries about what she wants to say about who she is," says Jolie. "This is her story to tell." Those boundaries extend to how Jolie and Andy respond to questions that are too personal for strangers to be asking.

"A friend who has also adopted once told me that we need to 'gently educate' people along the way. And that was good advice."

Being Bicultural

A lot of the discussion about international adoption focuses on the cultural divide between the countries the children are from and their new homes in Canada. Once a child joins their forever family, a link is formed between the two cultures that will last a lifetime. However, the connection between past and present, one world and another, is manifested in many different ways – some stronger than others.

Some families celebrate holidays and festivals from their child's country of origin. Others find mentors and grandparent figures from those countries who can fill the unique role of someone who knows both cultures intimately. Roz Molnar encourages adoptive parents to let the kids guide the way because personality plays a role too. Some kids are not as driven as others to make their birth culture a big part of their lives while they're growing up, but embrace it more in a different season in life.

Balancing a child's emerging Canadian identity with the heritage of their birth

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“If you have love to give, there are kids who need it. But it’s not a rescue mission.” Tamara Schmitke helps her son Donovan – an active, four-year-old pre-schooler – with his building technique.

can be a juggling act. Social worker Judith Craig chronicled her struggles in the soon-to-be-released film *Adopted ID*. Craig was adopted from Haiti by a Canadian pastor and his wife in 1980 and grew up in Toronto.

In the film, Craig – who now lives in England – travels back to Haiti to find her biological family. While she still speaks favourably of international adoption, she is passionate about the need for parents to allow their children to celebrate and explore their birth history and cultural heritage as they grow up..

“I’m concerned when I see people trying to wipe away their child’s culture. Mine wasn’t wiped out, but it could have been supported more,” says Craig, who acknowledges that things were different in the 1980s. “In inter-country adoption there is loss and there is gain. In some cases any connection with their culture gets literally wiped clean.”

Craig says her mother laments there wasn’t the same level of support for adoptive families there is today. “Children are growing up in a very different era. Growing up, I didn’t know anyone who was interracially adopted like me and my brother.”

It’s also important to remember that when families adopt, they don’t just add a new part – they become a completely new family, she says. And once they become an intercultural family, they have a responsibility to respect the culture their son or daughter is from.

“If you don’t [respect the child’s birth culture], you will pass that on to them. I’ve met adopted children who have no desire to even visit where they are from,” says the social worker.

“I think it’s important that parents go to the country they’re adopting from. It makes it more real. You’re seeing life from your child’s perspective, and you’ll

also experience being what it’s like to be in the minority.”

Shifting Landscape

The landscape is always shifting, however, as different countries open and close for adoption. Though the Lambkins, for instance, adopted from Thailand years ago, that country does not presently work with Canadian agencies.

The reasons why governments do this are complex. Sometimes the decision involves changes in policy and the need to restructure the system so that healthy practices and safeguards against abuse are put in place. Long-standing licensed adoption agencies with a good track record will be able to tell prospective parents at the outset which countries currently have a stable adoption system. Those agencies should also have connections with specific childcare facilities and social workers in those countries who know

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the children are both being well cared for and need families.

Add to the mix that each culture has a different prevailing view of adoption. For example, it's rare for children from China to know who their biological family is. In that country adoptable children are first brought to state facilities and later matched with a family waiting to adopt, but there is no information sharing on the child's birth or social history.

Children from Haiti, on the other hand, may have living relatives wishing to keep in touch with them – and they often do, even visiting them later in life. In some cases adoptive families even pay for biological siblings to receive an education, which is a luxury millions of children go without.

International adoption practices have changed since the days when Judith Craig first joined her forever family. In particular, the amount of support adoptive families have is far beyond where it once was.

Social media, for example, has nearly

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Helpful Adoption Resources

- The key government website is from Citizenship and Immigration Canada at www.cic.gc.ca (click Adopt a Child)
- The Adoption Council of Canada has a collection of useful links www.adoption.ca/links.htm
- Various Christian private adoption agencies that facilitate international adoptions are listed at www.canada-adopts.com (click Adopting in Canada, then International)
- When looking for an adoption practitioner, check your provincial government website for a list of licensed international adoption agencies such as www.children.gov.on.ca (click Adoption, then How to Adopt)

revolutionized the way adoptive parents communicate, making it easier for them to encourage one another, offer advice and pray for specific family needs. No longer are parents trying to figure things out in isolation. They now have daily contact with others who share their unique way of life.

Social media is also helping us realize there were adoptive parents who already decades ago were celebrating the child's birth heritage alongside the heritage of the adoptive family, balancing familiar stories like that of Judith Craig with more unfamiliar – and more exemplary – experiences.

Who is Adoption For?

"I was a lot more casual about thinking every believer should adopt at the beginning," says Jolie Lambkin. "But now I think that it's not for the faint of heart. It's more work financially and emotionally. It's very intentional parenting." She says there are family issues that require more thought and consideration than with biological children."

She does think there is a role for every Christian to play in the story of adoption, however – through contributing to a community where all children, adopted or not, are welcomed, nurtured and valued.

Families can be built in a variety of ways besides adoption – and that's okay, says Lambkin.

Roz Molnar, mother of recently married Jeremy, agrees. Raising a family "is not puppy love," she says. Prospective adoptive parents should spend a lot of time in prayer and really know, from the outset, that this is what God is calling them to do.

But she's thankful the Christian community has the example of God's love, which is "patient, kind, long-suffering" –

and she asserts God will equip all of us when we ask. **FT**

JEFF DEWSBURY of Langley, B.C., is a senior writer at *Faith Today*. The families quoted (Molnars, Schmitkes and Lambkins) have agreed to use their real names and those of their children. Don't miss our earlier articles on private adoption (Mar/Apr 2011) and on domestic adoption (Nov/Dec 2010).

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By Paul Hilsden

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Remember, we are all in this together! **FT**

PAUL HILSDEN is manager of affiliate relations at The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, in Markham, Ont. He also welcomes inquiries from businesses interested in joining this program.



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The Bodies in My Head

How should we respond when Christian women confess to an addiction to pornography?

By Renée James

It began as a wife-husband conversation that went from “What kinds of things do you fantasize about?” to “Do you want to watch these things on the Internet together?”

Amy Brown (not her real name) had watched Internet pornography through her teen years and mid-20s. The conversation with her husband, a pastor, led the couple to start watching Internet porn together. Today they speak of that decision with regret. Trying to put porn behind them, they still live with the consequences of having invited in a world of perfect bodies and instant 24/7 sexual availability.

“It’s a myth that if you’re a Christian woman, you won’t have an issue with porn,” says Marta Durski, a registered marriage and family therapist based in Oakville, Ont., who specializes in sex- and relationship ad-

dictions. “Being a [woman] of faith doesn’t inoculate you from the problem.”

Over the last 15 years she’s noted a shift in her clientele as more women disclose an addiction to porn. The statistics bear her out. In 2003 *Today’s Christian Woman* reported one out of every six women, including Christians, used porn. A 2007 ChristaNet.com poll put that number at one in five. In November 2009 mainstream media in the United States reported one in three visitors to adult websites each month were women. The reports prompted talk show host Oprah Winfrey to explore why millions of women used porn and erotica. “It’s pretty much mainstream,” she announced in her show’s teaser.

Elaine Pountney, a Christian counsellor and coach in Victoria, B.C., explains this as part of a larger trend in our culture to romanticize self-soothing activities. In our

over-sexualized culture girls and women are encouraged to think of sexual pleasuring – some form of masturbation – as part of their self-care package. Pountney, an expert on gender relations and spiritual integration, says the key question is this: “To what are you self-pleasuring or masturbating? What’s going on in your mind? What are you looking at?”

Brown’s experience with porn is all too common. She began at age 14, lonely and rebellious, recently dropped out of school. She discovered a video in her brother’s room and she watched. “What I saw as ‘affection’ made me feel like there may be something out there for me,” she recalls. Her family had just hooked up the Internet and her addiction took root. “There was a whole world of porn out there. I could seek out whatever I wanted to see. It was captivating.” Brown’s addiction continued well into her 20s. While her choice of content rarely changed, she watched porn more and more – up to three times a day.

At 11, Tina Smith (not her real name) read books with lots of sexual content for the same reason Brown watched Internet porn: “I could sit alone in a room and feel something that I could not [feel] anywhere else,” she remembers. “This was something that made me feel I belonged, emotionally. And, physically, I got attached.”

Today’s porn industry counts on women like Brown and Smith. While men continue to fuel most of the billion-dollar demand for porn, producers now also target female consumers with more romantic porn, more emotional storylines and foreplay. More women are producing porn for women. All of it comes with a hidden price tag.

Porn influenced Brown to question her sexual orienta-

tion. “I knew I was attracted to guys but couldn’t figure out why I was so interested in looking at pictures of women.”

Her self-esteem suffered after pregnancies left stretch marks and sagging skin. She no longer measured up to the beautiful women whose images had pulled her in. “How do I measure my beauty against the bodies in my head?” she asks.

The biggest cost of all is the thousands of images she’s seen. “They are now burned in my mind and I fear

they will be for the rest of my life. The addiction in some way continues in my head.”

Even after quitting, the addiction in some way continues in my head.

Where’s the Church?

Brown and Smith chose not to ask their churches for help, a choice that doesn’t surprise Kirsten Rumary, special projects manager with Living Waters Canada, based in Vancouver, B.C. In September 2010 Rumary led a 14-week pilot group specifically for women dealing with sex addiction. Some of the women with whom she works are afraid to talk to their pastors for fear of being seen as dangerous.

Part of the problem is a sexual double standard. Christian women who struggle with sex addiction are seen as “dirty,” while men are less quickly judged, perhaps dismissed with phrases like “sowing their wild oats.”

“We’ve categorized men in a certain way,” says Rumary. But when “women struggle with it, there’s massive shame.”

Durski, the Oakville therapist, agrees. Ideas like “boys will be boys” and “good girls don’t” make “the shame that women feel even more pronounced,” she says. It’s a shame reinforced every time a sermon on sexual sin

Twelve Reasons to Give Up Porn

Adapted from *Closing the Window: Steps to Living Porn Free* by Tim Chester (InterVarsity Press, 2010, pages 17-35).

- 1. Porn wrecks our view of sex**, because the sex in porn is not real sex. It creates distorted expectations and makes it hard to relate to real people as a lover or friend.
- 2. Porn influences viewers to prioritize sexual attractiveness far ahead of all the other aspects that make up a person.** It reduces sympathy for victims of rape. Analysis of the 50 best-selling adult videos shows nearly half the scenes contain verbal aggression and more than 88 per cent contain physical aggression. Studies show we are fooling ourselves if we think it won’t influence us.
- 3. Porn mars the development of young women and hurts women’s view of themselves.** An American Psychological Association report states the “saturation of sexualized images of females is leading to body hatred, eating disorders, low self-esteem, depression, high rates of teen

pregnancy and unhealthy sexual development. . . . If we tell girls that looking ‘hot’ is the only way to be validated, . . . they underperform at everything else.”

4. The porn industry abuses women. Former porn actors report drug use is normal to dull the pain. Many women in porn experienced sexual abuse as children and continue to be exploited. The majority of human trafficking involves women forced into prostitution and sex films.

5. Porn is a sin against our spouse (or against a single person’s future spouse). Jesus challenges his followers in Matthew 5:27-28 to realize that looking lustfully at someone who is not your spouse is a form of adultery. Singles who think they can abandon porn after marriage are mistaken. The unforgettable images can still make sex with a spouse less a celebration of love and intimacy between two people and more a performance focused on superficials.

6. Porn wrecks families. Users have a harder time finding sexual satisfaction with their partner and have a reduced evaluation of their partner’s attractiveness. It also endangers

Resources on Women & Pornography

or healthy sexuality fails to acknowledge that girls and women are sexual beings who may also struggle with porn – not merely sexual objects to be desired, but people who have physical desires.

Sophie Anderson (not her real name) is a self-described “incredibly good girl.” For 12 years she consumed porn and church activities with equal gusto. While these church activities counterbalanced her “dark” inner life, she maintains the Church’s silence shut her down.

“In a society that says this is a man’s issue, not once had I heard that women struggled with porn addiction. When you hear sermons for ‘men dealing with porn’ and nothing about women and porn, you [conclude] you are even more disgusting than you thought, because apparently you are the only one with this problem.”

What does the Church’s gender stereotyping and silence communicate? Rumary puts it this way: “If one woman is unable to reflect the image of Christ to you and me because she is covered in porn images and in shame, then we lack, the body of Christ lacks, and the world lacks because it doesn’t see Christ. The image of God has been stunted.”

Make the Issue Normal

Marion Goertz, president of the Ontario Association of Marriage and Family Therapy, suggests churches should normalize the issue. Talk about it. See girls and women as sexual beings, recognize that porn addiction is not a men’s issue, and enlarge the conversation to acknowledge both those facts.

“There’s a great deal of shame and blame attached to sex and even talking about sex,” says Goertz. “But the shame is that women are buying into this and therefore

- Dirty Girls Ministries seeks to help women overcome pornography addiction. Founder and executive director Crystal Renaud began it out of her own eight-year battle with porn. www.dirtygirlsministries.com
- Anne Jackson was one of the first young Christian women to disclose her porn addiction to church and world alike, ministering through a website she created and moderated. She now writes at annejacksonwrites.com
- Celebrate Recovery is a Bible-based 12-step program founded by Saddleback Church in California. There are more than 60 mixed-gender Celebrate Recovery groups in Canada. www.celebraterecovery.ca
- Living Waters is a community-based, Christ-centred discipleship ministry that deals specifically with relational and sexual brokenness. www.livingwaterscanada.org
- *Pornified: How Pornography Is Damaging Our Lives, Our Relationships, and Our Families* by Pamela Paul (Holt, 2005). Based on more than a hundred interviews and a national poll in the United States, an investigation into the costs and consequences of porn for our families and our culture.
- *Closing the Window: Steps to Living Porn Free* by Tim Chester (InterVarsity Press, 2010). Insightful reflection, easy to relate to.
- *No Stones: Women Redeemed from Sexual Addiction* by Marnie C. Ferree (InterVarsity Press, 2nd edition, 2010). A comprehensive approach to recovery for women struggling with sexual addiction.
- *Sexual Character: Beyond Technique to Intimacy* by Marva J. Dawn (Eerdmans, 1993). A theologian offers a clear and biblical understanding of human sexuality. **FT** –RJ

not talking.” Women like Amy Brown, now studying to be a pastor but willing to share her struggles, are rare.

According to Goertz, churches need to see porn addiction as a symptom of something else. “We must take the stigma out of talking about sex, masturbation, being

children – many people report their first encounter with porn happened by finding porn belonging to their parents. Getting caught often leads to divorces and ruined careers.

7. Porn is enslaving. Viewers require increasingly deviant materials to achieve sexual arousal. Most people don’t start out looking for perverted forms of sex, but that is where it ultimately takes us. It’s not a safe release, as some people tell themselves. It leads deeper – for many to strip clubs, prostitutes and worse.

8. Porn erodes our character. It teaches us to ignore our conscience, to block up our ears to the voice of God. From lust grows other kinds of sins, as happened to King David with Bathsheba and Uriah (2 Samuel 11 and 12).

9. Porn wastes time, energy and money. Porn promises much, but doesn’t deliver. It’s not a satisfying meal – it leaves you with increased hunger. It takes increasing amounts of time and energy away from other activities. Although there may be a lot of free porn online, it’s actually only there to hook people to become paying customers – and that works.

10. Porn weakens our relationship with God. King Solomon’s love for many women rivalled and eventually eclipsed his love for God (1 Kings 11:4). Porn creates a divided heart and robs users of our assurance of salvation.

11. Porn weakens Christian service. It is a sin against our local church. It corrodes our motivation for Christian service. It prevents us from engaging honestly and deeply in Christian fellowship and accountability. Joseph, tempted by Potiphar’s wife, knew that giving in would compromise his responsibilities (Genesis 39:8-9). And Joshua 7 shows how the secret sin of one person (Achan) can corrupt the integrity of a group of God’s people.

12. God’s wrath is against people who use porn. God forbids “even a hint of sexual immorality . . . for because of such things God’s wrath comes on those who are disobedient” (Ephesians 5:3-7).

For a summary of many of these ideas, see Proverbs 5. **FT**

– Adapted by Bill Fledderus

addicted to porn . . . and talk about healthy sex. God does long-term healing in community. But it's ironic – we don't have community with this in our churches because we don't talk."

Create Community

"Community is huge," agrees Smith. At 16 she found community the night she told her youth pastor. With his support Smith shared with her youth group and then in 2008 with 400 people at a Christian youth event.

The reception she received amazed her. "I was not the only girl who had struggled, and some of the girls who came up to me afterwards were still struggling," she recalls.

Rumary has suggestions about building community. "Be deliberate about creating safe places for women to talk. Make a place for women to be known and heard in their brokenness and love them well," she advises. Her 14-week pilot group now meets monthly for "maintenance" meetings, and she plans to start more groups led by women she's mentored.

Get Educated

Equipping women to lead such groups – women who have struggled with porn-, sex- or relationship addictions – is one of the most powerful ways churches can break their silence and reduce the stigma associated with this issue. But that requires a well-researched understanding of why women become addicted to porn, a patience with the long-term nature of healing and a courage, starting in the pulpit, to move beyond the solution of a "Porn is Sin and Affronts God" Sunday sermon.

"God and who He is fills you more than porn ever could. We run from sin . . . but we also run because Jesus is better, what we get from Him is better, and so we run," Smith says. As the Body of Christ, we can put heads, hearts and resources together to hold and heal our alienated sisters who run alone. **FT**

When "women struggle with it, there's massive shame."

RENÉE JAMES is the director of communications for Canadian Baptist Women of Ontario and Quebec and editor of its magazine *The Link & Visitor*.

Understanding Pornography Addiction

An interview with **Marion Goertz**, president of the Ontario Association of Marriage and Family Therapy.



Marion Goertz

FT: What's the typical pattern of an addiction to pornography?

MG: We speak more now of compulsive behaviours that limit effective, healthy life functioning rather than addictions. There is the same driving need to soothe.

FT: How does a girl's or woman's need to watch porn begin?

MG: It starts with an unacknowledged need. She may have attempted to meet that need through traditional

channels (family, friends), and then moved to less helpful, more hurtful ways of soothing. This soothing may be followed by a time of regret, self-recrimination or chastisement from another person. She feels even worse which starts her need to soothe again. If her inherent lack of self-worth, understanding or acceptance is not dealt with, the cycle continues. She needs to look more often at more porn [that has] a greater and greater degree of edginess to get the same effect.

FT: Why would girls and women be predisposed to becoming obsessed with porn?

MG: Comfort and self-soothing are needed when healthy attachment is absent – when she doesn't feel as meaningfully connected, accepted or loved by another. Her compulsive behaviour serves a purpose, and when it isn't countered by self-awareness and the ability to make healthier choices, her self-worth and health degrade over time. She becomes disconnected, disengaged and unable to carry on a functional life. When porn is the drug of choice, she is eventually unable to participate in real-life relationships, emotional or sexual.

FT: What does a woman need to know about her compulsive need to use porn, her recovery and her life after recovery?

MG: [First:] Sometimes life stinks, and it's your right and responsibility to live in ways that honour God, you and others. Second: Look in the mirror. It's up to you to make right choices – to make the changes that will make the difference. Third: Ask for help. You don't need to go through it alone. And finally: You are so worth the investment. You are a precious child of the King of Kings. **FT** –RJ

Education, Ministry and Outreach

Active, informed discipleship

Bethany College

Bethany College isn't alone in its size, location or overall aim. (Canada has many fine colleges that teach the Word and train for Christian life and ministry.) What gives Bethany its special flavour – what invites you to take a closer look – is our emphasis on active, informed discipleship. Our mission is to “nurture disciples and train leaders to serve.” We work hard to integrate in-depth learning and active service. In dorm life and classrooms, sports and artistic endeavours, student leadership and service-learning trips, this discipleship is central to everything we do.

Our students often tell us that what makes Bethany stand out is our community life. This is no accident. We know that discipleship happens best in community, and every student is given opportunity to thrive in a close-knit community. This goes beyond the often life-long friendships that grow at Bethany: it includes focused mentoring and personal discernment components.

At Bethany, we repeatedly see how God uses these aspects to bring about amazing transformation in the lives of our students. Whether you come for a two-year diploma or a four-year BA degree, you can expect your time at Bethany College to yield lasting change in your life.

Details at www.bethany.sk.ca.

A different type of adventure

Global Aid Network

Imagine groups of passionate people going to a country where a disaster has struck and aid is critical. Picture skilled teams visiting a shelter where destitute women and impoverished children are in need. Visualize individuals coming alongside a community in desperate need of clean water.

Through Global Aid Network (GAIN), a worldwide humanitarian relief and development organization dedicated to bringing hope and tangible help to the poor

and the suffering, individuals are given opportunities to go on a faith adventure.

“Whether it’s medical clinics, construction, working with orphans, trauma training or leader training, we have a several ways for people to make a difference in someone’s life,” commented Lindsey Schacter, GAIN’s LIFE teams manager.

GAIN engages with the God-given desires and abilities of individuals, men’s and women’s groups, athletic teams, businesses and churches, and sends them to places such as Benin, Haiti, India, Mexico and Tanzania on LIFE team projects that demonstrate the love of God in word and deed.

“I can’t stress enough how important it is for each of us to experience something that is much bigger than ourselves,” said Bill Blaney, GAIN’s CEO and director. “When we do that, we are changed forever!”

For more information, contact lifeteamsD@globalaid.net or call 877-462-GAIN (4246).

Canadian conference 2012

The Gospel Coalition

The Gospel Coalition is a movement of pastors, Christian leaders and churches who delight in the truth and power of the gospel, and who want the power of Christ crucified and resurrected to lie at the centre of all we cherish, preach and teach. The Coalition exists to promote and explore “the eternal gospel” (Rev. 14:6) of Jesus Christ, unfolded in Scripture.

Join us from May 29–31, 2012, at Heritage College and Seminary in Cambridge, ON, where Coalition members Don Carson, Stephen Um, John Nuefeld and others will be speaking. In a day when theological drift from the gospel is creating an ever-expanding chasm of suspicion and tension among churches and denominations, the gospel is our unifying hope. Our prayer is that these days will deepen our understanding of the Bible, our adoration of the Saviour

and our partnership in the progress of the gospel. Sessions and workshops will address contemporary theological concerns and equip us for ministry in our contemporary, multi-religious and increasingly urban context. For more information please call West Highland Baptist Church at 905-387-5385. Further information will be available this fall on the Gospel Coalition’s website: www.thegospelcoalition.org.

Solidarity with Jewish people

International Christian Embassy Jerusalem:

The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ) was founded in 1980 as an act of solidarity with the Jewish people in recognition of their 3,000-year-old claim and connection to Jerusalem. Today the ICEJ stands at the forefront of a growing mainstream movement of Christians worldwide who share a love and concern for Israel and an understanding of the biblical significance of the modern ingathering of the Jews to the land of their forefathers.

The Embassy’s work and witness are founded on the mandate of Isaiah 40:1 – “Comfort, comfort my people.” From our headquarters in Jerusalem and through our branches and representatives in over 80 nations, we seek to challenge the Church to take up its scriptural responsibilities toward the Jewish people, to remind Israel of the wonderful promises made to her in the Bible and to be a source of practical assistance to all the people of the land of Israel.

The Canadian branch actively reaches out to both Christian and Jewish communities across the nation through inter-faith conferences, educational seminars, humanitarian projects and prayer gatherings. ICEJ Canada recently participated in four MissionFest events, the “Canada Celebrates Israel” Knesset four-city tour, community Israel celebrations and the National Holocaust Memorial Ceremony in Ottawa.

Transforming lives
Operation Christmas Child

Christian Silva, of La Carbonera, Nicaragua, still recalls the day in 2003 when her children received Operation Christmas Child shoe-box gifts.

"My kids were full of joy with the boxes," she said. Christian's family hadn't been going to church, but she and her husband were so overjoyed with the gift-filled shoe boxes that they began attending the church that had hosted the shoe-box

event. Today they still attend the church, and every person in the family has committed to Christ.

"Through the discipleship lessons, I have learned to love Jesus," said 11-year-old Chrisada.

Christian's family is not alone. All



SAMARITAN'S PURSE CANADA

Christian Silva and her children were eternally impacted by Operation Christmas Child shoe boxes and The Greatest Journey discipleship program.

around the world, children are receiving Operation Christmas Child shoe-box gifts and hearing about God's amazing love. Intrigued, families are sending their children to the voluntary 12-lesson discipleship program called The Greatest Journey, which is offered after a shoe-box

distribution. Through these lessons, over 800,000 children per year, plus their families, are accepting Jesus as their Saviour and learning to love, live for and share Christ with others. And families like Christian's are being transformed.

"There used to be strife in our home," she said. "But [Jesus] changed everything. "Give gift-filled Operation Christmas Child shoe boxes and transform lives through the gospel.

Setting the standard
Robertson Hall Insurance

Robertson Hall Insurance has "set the standard" for property and liability insurance protection for churches and Christian charities since 1972. We have been endorsed by 25 major evangelical Christian denominations and chosen by the Canadian Council of Christian Charities (CCCC) as the recommended source of insurance protection.

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End of the World, Again

Some prominent religious leaders continue to do harm with predictions about the future.

“Beyond the shadow of a doubt, May 21 will be the date of the Rapture and the Day of Judgement,” declared Harold Camping, owner of an international radio network headquartered in California. Followers of Family Stations Inc., more commonly known as Family Radio, promoted the date on more than 5,000 billboards and in newspaper ads around the world. On the 22nd Camping said he was “flabbergasted” by the failure of the world to end. Then on May 23 he calmly announced that “spiritual judgement” had taken place and that the world would really end on October 21, 2011. No apology. Not even a blush.

This is tragedy on several levels. Think of the millions of dollars wasted and the time and energy lost to reckless Bible study, despite the clear warning of Scripture: “But about that day or hour no one knows” (Mark 13:32). The money could have been used to save some of the 4 million children who died of preventable diseases from the start of the year to May 21 (estimate from www.emptytomb.org).

False prophecies like Camping’s create ridicule and doubt about real prophetic truths. One news report from May 21 shows a woman at a “rapture party” holding a sign: “The End Was Nigh.” Sadly, Camping seems almost completely oblivious to the psychological and spiritual damage of his unbiblical views. Many of his own followers are left depressed and destitute from their blind faith and zealous giving to his unworthy cause. One devotee lost her entire life savings.

Sloppy prophetic speculation has long marred evangelical Christianity. Mark Noll used prophetic craziness as a major indictment in his book *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Eerdmans, 1995). For more evangelical critique, see Dwight Wilson, *Armageddon Now* (Baker Books/Institute for Christian Economics, 1977), William Alnor, *Soothsayers of the Second Advent* (Revel, 1989) and Richard Abanes, *End Time Visions* (Broadman & Holman, 1998).

Bad prophecy is a classic example that some sins are intellectual in nature, as C. S. Lewis said.

The best antidote is to avoid going beyond the Bible’s clear teaching. In this regard I recommend *The Truth About Armageddon* (Harpercollins, 1982) by William LaSor, the great Fuller Seminary scholar.

Of course, leaders like Camping don’t own a monopoly on false prophecies. Jehovah’s Witnesses have made their own prophetic goofs with miscalculations about 1874, 1878,

1914, 1918, 1925, 1941 and 1975. Various New Age leaders messed up on their apocalyptic frenzy over the “harmonic convergence” of August 16-17, 1987. Some New Age psychics are using “interpretations” of the Mayan calendar to foretell the end on December 21, 2012. Others are twisting NASA data about solar flares to argue for the same date.

Sometimes prophetic views have enormous global significance on political and military levels. Consider Israel. Many evangelical Christians believe the restoration of the Jewish people to the Holy Land is a fulfillment of biblical prophecy. This outlook has had influence in U.S. politics.

Likewise, for many Christians, evangelical and otherwise, protection of Israel is seen as part of God’s economy for the end of time. This view has its polar in many Islamic eschatologies (understandings of the end of history), which teach that Jesus will return and team up with the prophet Muhammad and a messianic figure (known as the Mahdi) to destroy the Antichrist (the *dajjal* in Islamic terms) and wipe out Israel.

It is common to hear prominent Muslim leaders equating both Israel and the United States with the evil empires predicted in Daniel and Revelation (13:4, for example) or citing Bible passages to “prove” that Jews run both the Catholic and Protestant worlds, as well as the United Nations.

This frightening side of Muslim prophecy is explored in Jean-Pierre Filiu’s *Apocalypse in Islam* (University of California Press, 2011) and David Cook’s *Contemporary Muslim Apocalyptic Literature* (Syracuse University Press, 2005).

Sadly, these prophetic views have gained popularity throughout the Islamic world since the 1967 Six Day War. Muslim prophecies of a doomed Israel grow in the fertile soil of Muslim and Palestinian resentment.

Thankfully, not all Muslims share this grim apocalyptic outlook. Furthermore, there are millions of Muslims who are open to pursuit of peace with Jews and all of humanity.

Christians who support Israel for prophetic and other reasons should not be naïve about the shortcomings and failures of Israel’s government. Likewise, Muslims should recognize how major themes in their own prophecies can harm the cause of real justice. Whatever legitimate grievances Muslims have over Palestinian issues, for example, will not be settled by any Muslim group (Hamas) or state (Iran) that uses prophetic speculation as a tool to solve political, social and economic problems.

Harold Camping and the May 21 fiasco are a warning, not of divine judgment, but of the dangers and real costs of not taking the present or the future seriously enough. **FT**

JAMES A. BEVERLEY is professor of Christian thought and ethics at Tyndale Seminary in Toronto. Thomas Nelson has just released his *Islam: Religion, Culture and History*.



Plugged In but Not Truly Connected?

The leader of a national ministry to women asks what being connected to Christ means in light of all our online connections. This column is the first in a new series.

When did you last check your email? Was it two minutes, five hours or eight days ago? And did my first question spark an inner urge to check your inbox before reading the rest of this column?

In a day when Canadian women have media technology at our fingertips, we need to be mindful that our activities and time spent online are God-honouring and purposeful. It's all too easy to fritter away an hour or two checking emails, updating Facebook, gulping celebrity gossip and reading fresh news bulletins with the well-meaning intention to "stay connected."

But to what – or whom – are we actually staying connected?

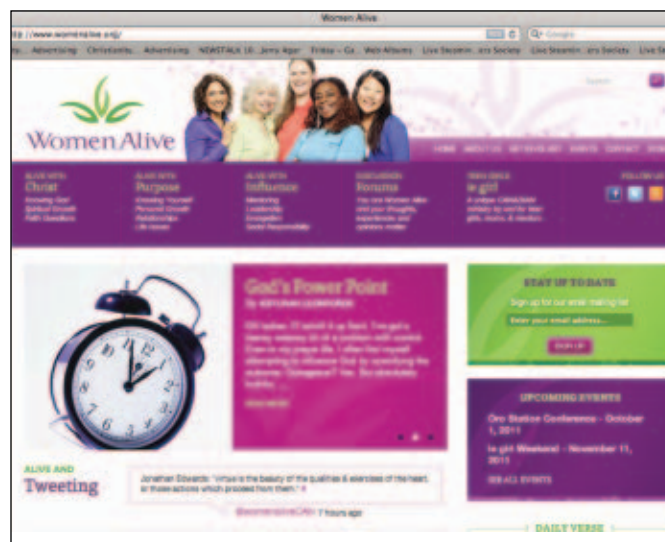
In John 15:5 Jesus encourages us to stay connected with Him: "I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."

Apart from Christ we can do nothing. Nothing! We must stay connected to Him to experience fruitful life – life to the full – as God intended. Remember Jesus' promise of abundance: "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10). Staying connected with Jesus is crucial for every area of our lives. Still, it's worth considering specifically in light of all the media messaging we take in on a daily, hourly, even minute-by-minute basis.

iTime Inventory

Consider taking a quick inventory of your time spent online or using other media technology in the past week. First, how did your time spent online compare to your time invested with God, family, work, serving or sharing Christ with those around you? Then, how much of your time online was spent purely absorbing entertainment, news stories, or other interesting but ultimately meaningless content? What amount did you spend online developing spiritual growth, truly building relationships or encouraging and influencing others?

Hopefully this quick exercise will be an encouragement



that your priorities – both online and otherwise – are centred on Christ. But it may also reveal some areas that could use prayer and new choices to better steward the time God has given you this week.

Five Helpful Tips

1. Consider setting specific times of day to check email both at work and at home. Inform your co-workers so they can anticipate your response time and address the issue in person, if necessary.
2. Use the Internet to go deeper in your relationship with God. Resources like Bible Gateway, Focus on the Family, and the newly interactive Women Alive website are great places to be encouraged and challenged in spiritual growth.
3. Create an Internet "allowance," establishing guidelines for how long and for what purposes you will stay connected.
4. Pick up the phone. Break the habit of sending email when a quick phone call could accomplish the same purpose. This helps build better relationships and avoid time-consuming email miscommunication. Remember, you want to manage your online presence, not have your online presence manage you.
5. Get active! Before going online, invest time in your relationship with God, family, friends and neighbours.

Every day is a gift, and each day has 1,440 minutes we can invest or squander.

As a favourite chorus from Canadian songwriter Carolyn Arends inspires us:

Seize the day, seize whatever you can

*'Cause life slips away just like hourglass sand
Seize the day, pray for grace from God's hand
Then nothing will stand in your way
Seize the day*

As women alive in Christ, let's choose not to let the moments of life slip away into cyberspace, but to truly *live* each day to the fullest with passion, purpose and influence. **FT**

MICHELLE (NAGLE) ARTHUR is executive director of Women Alive, a national ministry committed to equip and encourage Canadian women and teen girls to become dedicated followers of Jesus Christ, living out their God-given potential in their personal, professional and spiritual lives. Women Alive invites women and teen girls across Canada to the newly re-launched site www.womenalive.org for daily verses, weekly articles, podcasts, discussion forums, prayer, mentoring and resources all designed by and for Canadian women. Make it your homepage so that Women Alive can help you truly connect, grow in faith, fulfill your purpose and influence our nation.



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Four Vital Signs

A Baptist leader summarizes four goals to greater church health and better service.

I have an appointment with the doctor every three months. It's like he doesn't trust me – well, I do have borderline high blood pressure. Every visit is the same: “Get on the scale” and “Let me take your blood pressure and pulse.” He bases his initial evaluation on these quick results, on these “vital signs.”

People have debated over the years the characteristics of healthy churches. Recently so-called “missional thinking” has added new insights to these discussions. I'd like to summarize them by offering four vital signs for healthy missional churches. When accepted as targets, these four will reshape a church and help it to be more healthy and more aligned with God's mission.

The biblical foundation for these vital signs is found in the Great Commandments and the Great Commission. Just as the physical “vitals” are not the be-all and end-all of a healthy person, so the four here are incomplete indicators. My goal is to articulate a simple, memorable evaluation

paradigm that any pastor or church leader can use. These vital signs also rise from the following deeply held values:

- The purpose of the local church is to advance the Kingdom of God, not to protect itself and advance its own causes.
- The key to church health is to give yourself away.
- The primary vehicle to advance the Kingdom of God is the local church.
- For the church to be healthy, it must achieve God's purposes for it.

The first vital sign is new believers. A healthy missional church will see new people who have become new believers and will have a process to co-operate with God to see that happen. If it's been a long time since a congregation has seen a new person trust in Jesus, it must examine its programs and priorities, asking why this is not happening.

The second vital sign is new disciple-makers. A mature disciple is one who is investing his life and reproducing himself or herself in others. Too often we have been satisfied by attendance and giving as the standards for discipleship.

Every new believer enters a discipleship process to become more and more like Jesus Christ. Jesus invested His life in people, and so should we. As disciple-makers we

take on the responsibility of helping others on the journey to grow to be more like Him. The objective of that journey is to be and behave like Jesus, and invest in others on the same pilgrimage. Does your church have a plan to take every new believer and bring them through a process which challenges and leads them to be disciple-makers?

The third vital sign is new communities of faith – new units to connect with the world, new ministry opportunities, new outreach possibilities, new Bible studies and ultimately new congregations or churches. The Great Commission commands us to make disciples of all nations, and that is virtually impossible without an ever-expanding and reproducing array of ministry units.

Churches content with the status quo and churches which have not added another ministry or outreach possibility for years are stuck and cannot be said to be striving to be missional and healthy. A maturing church needs to

be asking God where and when to invest resources and leadership to start another congregation. Some see this as optional, but it's the key to giving yourself away for the Kingdom of God.

The fourth vital sign is transformative community engagement. If our church were to disappear today, would our neighbours even notice we were

gone? Would anyone say, “Oh, that's too bad! They were so good for the community.” Are we involved in community events? Do we volunteer beyond the church? The answers to these questions will help us know how to plan and strategize to impact our communities.

We should be clear that no church is perfectly missional or healthy. We live in realities and strive for ideals. I'm planting a church right now and can honestly say that on two of these vital signs we might be doing fairly well, but on the other two we have a long way to go. These are not legalistic standards for whipping the church into shape – rather they are opportunities to go to Our Lord and ask Him to help direct us. They are also not judgemental clubs for evaluating each other, to see where we line up on the continuum of healthy missional churches. Instead they are indicators that help us as we walk day to day with Jesus, the head of the Church, to help us make sure the main thing is in fact the main thing. **FT**

If our church were to disappear today, would our neighbours even notice we were gone?

GERRY TAILLON is the national ministry leader of the Canadian National Baptist Convention, a family of 250 churches, with headquarters in Cochrane, Alta. This column continues a series by affiliates of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. For a list, see the EFC.ca/affiliates.



Broadway Church, Vancouver, B.C.

Out of School Care, a before and after school care program for ages 5-12, addresses the need for licensed child care.

PHOTO: CITYREACH CARE SOCIETY

“A city church reaching city lives” is how Lead Pastor Darin Latham describes the DNA of Broadway Church, a congregation of diverse and gifted Pentecostals.

Broadway Church’s location on the east side of Vancouver, sometimes called “the poorest postal code in Canada,” brings with it several diverse realities. Poverty is an issue, yes, but Vancouver is also one of the most expensive Canadian cities to live in. Some label it the most secular city in North America, although its incredible influx of ethnic cultures also imports a host of religious beliefs.

This congregation of diverse and gifted Pentecostals (it’s affiliated with the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada) sharpened and focused its mission statement and core values as recently as last year. Broadway Church exists “to produce fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ” and encourages an outward orientation. Its members are committed to loving God and loving others. Every ministry aims to be biblically based and move people closer to the image of Christ. Congregants strive to understand the current realities in their community and then respond creatively and relevantly. Seeing themselves as managers of God’s generosity, they freely contribute their time,

talents and treasures, creating healthy avenues for community and communication.

Next Steps

Latham describes Broadway as the “church of the next steps” where an individual may enter at any point on a continuum. Some need food, a safe place for their kids, courage to face an addiction. Others are ready to hear and understand God’s Word. Laity comes alongside, helping individuals discern and take the next step. “Opening the conversation as Christ followers,” says Latham, “brings Christ’s presence into the community, inviting secular and sacred to meet.”

In the mid-1990s Broadway erected a multimillion dollar church right next to a vacant tire factory – an imposing structure in a low-income neighbourhood. Church leaders pondered and prayed for a creative way to use the tire factory for ministry. They eventually invested \$1 million to refurbish it for a ministry called The Warehouse, designed for people who may not feel comfort-



PHOTO: DAVE ROELS

Through Broadway's Club Freedom program 150 homeless men and women, many dealing with addictions, receive lunch every Sunday.

able taking that first step into a church.

CityReach Care Society, operating from The Warehouse, offers a range of programs and activities focused on tangible service to the community, as well as opportunities for personal growth and development. CityReach Care Society aims to address both physical poverty and spiritual poverty to truly "help people prosper."

Eighty per cent of CityReach donors come from the Broadway assembly. Approximately 50 per cent of CityReach volunteers also come from Broadway, a congregation with 1,500 in weekly attendance.

Club Freedom

Ken McElhoes and his wife prayed for a homeless man that Ken had met on the street and invited to lunch. Then he took several homeless men to lunch, filling a table at a restaurant every Sunday. As numbers grew, Ken moved the meal to the church boardroom and then to The Warehouse. Now 150 homeless men and women, many dealing with addictions, receive lunch every Sunday. More than 100 Broadway volunteers serve alongside a chaplain (under a shared contract with Union Gospel Mission) to serve meals, lead a weekly worship service, assist with recovery programs or to identify safe, affordable

housing. Now Aurel, that first homeless man, takes Pastor Latham to lunch.

Food for Families

Open 50 weeks of the year, Broadway Church's Food Bank serves approximately 170 families every week – 50 per cent of which are single-parent homes. The focus is on providing healthier food choices, most of which are organic and locally grown.

A related program called eduKitchen teaches participants cooking techniques and menu suggestions, emphasizing healthy eating, low-cost menus and shopping. Community partnerships have grown to enable on-site rotating access to a librarian, nutritionist, public health nurse and a representative from Healthiest Babies Possible.

Out of School Care

Addressing the need for licensed child care, Broadway offers a before and after school care program for ages 5-12. It includes a healthy snack and age-appropriate activities that foster individual growth and development in an atmosphere of respect. Volunteer tutors are also available once a week. By believing in kids and speaking words of encouragement, Broadway volunteers hope to help raise a generation of confident young men and

women who will become the future leaders of their city.

Kidstreet, a Saturday program for ages 6-12, offers interactive activities in a safe and caring environment where kids can make new friends and discover more about their value and purpose in Christ. Seeing Kidstreet teens make healthy life choices and knowing that perhaps this program played a part in their development are the greatest encouragement Broadway volunteers could ever receive, they say.

Broadway also operates several housing developments in partnership with the British Columbia government: geared-to-income apartments, subsidized suites for

seniors and handicapped, a step-up transition townhouse for families growing into the realities of the real estate market and an intermediate-care facility.

Prayer Wall

In all the busyness, Latham reminds his congregation not to lose their dependency on the Holy Spirit. At the Prayer Wall (on the Internet) hundreds choose one specific day each week to pray for all the needs listed. Some form the cancer prayer network. Others uphold off-the-street ministries. Several pray for people at the end of Sunday services. A few meet before the service to pray for the speakers.

Facing the Challenge

Broadway's roots lie a hundred years deep. "We are standing on the shoulders of those who've gone before," says Latham. He is conscious of the challenge to instill within the congregation a transition mindset to the ever-changing reality of the 21st century. For a city church to reach city lives, the same gospel – the same Christ-centredness – may need to be communicated in new culturally relevant ways. **FT**

CHARLENE DE HAAN is a freelance writer in Toronto. She is also the executive director of CAM International of Canada and founder of stepUPtransitions.ca. Read all the profiles in this ongoing series at www.faithtoday.ca

Zambia: Tragedy and Triumph

I took a break from my research on Zambia and met a co-worker at the coffee machine. “So, what do you know about Zambia?” I asked him—who shall remain nameless. “It’s . . . somewhere on the African continent?” he sputtered.

We laughed – at him – but next to some of its more infamous neighbours, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zambia could well fly under the radar of many a caring Canadian, with the tragic ordinariness of its developmental challenges. The only place I’ve noticed Zambia in the news lately is a business story about a Canadian gold company trying to buy the Equinox Copper Mine in Lumwana, Zambia, one of the largest in the world.

But of course there is more. Visit the website of the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia (www.efzsecretariat.org) and you’ll see a series of banners that proclaim its mission: Inspiring Faith and Hope, Peace & Stability. At press time another banner showed the words Fighting Hunger & Poverty and another had to do with helping victims and loving neighbours. You get the idea. This is an association of Evangelicals formed in 1964 (the same year as The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada) that has empowering “the poor, marginalized and vulnerable persons and households” as a prime objective.

And of those, Zambia has no shortage.

Zambia is one of the world’s poorest countries. Its journey through colonialism (it was Rhodesia when under British control) and out the other side, the ups and downs of the price of copper, a major export, and its struggle with debt, disease and disaster has positioned it near the bottom – 150th out of 169 countries – on the United Nations most recent Human Development Index (HDI). The HDI assesses progress in



health, knowledge and standard of living. Zambia’s HDI factsheet explains that “most households in Zambia lack basic conditions such as safe drinking water, basic health or clean energy sources, and half the time those deprivations are severe.” In fact, more than 80 per cent of Zambians live below the poverty line.

Mix in the ongoing struggle with HIV and AIDS that has robbed Zambia, and most of the continent, of an entire generation of workers, professionals, parents – and perhaps most cruelly, potential – and you end up with an all-too-common, and all-too-sad story. It is estimated that one in seven adults lives with HIV and AIDS in Zambia, with over 700,000 children orphaned by the pandemic. Malaria is another common killer, responsible for the majority of deaths of children under five. No wonder a major EFZ initiative, according to their website, is distributing mosquito nets to fight the disease.

Like any country, Zambia is much more than the sum of its problems. For every tragic statistic, there is a corresponding triumph of compassion and practical response, often led by Christians both within and outside Zambia. Like so much of Africa, Zambia is a home to tragedy, but also to hope, and, of course, beauty. The famous Victoria Falls cascade there, twice as high as Canada’s own Niagara Falls, drawing visitors from around the world who marvel at their power. **FT**



Zambia at a Glance

Full Name: Republic of Zambia
Population: 13.2 million (UN 2010)

Capital: Lusaka
Area: 752,614 km² (290,586 sq. mi.)

Major Languages: English (official), Bemba, Lozi, Nyanja, Tonga

Major Religions: Christianity, indigenous beliefs, Hinduism, Islam

Literacy Rate: 80%

Life Expectancy: 49 years (men), 50 years (women) (UN)

Main Industries: copper mining and processing, construction, foodstuffs, beverages, chemicals, agriculture, tourism

Average Annual Income: US\$630

(Sources: BBC, World Vision, CIA Factbook)

On Our Knees

- Zambia was declared a Christian country in 1991. Some estimate that 25 per cent of its population are Evangelicals. Pray that the people and government would continue to be comforted and challenged by the gospel.
- Zambia’s people are worse off than before independence. Pray that Zambians and other groups working to fight poverty would find the support they need.
- Pray for the Bible colleges and churches that disciple.
- Pray for the Canadian agencies that have projects in Zambia.

(Adapted from www.operationworld.org)

Canadian Connections

- Opportunity International Canada, a microfinance organization, is connected with the Christian Enterprise Trust of Zambia (CETZAM), which has helped create and expand employment opportunities since 1995. It was founded by Zambian Christian business leaders committed to fighting poverty through business creation. It now serves 6,700 clients with a loan portfolio of more than \$2 million. www.opportunityinternational.ca
- The Church of God in Western Canada supports the National Church of God in Zambia, including projects such as food relief, leadership development, vocational skills training and work camps. www.chog.ca

For more about how EFC affiliates are working in Zambia visit the EFC.ca/globalvillage



The Impact of Men

The leader of a national ministry to men reflects on how men can make a godly impact in the world by starting locally. This column is the first in a new series.

During the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization last October, many of the significant issues facing the world today were brought to the forefront. The Church was confronted with the realities of HIV/AIDS, poverty, abuse, child sex trafficking and many other stories of brokenness in the world.

As an attendee, I felt out of place and uncertain at times as to my purpose at this major gathering. Another attendee asked me why I felt that way and what our ministry was focused on. As I described our calling to help men, he said, "You need to see my journal! For every issue we have

discussed, I have been writing 'What about the men? Who is addressing the ones causing this damage?'"

Every man is making an impact in society. Some are making a good impact, some are making a bad impact, and some are making a godly impact.

Men are most often the direct causes of the greatest suffering and injustices in the world. The silence of men is allowing this suffering and injustice to continue. It's going to take men who choose to serve and reflect the Light of the World to undo the impact of men who choose to walk in darkness. It's going to take men who have experienced the redemptive power of Jesus Christ to bring His hope to the hopeless and broken.

Study after study will show what happens in families, churches and communities when men are growing in their walk with God, or even when men decide to fulfil their roles as husband, father or church member.

This is all easier said than done.

A sustained effort to help disciple men to make a godly impact is what we need.

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Many of us will look at the story of Pentecost or the Book of Acts to show what the Church should be and the kind of influence it should have in the world. What is often forgotten is that two very important things took place prior to these amazing stories.

First, Jesus spent three years turning these men into disciples and preparing them to make disciples. Every man who wants to make a godly impact should understand it takes time and energy to grow and be prepared to become such a man. Every church who wants to see something happen in the lives of men must be prepared to walk with their men just like Jesus walked with His.

This commitment to see men mature in Christ is important. It's also important to know that not every man will succeed in this journey. Jesus had disciples who abandoned Him (the Garden of Gethsemane) or betrayed Him (Judas). The temptations of the world or the desire for security will often lead men to abandon the call to making a godly impact.

Second, these men were empowered by the Holy Spirit. The power of God is not spoken about often enough in men's books or events. What's more obvious is a long line of formulas and step-by-step guides to success. These things are important, but it's even more important that, as men, we understand that all these formulas are meaningless and all our efforts are pointless apart from the power of the Holy Spirit.

Men need to feel they are part of something bigger than themselves. And yet they also need to know they can actually make a difference in the midst of that bigger picture. When we cast vision about the big picture, we must then connect men to how they play a part in the solution.

For example the issue of fatherlessness is a major challenge. Most men, when confronted by this reality, are saddened but unsure what to do about it. In fact, every time a man learns to be a better father to his own children, he is addressing fatherlessness. There are also opportunities to become foster parents or adoptive parents or to serve in a variety of mentoring roles in our inner cities. Any of these responses from a man provide the opportunity to be part of the bigger picture of helping to change the damage fatherlessness is caus-

ing in our nation and around the world.

At the heart of virtually every man is a desire to know his life counted for something. We are searching for significance, whether we use that particular word or not. Men who are older will often ask the question, "What is my legacy?" In reality, a man's legacy is being formed through the impact he is making every day. Our attitudes, actions and words are all telling

a story and making an impact.

The question every man must answer is: "What is the story and impact of my life?" **FT**

KIRK GILES is president of Promise Keepers Canada (www.promisekeepers.ca), a ministry to men founded in 1995 with offices in Burlington, Ont.

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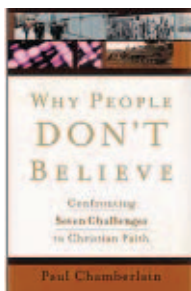
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Why People Don't Believe: Confronting Seven Challenges to Christian Faith

Author: Paul Chamberlain
Baker Books, 2011.
176 pages. \$14.99

Paul Chamberlain is director of the Institute of Christian Apologetics at Trinity Western University in Langley, B.C. His new book engages and



critiques the popular “new atheism” promoted by Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris and Christopher Hitchens. Specifically it critiques their assertion

that in our post-9/11 world religions should be eradicated because they imperil humanity through their inherent desire for violence, lack of justifiable evidence, glorification of irrationality, promotion of immorality, disdain for scientific knowledge, contempt for tolerant inclusivity and militant proselytization.

After judiciously summarizing the arguments of the new atheists, Chamberlain methodically disproves their assertions and unmasks them as unfounded ridicule and mockery rather than actual refutations of substance. By drawing on logic, sourcing relevant socio-political findings and examining key biblical texts, Chamberlain exposes the arguments of the new atheists as simplistic and reductionistic – demonstrating that Christianity cannot be discarded as its detractors may assume.

Chamberlain also puts forward constructive arguments in favour of Christianity, specifically the teachings of Jesus and the influence of the Church on world

history over the past two millennia. While confessing certain embarrassments such as the Inquisition and the Act of Uniformity, Chamberlain asserts that Christianity has been a significant source of good for all cultures it has come into contact with. He examines how Christianity has influenced the establishment and propagation of human integrity and dignity, equality, the “Golden Rule,” social justice and the relativization of nationalism.

To further buttress his argument for the validity of Christianity, Chamberlain points to concrete manifestations of Christian teaching: struggling against infanticide and child abandonment; establishing orphanages, hospitals and philanthropic organizations such as the Red Cross, Salvation Army and YMCA; abolishing the modern slave trade; and founding universities. Chamberlain concludes with an impassioned plea for the claims of Jesus, reminding us that Jesus’ own claims about himself make it illogical to consider Him as merely a good moral teacher. *—Brad Penner*

Rescued

Author: Donna Dawson
Word Alive Press, 2010.
242 pages. \$16.75

Daphne Barrie won’t survive her pregnancy – and she’d rather die with her baby than make a hurried choice she could regret for a lifetime. Desperate for another option, she pushes for a chance at a radical new procedure that would transfer her microscopic embryo into the womb of a healthy recipient, Charlene McTaggart.

Embryonic micromanipu-



lation has been a reality in livestock for years. *Rescued* is Donna Dawson’s exploration of what it might mean if it were possible for humans. Industry professionals have told her a procedure like this could work. “Possible but cost-prohibitive” is what one source said.

This is clearly an issue novel, but Donna Dawson is too skilled a writer to let it slide into propaganda. It’s more of a look at an alternative to abortion rather than an argument for or against. Both pro-life and pro-choice readers will find it interesting as long as they’re comfortable with a book where some of the characters talk about their faith.

Daphne and Charlene are thinking, feeling characters who draw reader empathy. We share the poignant experiences of a teen who knows she’ll never deliver a baby, and a woman who had lost all hope of ever being pregnant. The supporting doctors, the helpful reporter and the tabloid hack all have parts to play in exploring the ramifications of such a radical procedure. There’s also a menacing religious extremist adding yet another angle and keeping the tension high.

Rescued is an informative and thought-provoking novel. The first part is human interest: the fight to save Daphne’s life. The second is more suspenseful: the fight to protect Charlene and the unborn baby from the villain. With short chapters and a fast pace, it’s hard to put down.

Donna Dawson (www.authordonnadawson.com) is an award-winning novelist, speaker and writing instructor in Ontario. *Rescued* is her fifth novel. *—Janet Sketchley*

The Next Story: Life and Faith After the Digital Explosion

Author: Tim Challies
Zondervan, 2011.
208 pages. \$21.99

If you’ve detected some changes in yourself, your kids or grandkids since the coming of the Internet, video games and smart phones, you’ll want to read *The Next Story* by Ontario author Tim Challies. When this pastor and writer began to notice how his beeping and ringing gizmos and gadgets had him on an ever-shorter leash, he decided to do some investigating. The result is a holistic book that not only gives information about technology, but also provides a well-researched, -reasoned and biblically based context for its use.



In Part One Challies lays the groundwork for a discerning use of technology by first relating it to God and theology. Next he explains what theorists have discovered about ways it changes society and individuals. Finally he takes us on a tour of digital technology through history, showing us how we got here.

Part Two delves into modern digital technology’s impacts on communication, mediation (use of media instead of face-to-face contact), distractibility, family life, information (the sheer volume and questionable quality of it), truth/authority (Wikipedia versus an encyclopedia written by experts), and visibility and privacy.

Throughout Part Two Challies relates technology’s challenges to the foundational discoveries about spirit, soul and body he arrived at in Part One. Each of these chapters has a

“Questions for Reflection” and “Practical Application” section, good for personal or group use.

As someone who has interacted with digital technology for years, I saw my behaviours described often in this book and found myself thinking, “So that’s what’s going on!” Whether you’re a technology newbie, a seasoned digital immigrant, or a digital native, there’s something for you in its pages. Digital technology is here to stay. This book will help you see how you can remain its master instead of allowing it to master you. —Violet Nesdoly

The Essential Margaret Avison

Editor: Robyn Sarah
The Porcupine’s Quill,
2010. 63 pages. \$12.95

If you know anything about Canadian poetry or Christian poetry, you’ve probably heard of Margaret Avison; she is arguably Canada’s most significant modernist poet. Right until her death in 2007 she continued to write powerful poems that draw her readers into the reflective depths of their meaning.

Recently The Porcupine’s Quill has released this compact retrospective collection as an overview of her work.

Not for careless readers, the poetry of Margaret Avison is challenging. Meanings tend to gradually emerge after multiple readings, due to her unusual sentence structure and leaps of association.

As Robyn Sarah states in her forward, Avison succeeded in developing a simpler style over

time, although that is only relative. With this in mind, readers new to Avison, or those not used to reading much poetry, would be wise to first dip into some of her later poems, such as “Prayer of Anticipation” from *Momentary Dark*:

...It is my best good
to let you speak your
remembered, translated,
printed, painfully
accessible word.

Jesus, disclose
your journeying for
this day’s avenues.

It’s hard to look at such a slim sampling of her work without being disappointed by what’s not here. Even so, Sarah has included some of Avison’s better-known pieces, such as “The Swimmer’s Moment” and “The Dumfounding.” The earlier work is better represented (there’s only one poem from her later, prize-winning collection *Concrete & Wild Carrot*), but that makes this an excellent addition for those who have some of Margaret’s recent books.

Avison is not merely respected by Christians. In fact, she’s better known in the academic community, having won numerous honours including the Governor General’s Award (twice!) and the Order of Canada.

—D.S. Martin

Newworldson Artist: Newworldson Inpop/EMI CMG. \$14.95 at newworldson.com

Most artists would be ecstatic if they could match the performance level of their recordings on stage.

The studio offers so many advantages, including a controlled environment, multiple takes, overdubs, programming, special effects, a plethora of fixes and intricate mixing capabilities to achieve the optimal sound balance.

But for Newworldson the opposite has always been true. These four guys from the Niagara area in southern Ontario are musicians’ musicians. To see them live can be a jaw-dropping encounter. The challenge for them lies in translating the energy and excitement of their concerts into the recording studio. Although still not capable of rivalling the live experience, Newworldson’s latest studio album comes closer than they ever have before.

Following 2006’s *Roots Revolution* and 2008’s *Salvation Station*, the group’s third CD, and second major-label release on Inpop Records, is simply named *Newworldson*. Lead singer and keyboardist Joel Parisien explains on a MySpace video that

it was decided to self-title the disc “because it was kind of a culmination of all of our experiences together as a band, and it felt like it was the quintessential Newworldson recording because we were covering all the different genres and influences.”

After performing at everything from small clubs to large festivals, and touring throughout North America as well as Europe and Australia, Parisien goes on to say, “I think we’ve kind of matured as a group. We’ve let our influences kind of settle into something that is uniquely our own.”

Sure enough, Newworldson has actually managed to develop a distinct, recognizable signature sound. But it defies classification in any particular genre. Rather it’s a fusion of everything from R&B, soul, gospel, jazz, roots, pop, funk, blues, old fashioned rock ‘n’ roll and even some Caribbean influences (including a guest appearance by the Toronto Mass Choir).

Defying generational boundaries, this is an album for those looking for a high-energy sound that’s different from anything else in their Christian music collection. FT —Peter Fleck



Christian Writers Awarded

Writers from a wide range of Canadian churches won awards from The Word Guild, a national writers’ association, at its annual gala in June.

The Canadian Christian Writing Awards draw more than 250 entries each year across 35 categories. Winners were presented with cash prizes at a public event in Mississauga on June 15 (complete list at www.thewordguild.com/media).

Among the most nominated authors were

historical novelist Connie Brummel Crook for *No Small Victory*, John Bowen of Wycliffe College for *Growing Up Christian*, Brian Stiller of Tyndale College & Seminary for *You Never Know What You Have Till You Give It Away*, Tim Huff of Youth Unlimited GTA for *Dancing with Dynamite* and Alberta’s Mary Kassian for *Girls Gone Wise in a World Gone Wild*.

The gala was followed by Canada’s largest annual Christian writers’ conference (www.writecanada.org), also sponsored by The Word Guild. FT —Bill Fledderus

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Westwood Community Church in Winnipeg, a multi-generational church of 200 members, is prayerfully seeking a full-time lead pastor. We are asking God for a pastor who is strong in Pulpit Ministry, with special emphasis on Biblical preaching and encouraging the congregation to walk the Christian walk. We are seeking a pastor who is strong in relational aspects of church life, a good listener, approachable, an encourager and sensitive to the care needs of the congregation. The successful candidate will be inspiring, spiritual and a team leader. Please direct resumes and/ or inquiries to WCCSearch@westwood.mb.ca. Deadlines for submissions is August 31, 2011 or until this position is filled.

SENIOR/LEAD PASTOR

Port Rowan MB Church is adding to its pastoral staff and seeks an energetic, visionary individual to come as Lead Pastor, while our current Lead Pastor moves to a new role as Pastor of Care & Connecting.

Port Rowan MB Church exists to know Christ and to make Him known. We are an engaged congregation of 250-300 (all ages), located just outside the small SW Ontario town of Port Rowan, on the shore of Lake Erie at Long Point. The town serves as the hub of a large rural community and surrounding resort areas.

The applicant must have proven pastoral experience. As one who loves the Lord and loves people, his passion and gift is to preach and teach the Word. He must also be able to serve in the context of an active elders board and the current pastoral team.

Interested candidates are asked to submit a detailed resumé including a doctrinal statement and a personal phi-

losophy of ministry. A submission of a CD or DVD or web video of a recent sermon would be appreciated.

Email: Bryan Doerksen, Search Chair, bcdoerksen@gmail.com

To see the full job description, please go to www.portrowanmbchurch.com and click on "Lead Pastor Job Description."

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Sports and the Spirit

How do we enjoy them both when schedules conflict?

Youth workers and Sunday School teachers complain they can't offer programs that build from one week to the next because they can't count on the consistent attendance of half or more of their charges. Sports – from organized hockey leagues to individual ski trips – are the main competitors on Friday nights and Sunday mornings.

Pastors see attendance statistics fluctuate wildly as tournaments, playoffs, regattas and races come and go. Leaders of charities shake their heads at the money Christian families are spending on sports: on gear, coaching, facility fees and gasoline.

And what about expenses for sports fans, whether on season tickets, big-screen TVs or money spent watching at restaurants and bars?

The campaign for treating Sunday as a “common pause day,” a day of rest for all Canadians regardless of religion, was lost decades ago. Like so much else in our consumerist culture, sports now run 24/7/365.

So what are Christian individuals, families and churches to do in response?

We can insist on a Sabbath for ourselves. We can forego participation in any sport that will impinge on Sunday worship and other church activities. That was the simple choice my parents and I made at the start – and immediate end – of my minor hockey career when the first team practice was scheduled for 7:30 a.m. on a Sunday morning in a town 40 kilometres away. (The decision wasn't easy for any of us. My father played hockey up to the Junior A and university levels, so it was hard for him to see his son not enjoy what had meant so much to him.)

We can also insist, more generally, that sports not run our lives – our weekends, vacations, family schedules and budgets. If we can fit sports into the other good things we have decided to do, then fine. If not, then we must find other sports, or the same sports in a less demanding mode.

But wait. Some of us are powerfully drawn to the highly demanding world of serious sport. Some of us can figure-skate or swim at a high level, or play elite soccer or compete in marathons. Should we give up what gives us and, we trust, the Lord who gifted us, such pleasure? And

should we abandon all top levels of competitive sports to non-Christians?

And there are other complications. Some families find their closest fellowship canoeing, hiking or skiing together. And one of the few times our culture lets us all be free at the same time is Sunday morning. Should we give up “focusing on the family” to get to church instead?

Maybe we should. If a sphere of human life has become so deranged in its values and practices that a sensible believer can't participate in it or help to redeem it, then we should indeed abandon it.

There is still another option. People in highly demanding sports can elect to participate well in those sports while also looking to the church to help sustain their spiritual lives. And the same goes for those trying to capitalize on opportunities for family recreation.

The early churches met when and where they could. So do house churches in China today. So have congregations in every place and time in which Christians could not bend society's norms to fit our preferred worship time of Sunday morning.

Therefore the Saturday night service – long offered by Roman Catholics and more recently by certain experimental Protestants – might not be the pathetic capitulation to the culture some of us Evangelicals have concluded it to be.

And small fellowship groups – evening meetings in homes or midday ones in workplaces – have become for many their primary opportunities for worship, fellowship and mission, rather than the big-group Sunday morning gathering.

I don't like some of the choices contemporary Canadian life offers me. I want to be able to enjoy sports and church and other good things without compromise. But I have to live in the Canada of today, rather than keeping on trying to live in a Canada that's gone.

So let's keep thinking realistically and faithfully about how to honour God, love our neighbours, participate in church, care for the Earth and grow into maturity among the options we actually have, rather than wish we had. And let's encourage each other, even as we might disagree, in what has become a set of difficult choices. **FT**

Like so much else in our consumerist culture, sports now run 24/7/365.

JOHN STACKHOUSE last played hockey for the Regent College intramural team at the University of British Columbia more than a decade ago. His book *Making the Best of It: Following Christ in the Real World* (Oxford) will soon be available in paperback.

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