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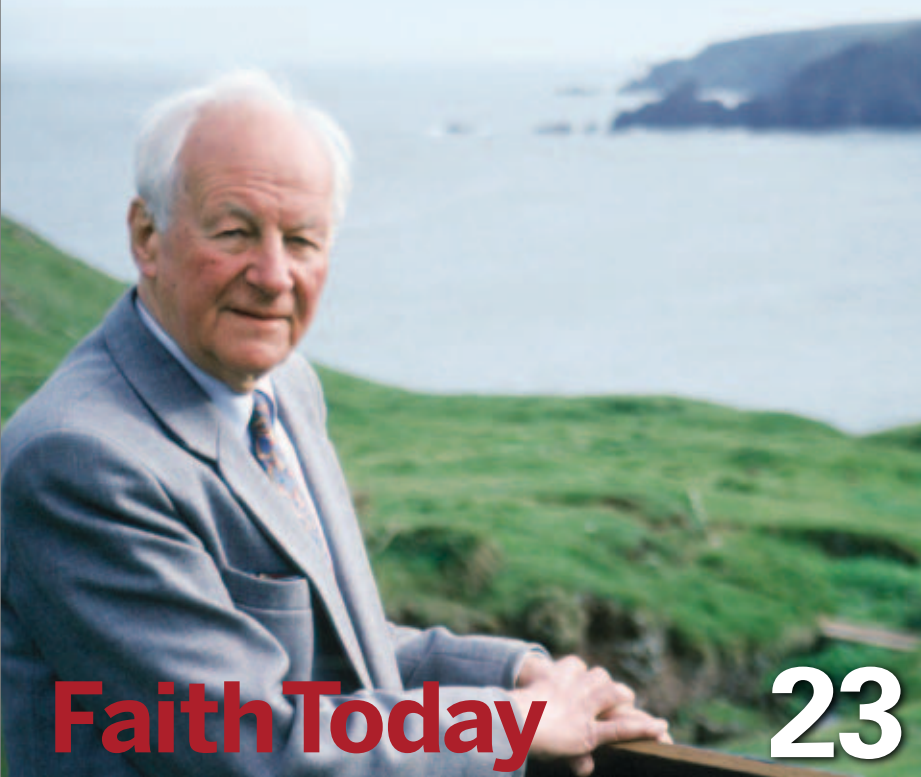


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Faith Today

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To Connect, Equip and Inform Evangelical Christians in Canada
September/October 2011

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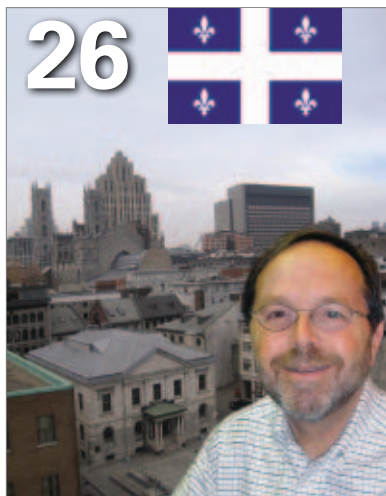
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Speaking out in love is not always easy.

“It’s not *what* you say, but *how* you say it!” my mother would say as she marched me to my room, then order me to stay there until I was ready to apologize “properly and mean it.” Even though I readily said, “I’m sorry!”, she quickly sensed something different behind the words. No doubt it was my tone of voice or clenched teeth and crossed arms that gave away my lack of repentance.

Is what we say more important, or how we say it? Is it better sometimes to say nothing? Or is that an abdication of our responsibility as Christians to speak out when we are concerned about something that contradicts our religious beliefs? Too often many of us vacillate between saying nothing out of concern for how we may be perceived, or speaking too quickly without thought to the consequences.

Actors are used to experimenting with the message behind words, and often vary how they read or play their lines. Perhaps that’s why it’s so complicated to balance Canada’s laws permitting freedom of expression while still condemning expressions that could be judged as hatred and therefore harmful.

In our cover story “Where Is Free Speech Heading in Canada?” writer Patricia Paddey outlines some recent legal battles related to freedom of expression. In Canada we have considerable freedoms of conscience and religion as well as belief, opinion and expression. However, there are lim-

its. Sometimes defining these limits can be as obvious as the tone, timbre and body language of a child. At others the limits are more subtle and challenging, demanding the wisdom of Solomon to discern.

In his column “Hate Speech Versus Speaking in Love” EFC President Bruce Clemenger suggests Christian principles can help our lawmakers as they consider the definition of hate speech and the limits of this expression. Everyday Christians also need to be prayerful and turn to Scripture for direction. We are to love the one we believe is sinning and remember we too are such sinners without Christ. With the Holy Spirit’s help, that tone and timbre of love will undergird our words.

P.S. Complementary copies of this issue of *Faith Today* are being distributed to some supporters of Promise Keepers Canada and Women Alive (don’t miss the thoughtful columns by their leaders that *Faith Today* is currently publishing!). We invite any new readers to help sustain our magazine ministry by subscribing (see details below). Similarly, some regular *Faith Today* readers will receive a sample copy of the Promise Keepers magazine *Seven*. Enjoy! **FT**

Is it better sometimes to say nothing? Or is that an abdication of our responsibility to speak out?

GAIL REID is managing editor of *Faith Today* and director of publishing and resourcing for The Evangelical Fellowship of

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Reaching Young People

Re: How Evangelicals Can Change the World With Social Media (Jul/Aug 2011)

Thank you for your excellent report on social media in the evangelical world.

This is an important outreach area for people of faith. Mary Lou Harrison did a commendable job in reporting on a variety of perspectives and age groups.

Samaritan's Purse Canada and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association of Canada (BGEAC) have employed social media for several years, with very active Facebook pages for Samaritan's Purse, Operation Christmas Child and BGEAC's Rock the River youth ministry.



As so many people interviewed said, Facebook is a key avenue to have two-way conversations with a young demographic.

On the purely evangelistic front, BGEAC's Soul Chat Internet ministry (soulchat.ca) is aimed squarely at non-Christians who are open to faith discussions. One of the prime methods we use to attract people to Soul Chat's blogs, essays and videos on the website is Facebook and Twitter. In many ways, we know social media will be a huge part of the future of evangelism around the world.

*Frank King
Calgary, Alta.*

A Women's Rights Issue

Re: "Young, Female – and Pro-life" (May/June 2011)

I loved this article and am passing it around to many of my friends. So often the attitude exists that if you're smart, intellectual, articulate and female, you must be pro-choice. But I'm pretty educated, informed and articulate – and also pro-life. Very much so.

For me, abortion is a women's rights issue and a general human rights issue. While it's true women take on exponentially more of the physical impacts of pregnancy than men (at times it seems really unfair, especially when the fathers are not around) I really resonate with your message on the harmful effects of a "quick-fix solution" on women.

There is life growing inside. Human life. That's where the human factor comes in.

Like the article says, this is not like getting your tonsils out – the baby growing inside is a human being, no matter the circumstances of conception. So much of the rhetoric out there tries to reduce the child to a number of cells, taking away the human qualities and the human rights of the child.

Every morning I try to remember to pray for Henry Morgentaler and my friends who are pro-choice, that they would come to an understanding of what abortion really is – and that in coming to such an understanding, they would be able to influence many people for good.

*Rebekah Sears
Winnipeg, Man.*

Milestones

APPOINTED

Janet Nolan of Kitchener, Ont., as chief executive officer of Christian Horizons, where she has served in several capacities since 1989, most recently as vice president of Canada and strategic initiatives. Christian Horizons is a charity that operates more than 200 residences, respite care homes and retreat facilities in Ontario for people with



Roy Eyre

exceptional needs, as well as a variety of international programs.

Roy Eyre, 39, as the next president of Wycliffe Bible Translators of Canada, when Don Hekman completes his term in November. Eyre was born in Toronto but has lived and worked mostly in the United States, in graphic design, management and leadership development. He joined Wycliffe in 1997 and



Marvin Brubacher

worked four years in Canada.

Marvin Brubacher as chancellor of Heritage College and Seminary, after serving as president for 21 years. The school, based in Cambridge, Ont., is now searching for a new president.

Shelley Campagnola of Waterloo, Ont., as executive director of Kids Alive International (Canada), a Christian charity that rescues vulnerable children in 17 different countries, nurturing them with holistic care in a family environment. Ken Christy, who previously served as managing director, continues as administrative director. Campagnola also chairs the Child in Church and Culture Partnership, a network operating on the EFC's partnership platform.

RENAMED

Providence College and Seminary

has added the word "University" to its name. The Manitoba legislature made the change to the province's largest self-standing private post-secondary institution in June, recognizing its educational excellence and allowing it to extend its international reach.

Edu Deo is the new name for Worldwide Christian Schools, a Canadian charity that helps build schools in Central America and beyond. The new name recognizes an enlarged vision including teacher training and curriculum development, all working together to bring long-term, everlasting change.

Context: Life Beyond the Headlines

is the new name for Listen Up TV, a weekly program hosted by Lorna Dueck that looks at the Christian aspects of popular media topics. In Canada it airs on Global, CTS, Grace TV and Salt and Light TV.

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AWARDED

Tim Huff of Toronto with the Grace Irwin Award, Canada's largest literary prize for writers who are Christian. He received the \$5,000 prize for his book, *Dancing with Dynamite: Celebrating Against the Odds* (Castle Quay Books). Huff has been an advocate for the homeless for 25 years. The award is given by The Word Guild to the best book entered in its annual writing contest. A full list of winners is available at www.canadianchristianwritingawards.com. Huff also serves on Street Level, a network operating on the EFC's partnership platform.

RELOCATED

Peoples Christian Academy, a private Christian school based in Toronto for 39 years, is moving to Markham, Ont., in September 2011. It had been housed at The Peoples Church until 2007 when the church decided to disband the school operation. The school, re-incorporated under its own auspices, has since been seeking a new site.

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Unlikely Hero Changes Lives in Alberta

This fall a 10-year-old boy from Airdrie, Alta., will be joined by hundreds of schools, corporate sponsors and volunteers as he prepares to bring hope to street children at Christmas. It's a vision that began five years ago when Stephen McPhee first learned some kids have nowhere to call home. His vision has grown to become Ste-

phen's Backpacks, a national organization which, to date, has touched the lives of over 12,000 children through the gifts of stuffed backpacks and new running shoes.

"Every kid should have their own bed, their own home with grass to run on and lots of toys," says Stephen, a belief that began in the young boy – who lives with autism – when he was five years old and

Every kid should have their own bed, their own home with grass to run on and lots of toys: Stephen McPhee.

overheard his parents lamenting homelessness in Calgary.

Stephen announced then that he wanted to give these homeless children "pack-backs," and donate his newest toys. "Jim and I were very excited to see this

New Worship School Has Special Focus

After 18 years as an assistant professor of music and the composer-in-residence at North Central University (NCU) in Minneapolis, Minn., David Pedde felt what he calls a "holy discontent" with the traditional model of education.

"I'd watched too many students drop out, be dismissed, or fail to live their faith once they got out into the world. As I counselled a growing number of 'failures,' I began to wonder how a school and its teachers should really measure their achievements."

Like the shepherd in Matthew 18, who left the 99 that were

safe to go after the one that wasn't, Pedde knew it was time to leave the ones who could make it on their own to help the ones that couldn't.

The Sanctus School for Worshippers was born.

Launched this September, Sanctus will be a two-year Christian college for people with musical abilities. "I call it a prep school because it isn't meant to be the end of its students' higher education," explains Pedde. Credits earned will transfer to partnering Canadian schools and Assemblies of God schools

empathy,” says Nancy, Stephen’s mother. “It’s not a trait of autism, usually.” That year the family of eight gave 15 backpacks to a Calgary mission called Inn from the Cold.

The following year Stephen vowed to hand out 150 backpacks. “You need to dream out loud, Mommy!” he stated. A newspaper article publicizing his goal resulted in enough donations to fill 265.

In 2008 Nancy and her husband James formed Stephen’s Backpacks Society, in addition to writing a book entitled *Dream Out Loud*, picked up by Safeway stores across Alberta. All proceeds from the book go towards Project Hope off the Streets, another effort by Stephen to house homeless families.

Meanwhile, two donated warehouses in Airdrie have made it possible to continue collecting donations from 300 corporate sponsors, while Canadian Helicopters has allowed Stephen –recently named Leader of Tomorrow by Volunteer Calgary – to play Santa to shelters in Edmonton. “From our home, to our city, to our province,” says Nancy. “One ordinary little boy with a dream, and thousands of people who caught it!”

Nancy credits her son’s empathy to his faith in Jesus, encouraged by his weekly attendance at their Cornerstone Church. “Every kid should have hope,” says Stephen, whose long-term goal includes establishing a shelter in Airdrie called The Happiness Hotel. “I want to keep helping until there are no more kids sleeping on the floor or outside. Kids shouldn’t be on the street. It’s not right.” For more info, visit www.stephensbackpacks.com. **FT**

–Emily Wierenga

Christian Film Sparks Anti-Suicide Movement in Prince Albert

A simple screening of a Christian film about youth suicide has sparked a movement in northern Saskatchewan that just might save the lives of some vulnerable teens.

Norbert Haukenfrers, rector of St. David’s Anglican Church in Prince Albert, Sask., initiated the first screening in his town of *To Save a Life*, a 2010 Christian movie about youth suicide. Struck by the relevance of the film for Prince Albert – a city with suicide rates higher than the Canadian average – filmgoer Gen Klingenberg met with Haukenfrers to discuss ways to help the community deal with the issue on an ongoing, deeper basis.

The result: To Save a Life Prince Albert, (TSAL), an advocacy and awareness group consisting of volunteers from churches who had hosted the screening, partnered with community organizations like Addiction and Victim’s Services, the local chapter of the Canadian Mental Health Association and the Prince Albert Health Region. “We went into all the organizations that deal with suicide and depression and met with anyone on the front lines who deals with it from day to day,” explains Klingenberg. “Everyone was very excited. It networked very quickly with people in the community.”

One of the first things TSAL did was to host a second screening of the film to draw in even more young people to hear its important message. TSAL representatives now travel to neighbouring communities to educate audiences about suicide awareness – 14 communities in the first six months of TSAL’s existence.

“This arose out of awareness that suicide is a real problem in our area,” says Klingenberg. “We focused on how we can address that need . . . that’s how we gained credibility,” she explains. “They all saw we weren’t intent on evangelizing. We were intent on addressing the issue of suicide and suicide intervention.”

TSAL’s goal is to build youth suicide prevention and awareness skills and help connect at-risk individuals with qualified professionals. Klingenberg says that after a presentation in one community that had lost a youth to suicide only three days before, “Teachers said, ‘Now I know what I missed.’ We’re working with five communities in the fall and expanding to get other areas involved. We won’t see the whole residue until eternity.” **FT**

–Michelle Zarins



such as NCU in the United States, and count towards a bachelor’s degree.

And, yes, it will be a college that caters to students who are emotionally broken or confused about where to go in life – the ones he believes to be the most likely to encounter huge challenges if thrown into the impersonal world of traditional education.

Pedde hopes to turn out worship leaders whose lives, as well as their music, will attract others to Christ. It will also be a school for people who want a solid biblical grounding before continuing with their education.

Sanctus organizers hope for a 10:1 student-to-core-faculty

ratio, with professors adopting mentoring roles. Although other core faculty members are yet to be determined, the guest faculty roster reads like a Who’s Who in the Christian arts: Ben Gowell (guitarist for Sara Groves, Paul Baloche and Michael W. Smith); Michael Olson (drummer for Michael W. Smith); Carolyn Tennant (author of *Front Line: A Daily Devotional Guide for Christian Leaders*); and Eric Samuel Timm (artist and founder of No One Underground and Painting Hope).

The school will be initially located in Portico, the community church in Mississauga, Ont., where Pedde works as worship arts pastor. Visit www.sanctusschool.com. **FT**

–Marcy Kennedy

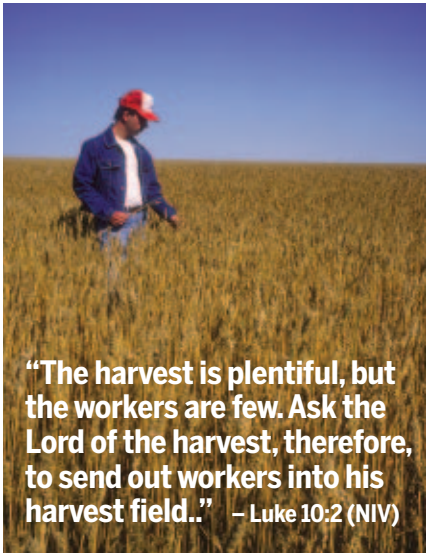


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“The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field..” – Luke 10:2 (NIV)

Food Allergies Can Hinder Communion

For Kathy Brooker of Stouffville, Ont., a sensitivity to gluten in food products made taking communion at church a problem, before she received treatment for food allergies. “I couldn’t participate,” says Brooker. Gluten is a protein found in wheat, rye, oats and barley that helps bread and other baked goods bind together. With an estimated one in 133 Canadians suffering from Celiac disease, ingesting gluten can bring on a host of symptoms, including fatigue, anemia and stomach cramps.

Retailers do market alternative communion wafers in Canada. Gluten-Free Food Mart of Manitoba, for example, offers communion wafers made primarily from rice flour, potato starch and eggs, packaged in sealed plastic containers. Augsburg Fortress Canada sells a wafer that is gluten-, dairy-, wheat- and corn-free. Some retailers market a low-gluten wafer, which contains 0.01 per cent gluten.

Brooker suggests using a substitute “sealed with plastic wrap that is guaranteed to have no gluten in it. Some people need their own plate.” **FT**

–Michelle Zarins

Canadian Mission Heads North

Mission Aviation Fellowship Canada (MAFC) is best known for facilitating and delivering critical aid to some of the most isolated and impoverished communities in nations like Haiti, Angola and Papua New Guinea. Their attention has now also turned toward those in need right in their own backyard: Aboriginal communities in Northern Manitoba and Ontario.

The program is called Wings to Northern Canada, and it began in the summer of 2010 when a hangar was leased in Steinbach, Man. Since then the project has been building on a grow-as-you-go basis, according to Mark Outerbridge, president of MAFC. After nearly a year of building and slowly expanding the project’s scope and infrastructure, the organization now has two aircraft fully dedicated to the project.

Outerbridge points to three factors that led to the increased attention to these communities, many of which are only accessible by aircraft during all but the coldest months of the winter. “MAF has always been about reaching the isolated. And so we would have people ask a very good question: What about the isolated people in Northern Canada?”

The second point of inspiration came from Northern Australia, where Australia’s MAF pilots had become one of the primary suppliers of aid delivery to Aborigine communities. Last, but not least, was repeated interest from other missions organizations.

“Every year we were constantly getting questions and requests from others saying, ‘We want to do something for the North, we want to reach people, can you help us?’ So it was a response to that as

Band councillor George Harper accepts cases of water from MAF pilot Nathan Driediger on behalf of the First Nation community at Red Sucker Lake, Man., after the community’s water tanks were contaminated with bacteria and families lacked access to clean water.

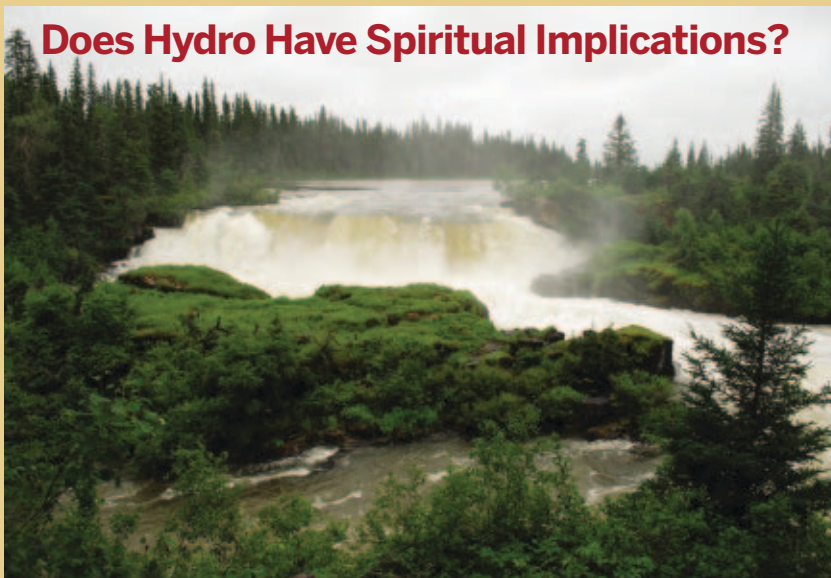


well,” explains Outerbridge.

Looking ahead, he says that while he can't say for sure what the future holds, the Wings to Northern Canada project was not set up to be a temporary stop-gap affair. “We don't want to be presumptuous and say that we're going to be there in 20 years, but we didn't start it with the idea of just being there for a year or two. We want to see how we're received, how much use there is [for the project].”

As far as response for the project goes, the future looks bright for MAFC's Northern Canada mission. “I've been quite overwhelmed in some ways, but impressed and pleasantly surprised by how engaged Canadians have been, and the response we've [received] from people who think this is a great idea.” For more information about MAFC, visit www.mafc.org. **FT**

—Ryan Paulsen



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Does Hydro Have Spiritual Implications?

■ Pisew Falls on the Grass River in northern Manitoba.

Considering the spiritual implications of hydro is not likely something most of us have done. But a new website is hoping to change that.

Developed and maintained by the Interfaith Task Force on Northern Hydro Development and Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba (MCC), the site (<http://energyjustice.mcc.org>) was built to provoke discussion on the environmental impact of Manitoba Hydro's damming systems.

“We feel like mature public debate is warranted,” says Will Braun, energy justice co-ordinator for the task force. Citing the environmental consequences and related social harm that followed development of major hydro systems in northern Manitoba in the '70s, Braun says that while the provincial government and Manitoba Hydro often speak about that damage being “in the past,” it appears to be ongoing.

“Our purpose is to look at the northern end of the transmission lines and ask whether we can feel okay about what is happening,” Braun says. “We think there's a need to openly and candidly weigh the pros and cons.”

The website, which launched in February, offers commentary, photo galleries, fact sheets, interviews and a “Faith Page” that explores the “spiritual dimension” of hydro power. “It's an experiment in non-polarized public debate,” says Braun. “Often faith is boiled down to a matter of right and wrong. But we think faith can apply [to] something more – an element of healing and transformation.”

A spokesperson for Manitoba Hydro says more public discussion may not be what's needed. “I think the public is more aware than [the Interfaith Task Force] gives them credit for,” Glenn Schneider, head of Hydro public affairs, told a Winnipeg newspaper.

But Rev. Hugo Unruh, Task Force co-chair, says, “With Manitoba Hydro wanting to spend over \$17 billion on new projects in the next 15 years, robust public debate is important.”

Damage caused by hydro developments has affected aboriginal elders, says Braun, “in a deep way. So it must also affect us,” he says, “as consumers, in a spiritual way. If the products we use – such as energy – are produced in a way that harms people, then it becomes a question of relationship and a question of love.”

“I use electricity from these rivers,” Braun concedes. “I am dependent on that which I denounce. But when you see the damage first-hand, it's hard to think this is something that God blesses.” **FT**

—Patricia Paddey



Hate Speech Versus Speaking in Love

Christian principles can help as Canadian lawmakers consider the definition of hate speech

Freedom of expression (or “free speech” as our American neighbours call it) is one of our most basic freedoms. It is closely related to freedom of religion. We should steward it wisely.

As Christians, our words – an expression of our faith – are to be governed not by what the law permits, but by what the gospel requires, for it sets a much higher standard. It is true the law is a teacher; it sets out what we as a society have determined to be impermissible. It sets boundaries.

Are our freedoms being challenged? Considering where our freedoms bump into the freedoms of others is to be expected. This is how law is formed in a free and democratic society, how the line between what is legal and illegal is determined. It requires us to be vigilant and willing to engage in public dialogue about what is permissible and impermissible, where lines should be drawn and boundaries established.

We must also practise what we preach. Is it possible to preach the gospel without being intolerant or promoting hatred? Evangelists have been doing it since before we had a Criminal Code. Thousands of clergy preach the gospel in Canada each week without threat of criminal charges. This does not mean that none experience angst when preaching about matters such as sexual morality that can trigger strong opinions, particularly in a legal context when complaints under human rights codes can trigger significant and costly legal processes – win or lose.

This fall the thorny issue of what constitutes “hate

speech” will again be debated in the Supreme Court of Canada and, no doubt, on the airwaves and around water coolers. In debates about hate speech, opinions vary about what actually constitutes a legitimate restriction on expression. The Criminal Code is clear that communication whose goal is to incite violence or promote hatred against others crosses the line, as it should. But what else is encompassed by the term “hate”?


The uncertainty can both restrict written and verbal expression out of fear of crossing the line, and also prompt accusations of hate speech when hate was not spoken. Even the judges of the Supreme Court of Canada have disagreed about what legally constitutes hate speech. Some have expressed the concern that hate speech provisions may well silence people who need not be silenced, and not convict those who should be convicted.

Even the judges of the Supreme Court of Canada have disagreed about what legally constitutes hate speech.

The point of asking about how hate is legally defined is not to enable people to get as close to the line as possible without crossing it. This too is not the thrust of the gospel. In Scripture we find principles and stories that can guide us, and we can also trust the instruction of the Spirit. Rather than exploring specific utterances and using these to draw a line, it is more fruitful and consistent with Scripture to explore the principles that guide our speech.

One clear and basic Christian principle is that all are created in the image of God, are equal in value before God and loved by God. When we treat people contrary to this basic principle – as objects or as a means to an end rather than as image bearers – we rob them of their humanity. Diminishing the value of another, in spoken or printed word, or deed, may or may not meet the legal test of promoting contempt – but it is something we should avoid.

Our actions, words and deeds – and those of others – deserve scrutiny in light of Scripture. In so doing we are called to speak the truth in love. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Despite what we do, we are loved with an everlasting love. This is how Christ treats us, and this is how we are to treat others as disciples of Jesus.

Above all, we are reminded that in all we do we are to bridle our tongue – to speak the truth in love and with wisdom. May we steward our freedoms well as this too is a mark of the gospel. 

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



Together for influence, impact and identity

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

Ethics and Mission

The World Evangelical Alliance, of which The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) is a member, has launched a historic document on the ethics of Christian mission, the result of five years of collaboration with the World Council of Churches and the Vatican. (These three groups together represent 90 per cent of the world's Christian population.)

The report identifies the biblical call to evangelism and outlines the ethical mandates related to the gospel. It also addresses criticisms levelled at Christians by some other religious communities. *Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World* is available at worldevangelicals.org.

Law and Religious Expression

What role does the State have in monitoring or limiting non-hateful expression based in religious belief? Are there limits to how a Christian may comment on the morality of others when offering an opinion about public policy? Such questions will be addressed in a Supreme Court of Canada case scheduled for October 12, *Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission v. Whatcott*. The EFC has submitted legal arguments to the court. For details and updates, visit theEFC.ca/whatcott.

Connect at Street Level

The StreetLevel Roundtable on Poverty and Homelessness invites Christians engaged in social justice ministry to connect with roundtable members as they travel across Canada throughout 2011. The roundtable gathers those interested in engaging in social justice issues, providing opportunities for support, celebration and collaboration.

In early June leaders Dion Oxford and Pat Nixon sent out email updates containing reflections on a trip to Newfoundland. Email dionoxford@thegateway.ca for more about that trip or to connect with the group. StreetLevel operates on the EFC's administrative and communications platform.

Youth Group Fundraiser

Is your youth group – or sports team or other Christian group – looking for a way to raise funds? Why not sell magazine subscriptions and renewals? The EFC magazine *Faith Today* participates in the QSP fundraising program, operated by the Readers Digest Association. Customers can choose from 700 titles, including most mainstream magazines and two dozen Christian ones. Order an information kit at qsp.ca/StartFundraiser.aspx or call 1-866-342-3863.

Pray for the Board

Several new people have recently joined the EFC board of directors. Supporters are invited to pray for them by name. The current group, listed at theEFC.ca/board, includes David Wells (chair), Wayne Durksen (vice-chair), Martin Kreplin (secretary), Pierre Bergeron, Charles De Jager, John Denbok, Jessica Di Sabatino, Angela Draskovic, Bill Fietje, David Gur-

etzi, Jon Ohlhauser, John Pellowe, Geri Rodman and Larry Wilson. More EFC prayer requests at theEFC.ca/pray.

Aeroplane Excludes Religious Causes

The EFC has been exchanging letters with the Aeroplane travel points program over policies that appear to discriminate unfairly against religious causes wanting to pool their travel points. Read more at theEFC.ca/aeroplane. In contrast EFC supporters can already collect points for the EFC in the similar but unrelated Air Miles program. Order a free card at theEFC.ca/airmiles.

Discussing Public Policy Online

EFC staff continue to address a variety of important topics online at theEFC.ca/activateCFPL. Recent posts have considered calls to revoke the charitable status of “ex-gay” organizations, the social justice work of the late Christian activist Gerald Vandezande, religious accommodation and anti-discrimination program policies in public school boards, challenges to Canada's laws on prostitution and physician-assisted suicide, the status in Canada of clergy-parishioner confidentiality, and more. This blog also allows readers to respond to postings with their own comments.

Paying Our Pastors, Hiring Part-timers

How much do evangelical congregations invest in compensation for their staff? A new study in the EFC periodical *Church and Faith Trends* looks at this question as well as recent trends in compensation. Read “Canadian Evangelical Congregational Staff Compensation, 2003-2009” and more in the July 2011 issue.

The issue also examines staffing trends in evangelical congregations from 2003-2009 to better understand the increasing use of part-time staff.


And don't miss a review of the latest book on religion in Canada by sociologist Reginald Bibby.

All three articles are available free at churchandfaith-trends.ca. A video introduction to the staffing report is available at theEFC.ca/congregationalstaffingvideo.

The EFC Responds to Layton's Death

EFC President Bruce Clemenger recently offered public comment after the death of Jack Layton, former leader of the New Democratic Party. “Canada has lost a passionate promoter of care for the poor and marginalized, a man whose optimism and conviction contributed significantly to Canadian public life,” says Clemenger. More at theEFC.ca/current.

Responding to Norway

EFC President Bruce Clemenger wrote a letter to his Norwegian counterpart in the World Evangelical Alliance in response to the mass killings in Norway in July. The letter, along with a similar one from the European Evangelical Alliance, is available at theEFC.ca/norwayletter. 



Love One Another

By Cam Roxburgh

Being “missional” may be new theological jargon, but at its core it reminds us of the timeless call to demonstrate the timeless love of God.

At the EFC-sponsored Hinge Conference last November, Cameron Roxburgh was a keynote presenter. Many resources from the Hinge Conference have been posted at theEFC.ca/hingesessions, including free copies of the video and audio (MP3) of Roxburgh's presentation “People of the Kingdom,” as well as an audio of the question and answer session that followed.

For further reading, Roxburgh recommends the following books (some are quoted in his article):

- Charles Ringma, *Catch the Wind*. Regent College Publishing, 2003.
- Alan Roxburgh, *Missional: Joining God in the Neighborhood*. Baker Books, 2011.
- Alan Hirsch and Michael Frost, *The Faith of Leap: Embracing a Theology of Risk, Adventure & Courage*. Baker Books, 2011.
- Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ*. InterVarsity Press, 2001.

Change happens in culture and in the Church, in the culture's opinion of church, and most importantly in how the church reacts to culture. The increasing gap between church and culture scares many of us who don't see the potential this provides God's people for a new approach. Or maybe an old approach made new.

Revivals, evangelism and new models are all good ideas, but what we really need, as Vancouver professor Charles Ringma has written, is a renewed theological vision of the Church. We must stop trying to make church work – to make smoothly functioning and internally satisfying congregations and denominations – and start living out what we deeply believe about God. Theology must inform our ecclesiology.

American theologian Dallas Willard describes the spiritual life based on Mark 12: We are to love God with all of our hearts, minds and strengths and to love our neighbours as ourselves. This reflects who God is and what He is doing, and helps us understand His call on the Church to be missional. More than a new model or approach to evangelism, it is a reminder we are participating in the very mission of God (the *missio dei*, as theologians like to phrase it).

The word “missional” has come under criticism recently. Although overused and misused, it is the word that best describes the nature of a God who loves us in all ways – and has always sought to draw people into relationship with himself and one another. He is redeeming all things through His Son Jesus Christ.

Missional means we bear witness to God by loving Him with all of our hearts. He is first. He alone we worship. Worship is not about attending a service so we get our spiritual needs met, but rather about bringing gifts to the King.

The Jews understood that they reflected the nature of the God they believed in by the manner in which they worshipped.

Being missional means loving Him with our minds. We have the opportunity to know

God through the study of His Word. We have the opportunity to demonstrate His love through the study of other religions so we might dialogue with our neighbours of other faiths. Or we can fill our minds with other things and miss demonstrating the nature of a God who cares and knows all about us.

Missional means becoming stewards of the resources God has entrusted to us. We learn to live at a pace attractive to

others. We practise Sabbath. We learn to be generous with His resources. We use the talents He has given for His sake. We obey His command to steward creation. In these ways we reflect His nature.

Loving our neighbours is crucial to being missional. As Jesus moved into the neighbourhood, so must we. It is not just the hosting of programs that will draw a crowd, but the practice of hospitality – where we are invited to the home of our neighbour, where we learn to serve others.

Being missional is about reflecting the nature of God through loving one another. Our culture is starved for community. People want to belong. Through demonstrating what community looks like, others will be drawn not just to us, but even more to the One in whom we live. Then they will know we are His disciples. **FT**



Cam Roxburgh

CAM 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).

Religion in Public Schools

By Faye Sonier

Many of us have heard this cry in recent months: "Religion in public schools? Not in my country!"

In July the media published stories about Toronto's Valley Park Middle School, which has been accommodating its Muslim students by permitting half-hour prayer sessions in the cafeteria on Friday afternoons. Public debate ensued on the place of religion in public schools.

The most common argument made in favour of a religiously sterile school system was that this type of accommodation violates the principle of "separation of church and state."

Truth is, there is no such thing as separation of church and state in Canada. The concept is an American constitutional principle. It seems many Canadians – including some teachers, reporters, politicians and civic officials – have mistakenly come to believe the U.S. Constitution applies in Canada, probably due to exposure to American news media.

In Canada we have instead a long history of what might be styled as "co-operation between church and state." The Canadian relationship recognizes that both institutions serve overlapping constituencies, and good public policy takes place when there is co-operation between the two. Think of hospitals, schools, halfway houses and shelters.

Others in the media debate referred to the Lord's Prayer being removed from public schools in Ontario, arguing therefore Muslim students should not be allowed to pray in schools. But this argument misses an important distinction in fact and law. In 1988 the Ontario Court of Appeal ruled the Lord's Prayer could not be part of mandatory school opening exercises. To do so would infringe upon religious freedom of minorities, even if exemptions were possible. In that case the school was considered to be imposing a single faith on all students.

However, in the Valley Park example the school isn't instructing or indoctrinating a single faith, but is accommodating the religious beliefs of its students as required under human rights codes across the country.




Faye Sonier

In Canada we have a long history of what might be styled as "co-operation between church and state."

The right to religious liberty is also guaranteed in the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Such rights belong to all Canadians, whether Evangelical, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim or other. Valley Park and similar schools appear to simply be doing their best to comply.

Public discussion around such matters also provides an opportunity for evangelical students and their parents to call schools and school boards to reasonably

accommodate them as well. Does your school allow Bible studies over lunch, the formation of a Christian club, or exemptions from classes that may conflict with your religious beliefs?

If public schools are truly going to be public, they need to reflect the pluralism of the public square, which includes voices and beliefs from many Canadian communities, including those of evangelical Christians. Religious freedom for one translates best as religious freedom for all. 

FAYE SONIER is legal counsel at the EFC's Centre for Faith and Public Life.

What Can I Do?

The EFC has consistently taken a strong stand in support of religious freedom rights in the education setting. To read more about this issue and become better equipped to activate change in your school system, check out the free online resources below.

Recent EFC blog posts

- The Problem of Double Standards When Religion and Public Schools Meet: Toronto District School Board (theEFC.ca/TDSB)
- Are Anti-discrimination Policies Bullying Christian Schools and Families? Edmonton Public School Board (theEFC.ca/EPsB)

Resources for you and your family

- *Hands Up! Identifying Parents' Rights in the Education System: A Discussion Paper* (theEFC.ca/HandsUp)
- *ProLife Clubs and the Law: A Reference Guide for Students and their Legal Counsel on the Law and Legal Principles Involved with ProLife Campus Club Challenges* (theEFC.ca/prolifeguide)

For more information, visit theEFC.ca/education.



Where is Free Speech

Is our right to freedom of expression – including expressing our faith – expanding or dwindling in a Canada that is more politically correct than ever?

By Patricia Paddey

It was Tuesday, May 10, 2011 when Damian Goddard sent the tweet that would change his world. At home with his children, enjoying a day off from his work as on-air host for Rogers Sportsnet, Goddard published an opinion on his personal Twitter account that quickly proved unpopular. *“I completely and wholeheartedly support Todd Reynolds and his support for the traditional and TRUE meaning of marriage,”* he typed, endorsing Reynolds, a hockey agent who had taken a public stand against gay marriage. A devout Roman Catholic, Goddard says he was merely weighing in on a debate, giving expression to his faith. But the backlash in the Twittersphere was immediate.

“There was tons of negative reaction,” Goddard remembers, describing many of the opposing tweets as

“There was tons of negative reaction”

“hateful, acerbic” and wishing him “ill will.” “Seven or eight out of every 10 people had something negative to say.” They not only said it to and about Goddard, they used the social networking service to express their displeasure to Rogers Sportsnet.

Within a matter of hours the broadcaster issued its own tweet, saying Goddard’s views did not reflect its own. They also called him, requesting a meeting. When he went in to work for that meeting the following day, he was fired.

Two months on, Goddard sits in an Oakville, Ont., coffee shop, sipping iced tea. He is more reserved than relaxed. He is, after all, still unemployed, with the manner of one whose self-esteem has been dealt a blow.

Philosophically, he believes God has a larger purpose and

plan, and says his faith in Christ is keeping him strong. But he is dealing with the death of a dream. His reputation has taken a terrible hit. Labelled a bigot, a homophobe and a hater by those who disagree with his stance, he is not optimistic about his chances of finding another job in broadcasting. “Time will tell,” he says, “but as it stands right now, it’s not looking good.”

Reflecting on the heavy price he has paid for exercising his right to freedom of expression in giving voice to his beliefs about marriage, Goddard concedes, “It’s had a profound effect on my life – both personally and professionally.” And yet, “Perspective needs to be attained here,” he says. “I just lost my job. There are people who have voiced their opinions – through their faith in Christ – who have gotten a heck of a lot worse than I have.”

The limits of freedom

Ah, yes. Perspective. Here’s more: this is Canada. And while all Canadians have a constitutionally protected right to freedom of expression (meaning the Government won’t have you shot, arrested or hauled off to jail for expressing yourself verbally or otherwise), that doesn’t mean there won’t be unpleasant repercussions for exercising that freedom.

In other words, says former editor and publisher of *The Calgary Herald* Peter Menzies, “One is free to say whatever one wishes. And you’re free to believe it. That doesn’t necessarily mean you *should* say it, or if you say it that you should not expect there to be private consequences.

“I’m free to be a jerk,” he continues, “but if I’m going to be a jerk and say things that offend people, then I’m going to be shunned.” The problem is, today’s “shunner” could well become tomorrow’s “shun-ee,” for the notion of what qualifies as jerk-like behaviour keeps changing. Yesterday’s saint often becomes tomorrow’s sinner. Or to put it more eloquently, in the words of Australia’s longest serving prime minister, Robert Menzies, “What appears to be today’s truth is frequently tomorrow’s error.”

Ray Pennings, a senior fellow at Cardus, a Canadian think-tank dedicated to the renewal of North American

What Exactly Is Our Freedom of Expression?

According to Part I of The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Charter “guarantees the rights and freedoms set out in it subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.” It further states, “Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms: (a) freedom of conscience and religion; (b) freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression ... (c) freedom of peaceful assembly; and (d) freedom of association.”

– Patricia Paddey

Heading in Canada?



On-air host Damian Goddard paid a heavy price for exercising his right to freedom of expression when he tweeted his beliefs about marriage,

social architecture, located in Hamilton, Ont., has often written on freedom of expression. He worries cases such as Goddard's could lead to a chill. "I think there's a subtle restraint implicit on freedom of expression that comes from the social stigma that's attached to the marginalization of religion," he says.

Tell that to Damian Goddard. The opinion he expressed, which led to his public humiliation and firing, is one not only affirmed by his Catholic church, but endorsed by Canada's own parliament just over a decade

ago. (In June 1999 the House of Commons adopted the motion "that marriage is and should remain the union of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others." It was a resolution that passed overwhelmingly, with support from members of all political parties.)

Goddard isn't, of course, the first person to experience the consequences of being out of step with the moral sensibilities of his time. Censorship has a long history in Canada, and to be fair, the Church has often been at the forefront of those taking offence.



According to author and librarian Pearce J. Carefoote, “It may be said that censorship was born in Canada in 1694 when the Comte de Frontenac, Governor of Québec, decided to ban Molière’s *Tartuffe* [a comedic play about a religious hypocrite] on the advice of the local bishop.”

Since then, countless books, magazines, newspapers, films and various art forms have been censored or banned in the interest of protecting religious or moral sensitivities of Canadians.

When words sound like hate

In recent years the offence-taking shoe appears to be on a different foot – one that seems determined to stomp out various forms of “hateful” expression. In the spirit of Charles Dickens you could say that for freedom of expression it is “the best of times and the worst of times,” because one person’s truth is frequently interpreted as another person’s highly offensive hate speech.

For example, eight pro-life students at the University of Calgary were declared guilty of non-academic misconduct for refusing to turn graphic posters of aborted fetuses away from passersby in 2010. That same year five students were arrested at Carleton University after attempting to put on a similar display. Public figures from U.S. right-wing firebrand Ann Coulter to former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, from TV broadcaster Michael Coren to print journalist Christie Blatchford, have all felt the vehement displeasure on Canadian university campuses of those who disagree with their opinions.

Then there are Alberta pastor Stephen Boisson, British Columbia teacher Chris Kempling, and Saskatchewan’s Hugh Owens and William Whatcott, all of whom came into conflict with various government bodies as a result of expressing their personal religious beliefs through speech, print or deed.

A valuable freedom

Of course, putting words and actions to religious faith is especially important to those who follow Christ. Our Scriptures teach it is out of the overflow of the heart the

mouth speaks. That’s partly why The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) has sought to intervene in a number of freedom of expression cases in the past.

“One of the basic foundations of evangelical Christian faith is the command and desire to share our faith with others,” says Faye Sonier, legal counsel at the EFC’s Centre for Faith and Public Life. “We are told in the Bible that we are to be witnesses. Specifically, in Mark 16:15, we are commanded to preach the Good News to all creation.”

Having the freedom to openly and honestly express our views is something many Christians in this country have long taken for granted. Perhaps it’s time we started recognizing the value of such freedom a little bit more.

It has, after all, been called the “right of all rights.” As University of Toronto Professor of Political Science Simone Chambers told CBC radio’s *Ideas* program recently, “Without freedom of expression or the freedom to speak up, to make claims, to argue, to defend our rights, all our other systems of rights are undermined. So this

is what makes it important.

“But what makes it interesting is that it’s also a right to speak *against* rights. So it is both the guarantor of our system of rights as well as the possible means of undermining our rights.” Which is precisely why it’s important for people to defend their right to freedom of expression, and to defend it vigorously.

The Canadian Christian experience

No country in the world has totally unfettered freedom of speech or expression of course. There are always limits. And in Canada we’ve got it pretty good. Courts have established legal limits designed to protect citizens. There are laws against defamation, uttering death threats, theft of intellectual property, fraud and copyright violations.

But Preston Manning, president and CEO of The Manning Centre for Building Democracy, says Christians need to continue to weigh in on how the limits on freedom of expression are defined.

“Groups advocating non-Christian or even anti-Chris-



Ray Pennings of Cardus says now is not the time for self-censorship.

ewan Human Rights Commission. A tribunal appointed by the Commission concluded the flyers contravened the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code and promoted hatred. An appeal is underway.

The EFC was granted intervener status in the Whatcott case, and will – along with a large number of other interveners – be presenting arguments to the Supreme Court of Canada on October 12.

The EFC and a Controversial Case

In 2001 and 2002 William Whatcott distributed four flyers under the name of Christian Truth Activists to neighbourhoods in Saskatoon and Regina. The flyers, vehement in tone and language against homosexuality, deeply offended at least four individuals who received them, and they subsequently filed complaints with the Saskatch-

tian positions have made maximum use of their rights and freedoms," he observes. "Christians have been much slower to insist on their rights to freedom of expression and religion under the Charter. If Christians do not constantly affirm those rights, nobody else will do so on their behalf, and they may very well find those rights being circumscribed."

It wouldn't be the first time. Manning speaks about the early days of religious radio broadcasting in Canada, when broadcasts got ugly as Protestants attacked Catholics and vice-versa. Public complaints caused government regulators to step in. They stopped issuing broadcast licences to religious groups for 70 years. "The lesson in all of this is that if one abuses a freedom, it will lead to public demand for government regulation and intervention," says Manning. "Christians, in exercising their rights and freedoms, need to be – as Jesus insisted – 'as wise as serpents and gracious as doves,' particularly when operating in the public arena."

Bumping up against the boundaries

You'd be hard-pressed to name someone who's fought harder for freedom of expression in the Canadian public arena than Ezra Levant. As host of a daily news commentary show on the Sun News Network, Levant regularly advocates for free expression and smaller government. The two causes are related in his mind. When asked what poses the greatest threat to freedom of expression in Canada, he is quick to respond. "Well, it's obviously government. No one else has the power to take away your freedom."

His public persona may be all bravado and bluster, but in person he speaks quietly about the experience that altered the trajectory of his life. "We have a whole range of government agencies with the power to censor," he says. "In my case I felt that first-hand when I was prosecuted for 900 days by a human rights commission, a statutorily created, government-funded agency with lawyers and prosecutors and bureaucrats with the power to make orders that are enforced by the court. Orders of financial compensation. Orders of apology. Orders of correction. And if you don't follow them: prison."

“You can't censor an idea, but you sure can bully a person”

His ordeal happened when Levant was publisher of the Alberta-based magazine *The Western Standard*. In that role he made the courageous or foolish choice (depending on your perspective), to republish the infamous *Jyllands-Posten* cartoons of the Islamic prophet Muhammad that had led to violent protests across the Muslim world. Edmonton Imam Syed Soharwardy took offence at the move, and in 2006 filed a complaint with the Alberta Human Rights Commission against Levant. It was a move that would cost Levant "lots of time ... lots of money and some of my faith in the legal system."

Soharwardy eventually withdrew his complaint, and would later tell *Macleans*' magazine he had changed his "view of the role of human rights commissions in Canadian society."

He "honestly believed at the time that, in Canada, if you felt offended by something that had been said about your religion or identity, this was the way you resolved the issue," he told *Macleans*'.

For his part, Levant came away from the trial convinced "you can't censor an idea, but you sure can bully a person." He is opposed to the continuing existence of Canada's human rights commissions and hate speech laws. "Hate is a human emotion," he says. "People express their emotions through speech. I am against hurting people. I'm all for the criminal code that says you can't act on your hate in a violent way. But I put it to you that there's a correlation

The EFC intervened believing that if the court rules that one cannot act in a non-harmful way in public discourse, based on one's foundational religious beliefs, then one does not actually have religious freedom, but only freedom to believe.

The EFC will argue the Charter guarantees the right to freedom of expression, conscience and religion of all Canadians, and the right to debate moral issues and

issues of public policy is foundational in a true democracy.

While the EFC does not necessarily condone the words used by Mr. Whatcott, the principle remains: Every individual in Canada should feel free to openly bring their religious convictions to bear on their opinions and their engagement in public policy debate. **FT**

—Faye Sonier



One is free to say whatever one wishes. And you're free to believe it. That doesn't necessarily mean you should say it: Peter Menzies.



between countries that do not allow freedom of expression and countries where people express themselves through violence.”

So where does he think freedom of expression is heading in Canada? “It’s going nowhere politically, but it’s slowly slouching in the right direction legally,” he says. “In the meantime it’s going to be very painful.” (Levant’s 2009 book *Shakedown: How Our Government Is Undermining Democracy in the Name of Human Rights* critiques the role of government-appointed human rights bodies, and was just named by Canadian readers the best political book of the past 25 years.)

What do we want Canada to be like?

Reflecting on the painful mess he finds himself in, Damian Goddard says he’s convinced it’s all “happening for a larger reason. I want to ask the question, ‘What country are we creating here? What do we want from our nation? What does Canada look like to you down the road? Is it a society where we can speak freely about matters, or where you’re afraid to voice your opinion for fear of losing your job?’”

Ray Pennings of Cardus says now is not the time for self-censorship. Our world faces huge existential questions. Narrowing the boundaries of public discourse, “because somehow, we think having these sorts of belief

systems puts us at the margins of society and debate ... is far more injurious to free speech.”

As executive director of New Direction Ministries of Canada, serving people outside the heterosexual mainstream, Wendy Gritter is used to navigating huge questions and difficult discussions. “I think followers of Jesus always need to consider whether we’re living in a house of fear or a house of love,” she says. “So when we engage topics as complex and overwhelming as freedom of speech and hate speech, we need to pause and ask, ‘That feeling that’s rising up within me, is that arising from fear or love?’”

“God gives us the courage, the humility, the strength to

Canada’s Criminal Code and Hate Speech

Since the late 1960s Canada has had both federal and some provincial laws that impose controls on freedom of expression. The *Criminal Code of Canada*, sections 318 and 319, spell out the relevant details prohibiting public expressions of hate against any section of the public distinguished by colour, race, religion, ethnic origin or sexual orientation.

According to section 318 (1): “Every one who advocates or promotes genocide is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years.”

Section 319 (1) says: “Every one who, by communicating statements in a public place, incites hatred against any identifiable group where such incitement is likely to lead to a breach of the peace is guilty of (a) an indictable offence and is liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years; or (b) an offence punishable on summary conviction.”

Section 319 (2) says: “Every one who, by communicating statements, other than in private conversation, willfully promotes hatred against any identifiable group is guilty of (a) an indictable offence and is liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years; or (b) an offence punishable on summary conviction.”


–Patricia Paddey

ground ourselves in the house of love,” she continues. “If we’re coming from a place of love, we will be much better postured to deal with diversity and perceived threats, or simply to stand for fairness and truth and equitable treatment for all, for the common good.”

Fortunately, as Christians, we have been equipped to express ourselves wisely and well. We’ve been given the Holy Spirit who can speak through us. We also have the Bible, which contains an entire exposition on talk in the book of Proverbs. Writer Paul David Tripp summarizes that exposition: “Words give life; words bring death – you choose.”

Tripp’s is a thoughtful essay in a meaningful little book called *The Power of Words and the Wonder of God*, (John Piper and Justin Taylor, eds., Crossway, 2009), in which he explores the meaning of Proverbs’ treatise on talk.

“It means you have never spoken a neutral word in your life,” he writes. “Your words have direction to them. If your words are moving in the *life* direction, they will be words of encouragement, hope, love, peace, unity, instruction, wisdom and correction. But if your words are moving in a *death* direction, they will be words of anger, malice, slander, jealousy, gossip, division, contempt, racism, violence, judgement and condemnation.”

As Canadians, we owe it to our country to stand up for our constitutionally protected freedom of expression. As Christians, we owe it to ourselves, our God and others to think carefully about how we use it. 

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



Christians need to continue to weigh in on how the limits on freedom of expression are defined: Preston Manning.

The Global Disciple

The life and ministry of British writer and pastor John Stott have made a huge impact on Evangelicals in Canada and around the world.

By Drew Dyck

Dr. John Stott, at 79, speaks at a conference at People's Church, Toronto, March, 23, 2000.

PHOTO: SUE CARELESS

When John Stott died on July 27 at the age of 90, Billy Graham spoke for many when he lamented “the evangelical world has lost one of its greatest spokesmen.” Scholar N. T. Wright was similarly effusive. “To say that we thank God for him is putting it much too gently.” Scores of other Christian leaders and friends of Stott added their voices to the chorus, praising the soft-spoken English pastor and writer whose ministry spanned more than half a century and touched millions of lives.

A tide of tributes also rushed in from the Global South, where Stott worked for decades to strengthen the Church by training

church leaders. On his American ministry website, more than one thousand testimonials were posted within two weeks of his passing. Most came from Christians in the non-Western world, including contributions from India, Romania, China and Uganda.

He belonged to all of us

Stott's impact was truly global, and Canada was no exception. Stott's ministry had a formative influence on the evangelical movement in Canada. It began in the 1950s when Stott led a series of missions at the University of Toronto, the University of British Columbia, McGill and other Canadian universities. Throughout his ministry Stott returned repeatedly to

Canada and spoke at numerous churches throughout the country.

In the 1980s Stott, an Anglican rector, inspired the creation of a Canadian member group in the global Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion. Today the group is known as Anglican Essentials Canada and exists to “offer support to Canadian Anglicans who wish to remain true to biblically faithful, historically authentic Anglicanism.” Stephen Andrews, bishop of the diocese of Algoma, says throughout the years Stott has served as “a rallying point for evangelical Anglicans in Canada.”

However, Stott's Canadian influence extended far beyond the Anglican Church. Andrews recalls a Bible study in which a

member mentioned Stott was an Anglican. A Baptist in the room piped up, "But he belonged to all of us!"

It's a sentiment echoed by Evangelicals across Canada who regarded Stott as something of a spiritual father. Stott's teaching always resonated with Canadians, and his understated style seemed to jive with the Canadian ethos.

"John's teaching focused on the authority of Scripture, on mission and on unity," says Geoff Tunnicliffe, the Canadian who heads the World Evangelical Alliance (and also serves as director of global initiatives for The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada).

Tunnicliffe particularly appreciated Stott's peaceful style. "He was irenic both in content and style, and that fit the Canadian framework very well."

John Bowen, director of the Institute of Evangelism at Wycliffe College in Toronto, observes that Stott's attitude toward culture influenced Canadian Evangelicals as well.

"He modelled a biblical experience that had been unusual in Canada. He looked broadly at the culture. He believed that the deeper you look into Scripture, the deeper it takes you into the issues of today."

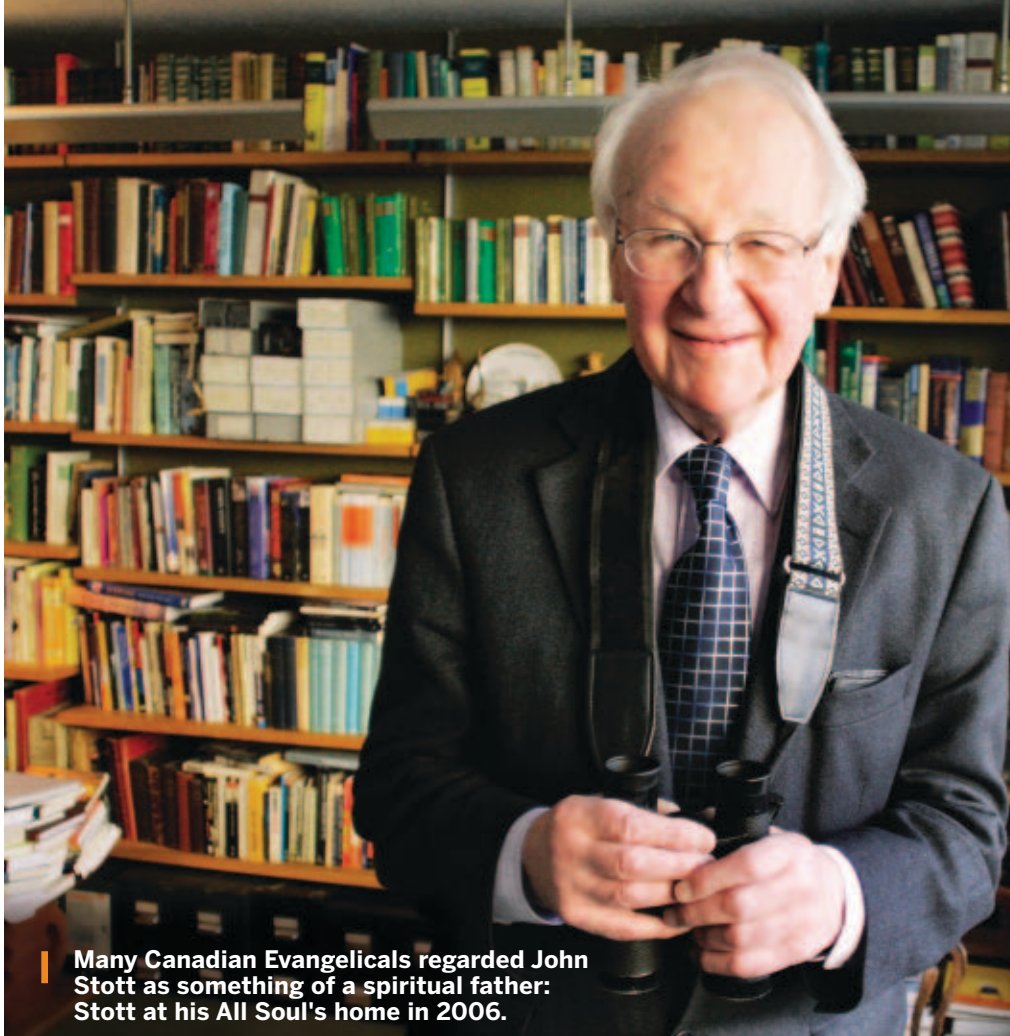
Charles Price, senior pastor at The Peoples Church in Toronto, was vacationing when Stott died and providentially arrived in London on the day of Stott's funeral, and so was able to attend. He describes Stott as "first and foremost an expositor of the Scriptures" who modelled how "to apply and affirm the truths of Scripture in a way that was relevant and accessible to our modern world."

Price, who in his early career was an itinerant evangelist and educator based in England, recalls times when Stott "encouraged me and rebuked me. My wife Hilary was converted through Stott's hugely influential book *Basic Christianity* when a student at university."

Many Canadians found Stott's style of evangelism refreshing, which Bowen describes as "winsome, reasoned, unemotional and biblical."

It was also holistic, Andrews adds. "He caused people in Canada to re-imagine mission. He made them see the need for word and deed to come together in evangelism."

And Stott widened Canadian Evangel-



Many Canadian Evangelicals regarded John Stott as something of a spiritual father: Stott at his All Soul's home in 2006.

PHOTO: KIERAN DODDS

icals' view of the world. "We must be global Christians," Stott wrote, "with a global mission, because our God is a global God." His ministry to leaders in the less-developed parts of the world continues through the Langham Partnership Canada, part of an international network which provides training to "majority world" scholars and sends them back to their countries to lead.

"He was one of the first Christian leaders to make people aware of the church in the Global South," says Bowen. "We take the importance of the Global South for granted now, but at the time it was rare."

Remembering "Uncle John"

As impressive as Stott's accomplishments were, they hardly capture the full measure of his impact. He was not only influential, he was beloved. The international leader, best-selling author and master exegete was known to many simply as "Uncle John," a warm friend with a wry sense of humour, and a knack for remembering names. People who knew Stott were struck by his humility. David Jones, former president of the American arm of Stott's ministry, says of Stott, "He was the most brilliant,

humble man I've ever met. Those two things don't always go together. He accomplished so much, but with such humility. He was never too far above us."

One trait that made him so relatable was his sense of humour. "People might be surprised at how funny he was," says Jones. "He liked to tease people." Jones recalls one of Stott's favourite gags. "When he hosted people at his house, he would always do the dishes and invite someone to help him. He would tip the pot of water, and keep splashing the other person. This would go on till the person finally worked up the courage to say something."

Jones also recalls how Stott, a lifelong bachelor, would refer to his books as "substitute for a wife." Then he would lean forward and whisper, "A pretty poor substitute, I might add."

Andrews, who worked as Stott's study assistant for two years in the 1980s, also describes Stott as extremely personable. "He had an amazing memory, so he remembered people's names, and he had an extensive prayer list. When he talked to you, he made you feel like you were the sole object of his attention."



Many were also impressed with Stott's commitment to a simple lifestyle. He donated his book royalties to train leaders in the majority world and lived in a small two-bedroom flat attached to All Souls Church in London, where he served as rector and then rector emeritus. Every year he would give away everything he hadn't used in the previous 12 months, with one important exception: his books.

A rich legacy

Stott's ministry will continue in the organizations he shaped and the lives he touched. He founded the Langham Partnership International (also known as John Stott Ministries) and the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity. He was one of the principal authors of the Lausanne

Covenant in 1974, an influential evangelical document on world evangelism written and adopted by 2,300 evangelical leaders. Stott played pivotal roles in many evangelical institutions around the world.

"He had a knack for stepping into organizations at critical times, giving vision, then stepping aside," says Bowen.

His influence went beyond those institutions, says Price. "He gave intellectual vigour and clarity to evangelical convictions, encouraging biblical renewal, resisting calls for Evangelicals to leave the historic denominations, which was a popular theme in the 1960s. Though working for renewal in the Anglican church, he was not sectarian in any way. He loved all Christians, in all places."

Jones thinks Stott "was everything you'd want in an evangelical leader. He had a keen mind and a humble spirit. I think people will be writing about him for years to come."

Bowen agrees. "He has shaped a whole generation of evangelical leaders. Nobody is going to fill his shoes. We all have to fill our own shoes, but he has shaped those shoes."

How would Stott respond to the shower of accolades in the wake of his passing?

"I think he'd be quite embarrassed by all this," says Andrews. "He wanted everything about himself to point to the glory of Christ."

In a 2010 interview, when asked how he'd like to be remembered, Stott responded with his characteristic humility: "I'd like to be remembered as an ordinary Christian who has struggled in his desire

to understand, expound, relate and apply the Word of God." **FT**

DREW DYCK of Carol Stream, Ill., is a senior writer at *Faith Today*, managing editor of *Leadership Journal* and author of *Generation Ex-Christian: Why Young Adults Are Leaving the Faith . . . and How to Bring Them Back* (Moody, 2010).

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How's the Church

An interview with **Glenn Smith**, a Montreal expert on urban community development, on the importance of culturally sensitive ministry. *By Debra Fieguth*

Glenn Smith is the director of Direction Chrétienne (Christian Direction) in Montreal, Quebec. Although born in downtown Toronto, he became bilingual at an early age and considers Montreal his home. “My mother was a French professor in Toronto. So we as kids learned French growing up.” Smith and his family have lived in Quebec since 1980, and he has been at Christian Direction for 27 years. Recently he spoke to *Faith Today* senior writer Debra Fieguth about issues facing the evangelical church in Quebec.

DF: In a nutshell, can you describe what Christian Direction does?

GS: Christian Direction is a multifaceted urban ministry committed to partnering with congregations for the transformation of children, adolescents and families in their communities. [For example] we have three centres for kids at risk of dropping out of school. Christian Direction’s history is Protestant and evangelical, but the context is always ecumenical. We also train urban ministry practitioners in large cities in the Caribbean and French Africa. We’re very much about urban community development, urban transformation and urban professional business people. At the heart of [the ministry] is a vision for concerted actions to see cities transformed.

DF: I want to define who we’re talking about when referring to issues concerning Quebec Protestant Evangelicals.

GS: Protestant Evangelicals and francophone Evangelicals are one and the same thing. Any sort of mainline Protestant francophone presence is very, very small.

DF: In a paper you wrote on French-speaking Protestantism in Quebec, you mentioned several issues facing Protestants in particular. Let’s walk through them. First, theological education is not keeping pace. What do you mean by that?

GS: I think one of the most scathing indictments of Evangelicals is that we’re training people for a ministry that doesn’t exist, [for a ministry framework constructed in a more rural, small-town past]. We’re not training people for the [contemporary urban] context they are in. When we did focus groups, that came out repeatedly as the general dissatisfaction most people and denominations have.

Perhaps we might come to the same conclusions in the rest of



the country. What we’re still doing is training people for churches based on what we might call Christendom or the denominational model. It’s still amazing to me how few courses people are taking dealing with context and contextualization. The Quebec francophone church is still decidedly rural or small town, whereas Quebec is the most urban of Canadian provinces.

A big issue is secularity. How are we dealing with issues of secularity? I think theological education needs a whole new re-think.

DF: The second issue: Church planting needs to be rethought. Why?

GS: Church planting has been a dismal failure. It’s not working.

in Quebec?



We're still working on classic models of sending two or three people to start a church. I was talking with somebody this morning about another church that's closed. You invest all that money. . . .

But the Fellowship Baptists are being very creative. They have some of the most exciting innovations which are more about churches planting than individuals planting. They're saying, "We're looking for 150 people to go into this neighbourhood." They are being very bold.

They're not necessarily letting real estate be the [deciding] category. What does this type of church planting look like? It's not about the church building. There's a deep antagonism and

with Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. He opened up the esplanade outside Place des Arts so 12,000 of us outside could hear the concert. Then Radio-Canada picked it up and broadcast it across the province. Better than five per cent of the Quebec population were watching. The arts is one of the best [opportunities] right now.

DF: You talk of a growing harmony between Catholics and Evangelicals.

GS: All the social science research and religious surveys are telling us there is a lot of convergence taking place between weekly attendees of Catholic and Protestant churches. Protestant-Catholic dialogue is now in a whole different era [than the

antipathy toward church institutions [in Quebec].
DF: You also mention permits are a problem.

GS: It's part of the secularity issue. If you have this antipathy toward institutional religion, then you're not going to grant people permits. But it's not just a Protestant issue: Buddhists, Muslims and others are all part of the religious accommodation. We have to keep advocating with borough officials to help them understand the good churches can do for the welfare of the neighbourhood.

DF: You say the arts have a big place in faith. Can you give some examples?

GS: The arts are an integral part of Quebec culture – certainly the visual arts such as sculpture. There's wood sculpture going back two to three centuries. And certainly with our festivals in the summer. Montreal has become a jazz capital. Visual arts or dramatic arts work very well as a way for the church to connect. We have an artist-in-residence at Christian Direction.

I think it's because you've got something in the culture here. A lot of it is younger people who understand the significance of the arts. When Kent Nagano became the conductor of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra, he began

antagonism and competition of several decades ago].

DF: What about other things you've cited such as low charitable giving and low volunteerism rates?

GS: They're huge issues. First, volunteerism and participation rates. That obviously is rooted in Quebec history, because among the Roman Catholics and so many of their institutions, the church did everything. Since the marginalization of the Roman Catholic Church from the 1960s and onwards, the State replaced the church. [As one commentator observed,] "Hope becomes political." That's Quebec.

We also know the only thing that volunteers hold in common right across Canada is weekly church, synagogue or mosque attendance. Therefore if church attendance is going south, don't hold your breath. This is not going to get better.

In terms of charitable giving, the average in Quebec in 2010 was \$130 a year. It's incredible. That does not mean that Quebecers aren't generous. But they are much more spontaneous or emotional givers. [For example, after events such as the earthquake in Haiti], many Quebecers give but don't get tax receipts. It's amazing how many people say, "The State needs to pay for that." The State can't afford it. Both of those are big issues. This really affects congregational life.

DF: What about the growth of the ethnic churches in Quebec? How is that having an impact on the evangelical church as a whole?

GS: One third of people attending churches are part of an ethnic congregation. The church is decidedly multicultural in Quebec, although there are very few intentionally multicultural churches in Montreal. Time will tell what's going to happen. But there has been a decline in the number of Hispanic churches since [Prime Minister Stephen] Harper enforced visas for Mexicans. The tap got turned off, but people also got kicked out. That's foreign policy as a factor in church planting.

DF: Are any of these issues also relevant to francophones in the rest of Canada?

GS: The two other areas where there are large French populations are Acadie in New Brunswick and St. Boniface in Manitoba. They don't have the secularity background. Certainly they also share issues about theological education and church planting.

DF: How can Christians in other parts of Canada help or encourage Quebec Evangelicals?

GS: Because I've been in Quebec for so many years, I see denominations come and go. I think there's a new day, a new interest. What we always need to be careful about is money. We sometimes think if we just get more money, we'll be okay. The partnership, the prayer, the solidarity is important. Obviously you need money for ministry. But money is not going to solve the issue of secularity.

DF: Thanks very much for your insights, Glenn. **FT**



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Persecuted Call Canadians to Prayer

Oppressed Christians in Egypt, Libya, Afghanistan, Israel and elsewhere are persevering and asking Canadians to pray for them. *By Debra Fieguth*



Egyptian demonstrators clash with Egyptian police in central Cairo, Egypt, on January 26, 2011 during a protest to demand the ouster of President Hosni Mubarak and calling for reforms.

PHOTO: VICTORIA HAZOU/ABACAPRESS.COM

The demonstrations that began in Cairo's Tahrir Square January 25 included something unseen on most of our TV screens. Yes, they showed the world the tumult Egypt was going through, the desperation its people felt after years of corruption and oppression.

But in fact Christians were active in that square. A few were protesters, of course, but many were also attending to the wounded and sick, caring for their Muslim brothers and sisters, mere weeks after a church in Alexandria was bombed by Muslims, killing 23 people.

"We believed in this revolution and encouraged people to demonstrate," says Brother H, a pastor from Egypt's largest

evangelical church, located right on the square. The people, he explains, "were asking for freedom and justice in this country."

The church also opened its doors for protesters – mostly Muslims – to use the facilities and perform their ablutions before prayer times. Those simple acts of generosity and care helped the Muslim population to experience love from fellow Egyptians who are themselves the most oppressed in the country. And though there was violence and destruction throughout Cairo, "nothing touched the church building."

Egypt is one of four focus countries in this year's International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church (IDOP), an annual event observed by churches across Canada on November 13 this year.

The other focus countries chosen by The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada and other participating ministries are Libya, Afghanistan and Israel.

(Details on the focus countries, including free materials to help your congregation observe the event, are available at idop.ca.)

The IDOP focus countries were picked to represent two regions – the Middle East and North Africa – currently experiencing immense political conflict and changes. What all four have in common is large Muslim populations.

This year's theme is "Victorious in Christ." To Western Christians who have no first-hand experience of persecution, associating violence and oppression with victory might seem a contradiction. But "the measurement of victory isn't in life and death; it's in relationship with Christ," according to Paul Johnson, executive director of Open Doors, another ministry involved in IDOP Canada.

IDOP, which has organizing teams in various countries, is supported by the World Evangelical Alliance's Religious Liberty Commission, headed by Godfrey Yogarajah.

"In gladness or in sorrow, in pain or in joy, in all circumstances



Anti-conversion and blasphemy laws restrict religious freedom in many places: Godfrey Yogarajah.

Christians are more than conquerors in Christ Jesus," agrees Yogarajah, who communicated with *Faith Today* in an email interview from his home in Sri Lanka.

Yogarajah acknowledged the danger of Islamic fundamentalists gaining ground, "riding on the pro-democracy movement." Certainly most observers agree Islam is the biggest challenge to the Church today, in regions ranging from Indonesia to South Asia to the Middle East to Africa.

Anti-conversion and blasphemy laws restrict religious freedom in many places, Yogarajah says. "Some of these hotspots are Afghanistan, Iran, Nigeria, India and Pakistan."

But as persecution has steadily increased over the last decade, the challenges are doing little to hamper the growth of the Church in these nations, as Paul Johnson

of Open Doors points out.

"The gospel is moving forward as we've never seen it in our history," says Johnson. Despite the very tough situations Christians find themselves in, they are learning the hard lesson of loving those who persecute them. "We are not to have enemies. If we have enemies, we are to love them."

Coming from one who takes risks every day, the words have even more clout. Brother H, the pastor from Cairo, wants

Meeting the Persecuted Church Face-to-Face

By Don Hutchinson

Can you imagine talking to a six-year-old who knows what martyrdom is because he watched his own parents put to death? The murderers walked away leaving him in the street, his home on fire. How about meeting a recent high school graduate who ended up with a bullet in her leg because she was a Christian?

In late June I travelled with The Voice of the Martyrs (VOM) to visit Nigeria, where there had been recent anti-Christian riots following spring elections.

Arriving late on a Friday we were taken to a secure compound with an eight-foot wall and barbed wire. Similar compounds would be our accommodations throughout the week. Saturday morning we found out the nationals eat one meal a day at about 9:30 p.m. As a concession to our Western tendencies, mornings were met with an omelette, served with some thin slices of warmed white bread.

Where we landed the population is roughly 70 per cent Christian and 30 per cent Muslim. We soon flew to another part of the country where the numbers reverse to 80 per cent Muslim and 20 per cent Christian.

Monday, a doctor with another visiting VOM team was

meeting with 20 patients, all victims of the anti-Christian violence (individually vouched for by local church authorities). I had a brief conversation with one man who had been refused medical treatment because he was a Christian. He had waited nearly two months for medical attention.

Soon after, we helped distribute food aid to 600 victims of the anti-Christian riots (again individually pre-approved by pastors). The packages of 10 kg of rice, 10 kg of corn, 10 kg of grain and a rucksack that contained some proteins and child-specific items had been funded by VOM Canada and a sister ministry from another country. We also distributed 400 Bibles.

Some danced and trilled their tongues in joy, praising Jesus for these basic provisions. One man put down the food and knelt before me, clutching his new Bible in his hands. "Thank you, Canada. When they came, they took my family outside and made us watch as they burned my Bible. And then they burned our house." With tears streaming, he continued, "Thank you, Canada. Now I have my Bible back." I knelt and wept with him.

Tuesday, we met with 100 pastors and 35 widows at a

Get free materials at www.idop.ca.to to observe IDOP on Nov. 13, 2011.

more than anything to send this message to Muslims: “We love you. Even if you wish us to die, we wish you to live.” And in the chaos of Tahrir Square, “they got [that message].”

Like a Spy Novel

Mel Wiebe describes a scene that could have been from a spy novel. When he entered the lobby of his Libyan hotel to meet an acquaintance, the man pretended they had never met. He left the hotel, Wiebe following at a discreet distance for several blocks of detours before the man allowed him to catch up. They took a taxi, stopped, got out and walked another eight blocks to the man’s home. They went in the door.

“Then he hugged me and said ‘I’m so glad to see you.’ ”

In fact, there *were* spies watching everything Wiebe, director of International Christian Response, and his companions did during his trip to Libya three years ago – “Probably the scariest place I’ve ever been.” The Abbotsford, B.C.-based organization supports the man and his wife as “secret missionaries.”

Libya and several other countries joined Egypt in the pro-democracy movement that became known as the “Arab Spring.” If the majority of Libyans find it oppressive under

Colonel Muammar Gaddafi’s regime, for Christians the pressures are even greater. Yet the secret missionaries – who are actually from Egypt – chose to stay instead of return home. “They are still there, and they are okay,” says Wiebe, adding, “Believers in these countries are fearless.”

And they are getting results. Wiebe knows an Egyptian doctor who started an underground house church a decade ago. That one community has multiplied into 6,400 house churches in Egypt and surrounding countries, with 70,000 new believers.

In the hotbed of Israel and the Palestinian Territories, believers in Jesus, whether from Jewish or Muslim backgrounds, are targeted by Israelis and Palestinian Muslims. Yet the region is not without hope. “A lot of work is being done in mediation between Palestinian Christians and Israelis,” says Johnson. Open Doors works in both Galilee and Gaza, one of the most violent places anywhere, where the hardline Muslim group Hamas wields majority power.

But Johnson sees openness even there, noting Open Doors founder Brother Andrew, after reaching out to professors evicted from Gaza by Israeli authorities, providing them with literature, including classics and Scriptures, was actually asked

location kept secret to avoid anyone becoming a target for extremists. The joy of the pastors and widows was overwhelming. We were honoured to distribute bicycles, portable PA systems and motorcycles to pastors witnessing for Christ in Muslim communities; as well as sewing machines, grinders for making meal, and microloans for small businesses to help widows become self-supporting. These items were sponsored by VOM ministries from several countries.


Returning to the mainly Christian part of the country, we headed to a residential school sponsored by VOM-Canada and others, attended by 300 children ranging from five to 17. Admission is granted to those who have lost one or both parents to anti-Christian violence. The school is located



In June, EFC vice-president Don Hutchinson (right) travelled with Voice of the Martyrs staff to visit persecuted Christians in Nigeria.

in a secure compound.

It was a beautiful sound to wake the next morning to children singing worship songs and choruses, a *cappella*, before school started. I marvelled at their resiliency – the boys playing soccer on a concrete field and the girls chatting among themselves, just being kids, smiling and laughing.

Clearly the Body of Christ is far different than I had previously experienced. I know I am a part of it, but on return I am more challenged in my understanding of my relationship with and within the full expression of the Church on planet Earth today. 

DON HUTCHINSON is vice-president, general legal counsel with The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada and a member of the board of directors for Voice of the Martyrs Canada.

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to give a series of lectures at the Islamic university on the topic "Who is Christ?"

So what are we as Canadian Christians sitting in our comfortable pews supposed to do besides wringing our hands over the injustices while thanking God we live in peace? The last thing Christians overseas want is for us to feel sorry for them. The first thing they want is for us to pray with them.

"Pray," says Brother H, who visited Canada for a series of meetings in August. "Pray," he repeats. "Pray, pray, pray. Pray with this vision: we are expecting miracles in [Egypt]."

His second request, not, obviously, for everyone: "Come and visit us. We need encouragement."

His ultimate desire: "We need everybody to hold hands and have one voice of prayer together." **FT**

DEBRA FIEGUTH of Kingston, Ont., is a senior writer at *Faith Today*.

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Preparing Students For Life and Ministry

Preparing for ministry Acadia Divinity College

Acadia Divinity College (ACD) – Acadia University's Faculty of Theology – offers degrees at the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral level for students preparing for paid and volunteer Christian ministry or advanced studies.

Representing more than 20 denominations, students come from across Canada and around the world to specialize in fields such as pastoral ministry, leadership and spiritual formation, youth and young adult ministries and chaplaincy as well as biblical studies and theology. Degrees offered include Bachelor of Theology, Master of Divinity, Master of Arts and Doctor of Ministry.

ADC offers instruction in Wolfville, N.S., Halifax, N.S., various sites in New Brunswick and Prague, Czech Republic. In addition, Acadia degrees are offered through its affiliated colleges in Nigeria, Montreal and Hong Kong.

For more information visit www.AcadiaDiv.ca.

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 learning community Briercrest College and Seminary

For 75 years, Briercrest College and Seminary has been a learning community where

students come to establish a relationship with Jesus Christ and build a foundation for the future. Faculty and students share a passion for learning together, studying the Scriptures and preparing for lives of service. More than 20,000 students have walked our halls, and now they're serving God in more than 80 countries.

We're not your typical Bible college. Though we're known for the quality of our ministry preparation, we've also come to value university-level studies. The combination of these disciplines is what makes us distinct – Bible and theology, ministry training, and arts and science are all essential components of our education. Several certificate

programs as well as associate, bachelor's and master's degrees give our students the tools they need to both succeed in the workforce and change the world. A new Education program in partnership with Minot State University as well as existing partnerships with the University of Regina, the University of Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology allow our students to transfer credits from Briercrest to these and many other schools.

Visit www.briercrest.ca for more information.

"The Word of our God shall stand forever" Isaiah 40:8.

Training, not just teaching Capernwray Harbour

At Capernwray Harbour, on Thetis Island, BC, we train young and older alike for "full-time Christian ministry regardless of occupation."

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of whom the Bible is all about – is the one who transforms lives and is resident within us. He is the Christian life.

Life is a person – not "Christianity" but Christ. Without Him we can have the system yet be void of life. Knowing the Truth in our heads is not enough. Hebrews 4 says the people knew the facts of God and saw the acts of God, but it did not profit them as knowing was not mixed with faith.

Serving Him can therefore be in any occupation when service is not "religious" but truly "spiritual." It is God's work through people, not people's work for God!

This is the aim of our training in our Bible school programs in the centre called Capernwray Harbour on Thetis Island, BC, Canada. www.capernwray.ca

Preparing leaders Horizon College & Seminary

Our focus at Horizon is to prepare leaders for Christian life and ministry, whether volunteer or professional. We aim to make our students better and more reflective thinkers about God and about Christian responsibility. We want to equip students to be skilled

practitioners of the Christian faith, ready for hands-on ministry. Whether students are preparing for professional ministry, planning to transfer credits to university or start working, it's essential to us that each student at Horizon more intimately develops her or his personal relationship with God.

Horizon focuses on practical ministry training. Our Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Theology degrees integrate biblical, practical and general education in an environment that encourages and nourishes spiritual growth. The ministry training degrees also include a four- or eight-month internship that places students in a supervised ministry position, giving extensive, real-life ministry training in the area of their majors. We have a number of certificate programs, including our Maximum University Transfer Certificate and our G3-Discipleship training certificate that partners with Youth For a Mission to offer classes and a four-month overseas missions program.

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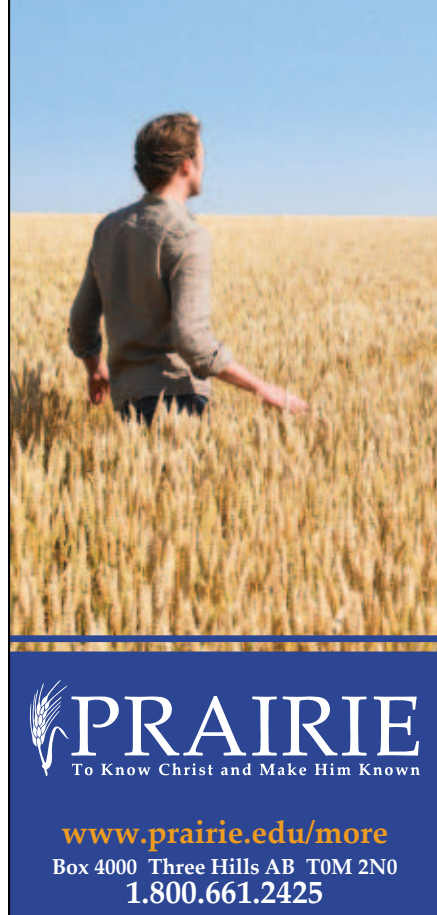
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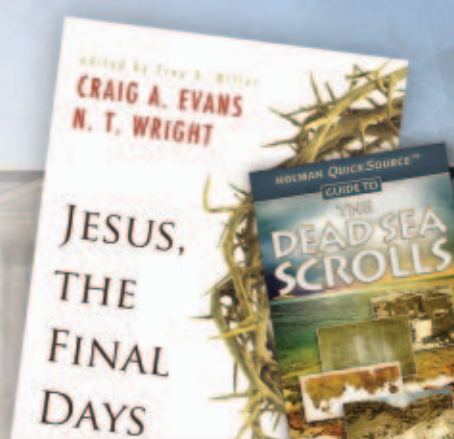
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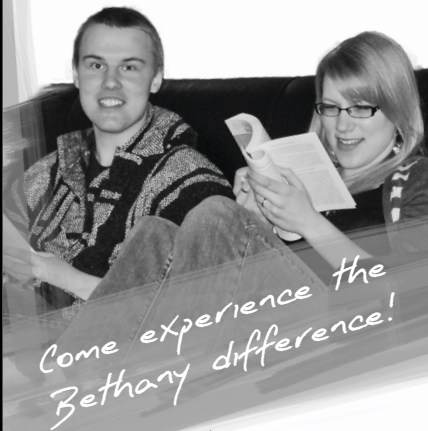
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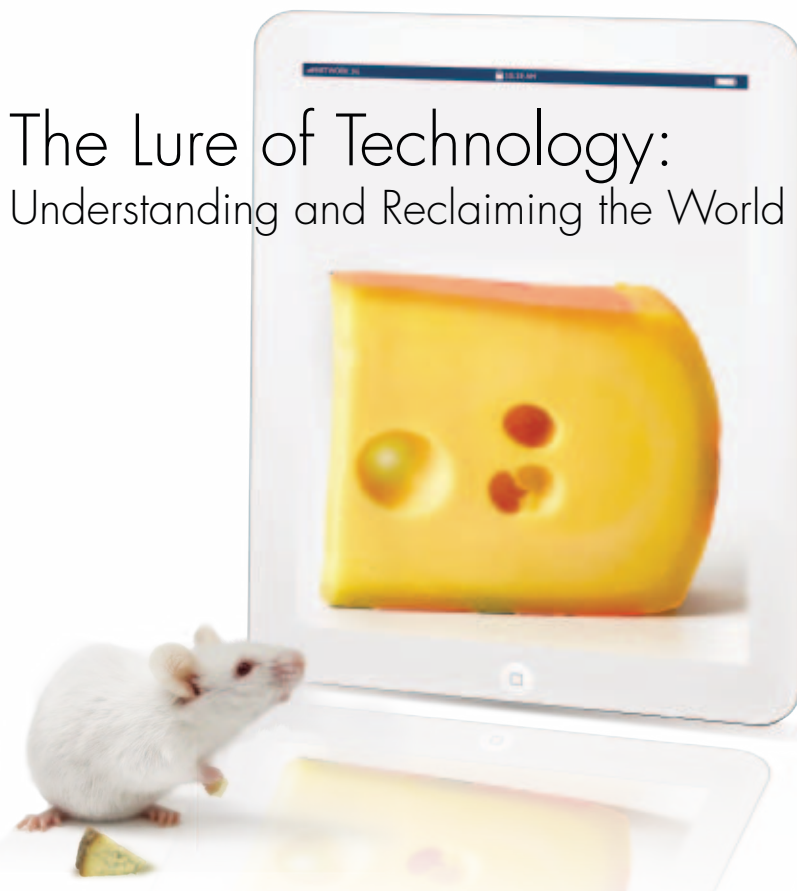
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Soul Sister

No matter our age or experience, every woman can benefit from a soul sister to spur us on in the journey of faith.

Pat was my Sunday school teacher in the small country church where I grew up. I was the only teenager in our 50-member congregation. She and I met in the pastor's office for Bible study and prayer before every service. My 16-year-old self was excited for the opportunity. I longed for the encouragement and wisdom of an older, godly woman, although at the time I probably wouldn't have been able to explain it quite that way.

I did know it would take a step of faith to trust her, a woman I really only knew in passing, with my deepest questions, dreams and concerns. But I also knew Pat cared and wanted to help me discover what it meant to grow in my relationship with God.

We talked, prayed and looked into God's Word on everything from boys to dreaming big for God. Her intentional encouragement had a significant impact on my life and still does to this day. We all need soul sisters like Pat to spur us on in the journey of faith.

Intentional Investment

Eight years ago I was headed to Mexico on a month-long mission trip – only for the trip to be cancelled several weeks before it began. It turned out only two people had signed up: me and another young woman named Hilary.

This near-Mexico experience left me confused and disheartened. What was God's plan? I thought I knew, but now I wasn't sure. As I prayed for God's leading in the months that followed, He seemed to be directing me to find another soul sister – one who would understand, help me fix my eyes on Christ and walk with me through it all.

In hindsight it's no surprise that Hilary's name kept coming to mind. When I approached her about meeting regu-

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larly for accountability, she finished my sentence saying she had wanted to ask me that very thing! It was an answer to prayer for us both. We began getting together for the purpose of growing together in our walk with God on a weekly basis (which we dubbed “Hilary and Michelle time”) back in 2004, and have rarely missed a week since.

When was the last time you had an intentional conversation? Do you have conversations on purpose, *about* purpose? As women alive in Christ, we need to surround ourselves with other women who will challenge and encourage us in our faith, and for whom we can do the same. It’s vital we invest in intentional relationships that go deeper than a quick hello in the church parking lot. No matter our age, experience or credentials, every woman can benefit greatly from a soul sister.

If we look at the relationships between Paul and Timothy, Ruth and Naomi, and Jesus and His disciples, we can see the Bible has much to say about the value of cultivating intentional relationships for the purpose of positive spiritual growth.

Formative Influences

Whether we realize it or not, we are all growing spiritually. The question is: Are we growing in the right direction? In *Renovation of the Heart*, Dallas Willard writes, “The most despicable as well as the most admirable of persons have had spiritual formation. Terrorists as well as saints are the outcome of spiritual formation. Their spirits or hearts have been formed. Period” (NavPress, 2002).

What influences are forming you? 1 Corinthians 15:33 is clear: “Bad company corrupts good character.” Do you have friends – soul sisters – who will speak words of truth into your life, ask the hard questions and challenge you when correction is needed? Do they help you live out your God-given potential?

Are your closest relationships drawing you closer to Christ? If not, pray and ask God to show you a woman in your life who could be such a friend. You don’t need to force vulnerability; allow trust to grow with time as you share what God is doing in your lives, struggles you are facing and dreams He has placed on your hearts. Together, memorize scripture pas-

sages. Commit to prayer for one another and rejoice together as you see God work!

Pat and Hilary are just two of the close friends through whom God has blessed my life and drawn me closer to himself. Through these women He has taught me the value of vulnerability, the beauty in brokenness and the essentials of encouragement. Let’s commit to going deeper in our relationships, spurring one another on to

love and good deeds, and standing together as sisters – women alive in Christ. **FT**

MICHELLE (NAGLE) ARTHUR is executive director of Women Alive, a national ministry founded in 1973. Through events, articles, podcasts, discussion forums and more, you can connect with other soul sisters from across Canada at www.womenalive.org. This column is the second in a new series.

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The Evangelical Chihuahua

The head of the Evangelical Covenant Church of Canada introduces his “small but saucy” family of churches with a bit of humour.

As I think how to introduce our church family to the broader evangelical community, I keep returning to the crazy and slightly irreverent idea that the Evangelical Covenant Church (ECC) of Canada is a bit like a chihuahua. Bear with me while I explain.

In the world of dogs the Canadian Kennel Club regulates a set of breeding categories. The smallest dog in the “toy” class of small dogs is the chihuahua. In the Canadian world of medium- and large-sized church denominations, the ECC group of 30 established and newly forming congregations makes us one of the smallest – a sort of chihuahua.

There’s also a similarity of character. The Canadian Kennel Club notes the chihuahua is “an alert, swift-moving little dog with saucy expression.” To my mind that’s a rough parallel with the ECC’s stated desire to live “fully, intentionally and missionally into our Kingdom priorities and purposes.”

Our original immigrant church experience came through the pietistic renewal movement of the 18th and 19th century in Sweden combined with the North American experience of the Second Great Awakening.

We have lived this tension of experiences by declaring the great value in the historic creeds of the Church, while at the same time being a non-doctrinal denomination that lives on this simple statement: “The Holy Scriptures, the Old and New Testaments, are the only perfect rule for faith, doctrine and conduct.”

We add to this a set of values that guides our mission and ethos. We seek to be biblical (letting the authority of Scripture shape us), devotional (letting the Spirit shape us), missional (letting the heart of God and the needs of the world shape us), and connectional (letting each other shape us).

Following our founding in 1904 our history has been written primarily around the rural and small communities of western Canada. Many of the original communities that were gathering points for Swedish immigrants are now no more than large tracts of land with old single-room church buildings used only for the occasional reunion ceremony.

Our history includes a jarring split over the atonement back in the mid-1940s – those leaving believing the only truly biblical view was penal substitution – and the closing in 2007 of a beloved Bible college after 66 years of fruitful ministry due to decreasing enrollment and increasing expenses.

We have remained a church family with dual status – we are a federally chartered denomination in Canada and also a regional conference of the Evangelical Covenant Church based in Chicago, Illinois.

Blending the aforementioned values with the following missional priorities sets our present ministry trajectory: leadership development, church planting/mission, revitalization/renewal and compassion/mercy/justice.

Significant emphasis has been given to partnership with the Ebenezer Clinic in Haut-Limbe, Haiti. This partnership goes back over a decade. When the cholera epidemic broke out in the north of Haiti recently, this ministry found itself in the unique position of being able to serve a number of communities. Many people who had been turned down for treatment or who could not afford treatment elsewhere were served by this clinic. When Doctors Without Borders moved into the area to assist with the load of patient care, they consulted frequently with the clinic’s medical director, and upon leaving designated the Ebenezer Clinic as the area’s cholera treatment centre.

Another exciting partnership for us is a growing relationship with Palestinian Christians in the West Bank and Arab Christians living in Israel. This relationship has come about due to The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada and World Vision Canada leading a small group of denominational leaders to explore ministry connections in the area.

Nationally we are focusing on church revitalization, and have stretched our budget to call a part-time co-ordinator of revitalization ministry. Our leadership board has also made a commitment to actively seek one new church plant per year.

Obviously, the chihuahua comparison only goes so far. But when you think of that dog’s “saucy expression,” consider the ECC has ordained women since 1976, continues to embrace both infant and believer baptism, and seeks to affirm the authority of Scripture without using terms like “inerrancy.” Might this be called evangelical sauciness? **FT**

Jeff Anderson is the superintendent/president of the Evangelical Covenant Church of Canada (www.canadacovenantchurch.org). He has served at the Winnipeg offices since 1997. This column continues a series by affiliates of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. For a list, see the EFC.ca/affiliates.

Paris Presbyterian, Paris, Ont.

Although none of us is perfect, we are all welcomed into God's family.

A church to come home to" is how Rev. Joel Sherbino describes his parish in the small riverside town of Paris, Ont., (about halfway between Hamilton and London). Sherbino came home there himself in 2006 from Malawi, Africa, where he served three years as an associate pastor.

"People move to Paris because they love the town," a growing community of 11,000, says Sherbino.

The 200 households attending Paris Presbyterian Church take their cue from the parable of the prodigal son, recognizing we are all welcomed into God's family even though we are all far from perfect.

Members are encouraged to be intentionally and explicitly welcoming at worship services or whenever they speak with neighbours, helping to break down barriers, encourage prodigals and welcome individuals and families at every stage of life into the congregation.

Services at Paris Presbyterian blend traditional and contemporary in a historic building alive with spirit and new technology, merging Scripture reading and sermons with choir anthems accompanied by pipe organ, alongside the guitars and keyboards of praise teams. Worship aims to engage the whole body in thinking about God and His mission.

Sherbino wants the congregation to be a place of learning, celebration and encouragement. He aims to lead its members into one purpose: a deep desire to love God and serve the world.

Love God – Serve the World

Evidence of God's fingerprints is obvious in the church's neighbourhood programs. Four teams rotate weekly ministry at Telfer Place retirement home, leading worship and fellowshiping over coffee.

Congregants, both young and old, serve up a community dinner scheduled near the end of each month. It's advertised through flyers, the local food bank, word of mouth and on the church sign, and it draws about 60 adult guests. Some come for economic reasons and others for fellowship. Young families enjoy relaxing over a meal they don't have to prepare. Congrega-



PHOTO: KEN NOLSON

Sports camps are Paris Presbyterian's largest outreach to more than 100 kids.

tion members sometimes invite and bring guests, introducing community members to the short devotional and worship time. Sherbino emphasizes a core value to integrate the community and church to "do life together."

A young man named Evan had only been attending a few months before he got involved in the men's ministry and com-



“Sports camps are well run, affordable and model Christ” in every phase of life: Joel Sherbino.

munity dinner. When he was travelling on business for a few weeks, he found he could hardly wait to get home. “This is a place I want to be part of,” he says.

One Month to Live!

A bold billboard campaign before Lent focuses the congregation on intentional conversations about Christ. Sermons and small groups address the topic “One Month to Live.” Members post lawn signs on the theme as a catalyst to conversations with neighbours. Their prayerful goal is 200 signs with 12 conversations each. The theme was chosen carefully and provocatively. Sherbino reflects on Christ’s mission: “Until we’re prepared to die, we’re not prepared to live.”

Christ In the Community

Sports camps are Paris Presbyterian’s largest outreach to more than 100 kids (ages nine to 12), many attracted through a one-page ad in the local paper. Initiated four years ago the camp now fills two weeks each summer with basketball, soccer, canoeing, kayaking and mountain biking where kids receive certificates for various skill levels. A local outfitter donates equipment and qualified staff, joined by 25 adults from the congregation, many of

whom book vacation from work to assist in this strategic mission.

Adrian took time off work to help with the basketball program last year. He has been attending church for three years and says, “For the first time Christ seems real to me.”

A program called Leaders in Training allows 13-year-old interns to participate alongside adult mentors.

“Sports camps are well run, affordable and model Christ” in every phase of life, says Sherbino. They’re a golden opportunity to build relationships with families. And parents respond by saying they’re “grateful your church is reaching beyond your own walls.”

A women’s book club, complete with child care, reaches several neighbours with no faith background. One daughter begged her mother to attend church at the end of the book club season. Sherbino sees children leading parents and families back to church and back to Christ.

A casserole club was started by one member with a heart to give to congregants in need of temporary aid. Seven days of meals are provided for those who are ill, families welcoming a new baby or those grieving a recent loss. Community referrals now stretch this ministry. “It’s im-

portant to bring the presence of Christ into the community,” says Sherbino.

He encourages the congregation to focus on “spending an ordinary day with Christ at work and in the check-out line.” So one Connections group (the parish term for a small group) intentionally meets in a local pub, attracting younger men. There is a good relationship with the pub proprietor who is asking spiritual questions and donating to church projects as he sees them helping people in need.

Paris Presbyterian members also offer the gift of time to boarding homes which include neighbours with chronic mental

health challenges. The manager reports an improvement in residents’ self-worth when church members speak a word of encouragement during a shared activity.

Stretch – Don’t Be Afraid of God

Sherbino acknowledges, “The challenge is to keep looking ahead into opportunities, to keep open to whatever God has in store. The things that have flourished came out of God’s leading.” This congregation is not afraid to ask how they can be involved in God’s mission. They exist as a witness of Christ in the community. “It’s good when we’re not so comfortable. When we’re comfortable, we don’t move forward,” says Sherbino.

Parishioner Ryan Graham, who recently went on a mission in Haiti, sums it up succinctly: “I have learned that regardless of what your profession is, your mission is so much greater when you allow God to use you.” **FT**

CHARLENE DE HAAN, a freelance writer in Toronto, also serves as the executive director of CAM International of Canada and founder of stepUPtransitions.ca. Paris Presbyterian Church (www.parispresby.ca) is affiliated with The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. Read all the profiles in this ongoing series at www.faithtoday.ca.



The Norwegian Terrorist

The man who gunned down so many people in July claimed to be defending Christian Europe. What are we to make of this?

“I believe this will be my last entry. It is now Fri July 22nd, 12.51.” So concludes the 1516-page manifesto of Anders Behring Breivik. Later that day Breivik, a 32-year-old Norwegian, detonated a car bomb in downtown Oslo, killing eight people, and proceeded to an island where he gunned down 69 others, mostly young adults, at a summer camp. One youth sent this text: “Mummy, tell the police that they must be quick. People are dying here!” Initial speculation this was another act of Islamic terrorism gave way to Breivik’s proud boast of doing the killings in the name of Christ.

Breivik was quickly targeted as a “Christian fundamentalist,” but this is a serious misnomer. Breivik’s huge document and his frequent Internet postings show no interest in the ideas and spirituality of traditional fundamentalism. One thinks here of inerrancy, dispensationalism, KJV only, and separation from the world. On the latter, Breivik lauded his collection of wine and bragged he would engage with prostitutes before he went on his killing spree. He was also a member of the Masonic Lodge, an association rejected by fundamentalist Christianity. By his own admission Breivik is drawn most to old-style Catholicism going back to the Crusades.

The Norwegian killer is also described by many, including his lawyer, as crazy. So, is he not guilty by reason of insanity? The courts will decide of course, but he is certainly not crazy in a stereotypical way. In fact, Breivik’s manifesto says the European power elite will paint him as mad to deflect attention from the cause. The July 22 killings were years in the making and part of a larger war against Islam, multiculturalism, Marxism, liberalism, feminism, etc. The manifesto to save Christian Europe includes details on fertilizer for bombs, assault rifles, martial arts training and nuclear power plant assault strategy. He also gives tips on photo ops for mercenaries (use sexy females), proper Knights Templar uniforms, and the best protein bars and anabolic steroids for the Christian warrior.

Is Breivik the Christian equivalent of the Muslim terrorist? A “Christian terrorist”? The answer is ambiguous. From one angle, he has no interest in Christian living *per se*. In his manifesto he claims he does not have a “personal relationship with Jesus Christ and God.” However, he claims Christianity as the cultural, social and moral platform for a Europe free of Muslims, Marxists and their Western allies and enablers. He

killed the youth at the camp, he claimed, because they were connected to the ruling party ruining Norway. On July 22 he followed his own manifesto guideline: “Once you decide to strike, it is better to kill too many than not enough. Do not apologise, make excuses or express regret.”

Thankfully, there is little evidence that Breivik has comrades in arms in a literal sense. He is basically a lone wolf, somewhat like the Unabomber (Ted Kaczynski) and Timothy McVeigh (the Oklahoma City bomber). No right-wing organization has applauded Breivik’s actions. His killings have been condemned by all the major conservative culture critics in the West, including Ann Coulter, Bruce Bawer (a resident of Norway) and Robert Spencer. Muslim terrorist groups are the only ones who have applauded the Norway tragedy.

Of most significance for global and Canadian realities, Breivik’s terrorist acts are fodder in the continued, nasty verbal fights between right- and left-wing ideologues. Several left-wing social commentators have already tried to use Breivik as proof of where conservative values lead. In reply, their conservative counterparts have said repeatedly they have nothing to do with Breivik and, regardless, accuse leftist elites of being blind about the real threats (like militant Islam) to Western civilization. On these matters, two things need to be underscored.

First, the rhetoric between right and left is often shrill and careless. The shouting and nastiness create needless complexity in the already complex templates that face all sides in the culture wars continuing in Canada, America, Europe and elsewhere. Both right- and left-wing ideologues need to be better at fact-checking, for example. Yes, Breivik is proof not all terrorists are Muslims. But the majority of terrorist acts in the last three decades are the work of Muslims. Here, a second point comes into play.

Critics of militant Islam need to watch overemphasis on Islam’s dark side. Take the fact most terrorism comes from Muslims. If that drum is the only one heard, or if it is beaten too often, non-Muslims become paranoid and suspicious of their Muslim neighbours, and fail to make sufficient distinctions between various types of Muslims and alternate understandings of Islam. As well, overstatement of weaknesses in Islam or of the threat of Islamic militancy create anxiety among moderate Muslims and a sense of despair.

For us to live up to the name “Christian” we need to follow the living, neighbour-loving Christ – and ensure the name stands for more than a set of mere social and cultural ideas. **BT**

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*.



Where Are You, Men of Courage?

The leader of a national ministry to men reflects on how fathers can move beyond being “just good enough.”

A movie coming out at the end of September targets some of the most influential people in the world: fathers. *Courageous* is produced by the same group that released *Fireproof* and *Facing the Giants*. It’s the story of a police team who are confident and focused in their jobs while facing the even greater challenge of fatherhood.

As tragedy strikes one of these men, it does what tragedy often does – forces a series of fears and hopes to the surface. It causes these men to ask more difficult questions and to search deeper within than they have ever done before. In one poignant moment a man says to his friend,

“You are a good enough father.” His friend responds, “I don’t want to just be a good enough father.”

I have the joy of being the father of four children: three boys and a girl who has stolen my heart. Yet I will be the first to admit that far too often the priorities of my job and my other hobbies in life become too consuming. Many will say to me that I’m a good enough father, but the words of this movie ring in my ears – that’s not what I want.

Fatherhood is one of those roles where it’s easy to assume everything is going well because we don’t see an immediate crisis. When things seem to be going well on the home front, a man will often pour himself into his job, church activity or the like. It’s not that he wants to ignore his family – it’s that he wants to do well in his other tasks in life.

The influence of a father in a child’s life cannot be understated. When a father is positively and actively involved in the life of his child, that child is more likely to succeed in academics and careers, less likely to face depression, better able to handle stress and more likely

THE EFC ON SOCIAL NETWORKS

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to have positive peer relations. When a father is positively and actively involved, that child is far more likely to follow in the faith of his or her parents. When a father is not involved, there is greater likelihood of drug use, delinquency and violent behaviour.

As men who have experienced being adopted by God the Father, Christians have an even greater opportunity and responsibility. We have the privilege of being a physical reflection of God the Father to our children. This is one of the most courageous things a man can do.

With this in mind let me share some ways men can father their children the way God fathers His. This is how we can move beyond being “just good enough.”

A Father’s Blessing: Jesus received the blessing of His Father in the words “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17). Do your children know the good you see in them? Do they know you believe in them?

A Father’s Discipline: In Hebrews 12:6 we read God disciplines those He loves. There are often two extremes in men. Some men abuse rather than discipline, while other men permit anything (in the name of being loving) rather than discipline. There are moments when a father needs to discipline his child with the intention of developing right living. That’s what God does with us.

A Father’s Protection: God promises He will only allow His children to be tempted to the point we are able to handle. This requires an intimate knowledge of what your child can or cannot handle, and a willingness to push them to their limits while still providing the protective cushion of your love.

A Father’s Provision: God promises to provide for all our needs. Men need to recognize our important role in providing for the needs of our children – physical, emotional and spiritual. Please notice the use of the word “needs.” By staying focused on needs (and not simply wants), we are also able to give our children true biblical discipline and protection. We help them realize life is not about what *they* want.

A Father’s Presence: The term “Abba” for God the Father is an endearing word, inviting us into the very presence of our “Daddy.” Do your eyes light up when

your children are around? Do they feel welcome in your presence? Or do your actions communicate they are just a nuisance?

These and many other character traits of God the Father can teach a man to be more than “just good enough.”

In *Courageous* the question is asked of a large group of men: “Where are you, men of courage?” Will men who are fath-

ers be courageous enough to not settle for “good enough”? It’s a critical question for our time. **FT**

KIRK GILES is a father to four amazing children aged nine to 15. He also serves as president of Promise Keepers Canada (www.promisekeepers.ca), a ministry dedicated to ignite and equip men to make a godly impact at home, work, church and in their community.

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The Watcher

Author: Sara Davison
Word Alive Press, 2011.
352 pages. \$15.99

Sara Davison's debut novel is not for the faint of heart. Set in B.C.'s Fraser Valley, this offering of contemporary romantic suspense is riveting in more ways than one.

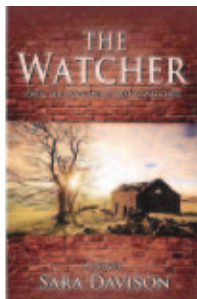
The story is rife with foreboding and danger. Twenty years after the crime which wrecks all of Kathryn Ellison's youthful plans, she is almost ready to let a new man into her life. But first she must cut ties to the past and deal with her 19-year-old daughter's quest to find her father.

As Kathryn sorts through an old shoebox of memorabilia, she remembers – and we're dropped into – a soup of issues. We see that God doesn't stop bad things from happening to His children. Truth will always come out. Consequences are inevitable. Forgiveness is key. Good things can come from evil situations. Above all, grace is tenacious.

Davison's action scenes are dynamite. She knows how to ratchet up the tension (of which there is plenty) and how to relax us and put us off our guard. The story comes out in a puzzle-piece manner, giving the reader lots of opportunity for discovery and participation.

Davison tells the story through a celestial being (the Watcher). What a great perspective this

quirky narrator provides with the ability to sense human thoughts, feel emotions, move effortlessly from one location to another, recognize cohorts (like Faith, Grace, Courage and Fear, and in this way explore another spiritual layer), and provide welcome comic relief: "Of all things human, coffee is the thing I crave the most. I've never tasted it, of course, but the smell alone is enough to curl my toes in equal



parts delight and envy."

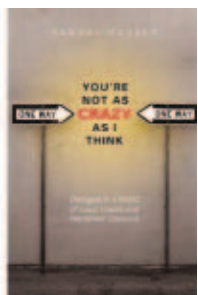
Canadian fiction has a fresh new voice in Ontario author Sara Davison. *The Watcher* won the fiction category in the 2010 Word Alive Publishing Contest.

–Violet Nesdoly

You're Not as Crazy as I Think: Dialogue in a World of Loud Voices and Hardened Opinions

Author: Randall Rauser
Biblica Publishing, 2011.
218 pages. \$18.99

Randall Rauser is an associate professor of historical theology at Taylor Seminary in Edmonton, where he also teaches apologetics. This book examines why evangelical Christians don't often dialogue with those who stand in polar opposition to their beliefs and worldview.



However, the analysis process he develops is somewhat

suspect. At the outset he sets up a straw man argument using a fictitious person named Ted, whom he labels a strict evangelical Christian with a very exact, narrow, biased worldview. Ted stands in opposition to anyone and everyone who disagrees with his biblical interpretation.

This is an unfair misrepresentation of Christians generally. From this artificial vantage point he then examines a number of reasons why such a person cannot easily have open, honest, respectful dialogue with those who hold opposing views.

Rauser's observation seems to be that Evangelicals in general are dismissive, argumentative, biased and generally condescending toward those who disagree with them on a number of fronts. He then proceeds to contend the "truth" evangelical Christians so passionately wish to guard is not found in "dogged adherence to a set of statements we happen to believe... A close-minded refusal to hear truth in others is incompatible with being people of truth... The real person of truth is one who expresses a genuine willingness to listen to the other as an equal conversation partner."

This is his thesis, and he proceeds to develop it using some interesting themes including atheism, animal rights, Darwinism and evolution.

Rauser is right when he says too many Christians have "resorted to the distortions of simplistic judgments." This book deserves careful reading.

–R. Wayne Hagerman

Grand Entrance: Worship on Earth as in Heaven

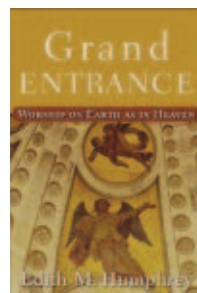
Author: Edith M. Humphrey
Baker Academic, 2011.
272 pages. \$26.50

Many books about worship, sadly, are written with an edge, to denounce or defend this or that denomination, style or action. A book combining clear convictions with generosity and breadth is rare. This book is just such a find.

Author Edith Humphrey is a Canadian teaching New Testament at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. Her new book explores corporate worship with grace, elegance and a deep personal investment.

Humphrey takes us on a journey that begins in the Scriptures, continues through the classic liturgies of the Eastern and Western Church, and culminates with a survey of contemporary worship services from diverse traditions. Her conviction, which radiates through the seven chapters and conclusion, is that worship is not so much something we do as the means by which the triune God draws us into His own presence.

Humphrey's training as a biblical scholar serves her well in the opening chapters. Without being overly academic (we are not overwhelmed with scholarly footnotes; words that might be new are helpfully asterisked and defined in a glossary) she displays keen insight into the Old and New Testaments.



She is similarly adept at tracing her theme through the classic liturgies of Orthodoxy and Catholicism. For example her deep description of the Tridentine Mass will give even the “free-est” of free-church readers much food for thought.

Though she personally has moved to Orthodoxy after many years of free-church and Protestant liturgies, she avoids advocating for any one tradition and remains focused on her theme.

The only improvement I could ask of this excellent book – and perhaps this is my own personal bias – would be more attention to the doctrine of the Ascension of Jesus.

This is a fine work from start to finish, to be read by Christians regardless of liturgical formation or worship practices. It won’t solve our “worship wars,” but it just might teach us how to sidestep many of its mines.

–Tim Perry

Transforming Conversion: Rethinking the Language and Contours of Christian Initiation

Author: Gordon T. Smith
Baker Academic, 2010.
224 pages. \$22.99

Gordon T. Smith is the president of reSource Leadership International and a sessional lecturer at Regent College in Vancouver. In his latest book he calls Christians to reconsider our theology and experience of conversion, particularly as it has been interpreted and propagated by revivalist evangelicalism.

While remaining rooted in the evangelical tradition, Smith criticizes the pragmatic, anti-intellectual, anti-sacramental, hyper-individualistic and escapist excesses of revivalism. He encourages a more biblical and holistic vision of conversion that emphasizes the goodness of God, upholds the gravity of sin, and encompasses the cosmic purposes of redemption in Jesus Christ.

Smith then surveys self-written conversion experiences from Augustine to Benedict, Luther, Calvin and Menno Simons, Wesley and Edwards, and then into the rise of the Holiness and Pentecostal movements. He adds a contemporary conversion experience of a Muslim that addresses the unique challenges of coming to faith in Jesus in a Muslim culture.

In the latter half of his book Smith fleshes out his theology of conversion by arguing for the necessity of holiness in all aspects of Christian life. Using Acts 2:38 as the key to a biblical theology of conversion, Smith rightly contends that if one is to possess a robust and meaningful theology and experience of Christian conversion, then the twin realities of repentance and baptism are necessary.

Thus he argues for a recovery and reimplementing of confession for both those coming to faith and those maturing in it. He also argues baptism is complementary to repentance and is absolutely crucial for an authentic and theologically sound conversion experience. (He is not

a “sacerdotalist” seeking to defend baptism as the moment of regeneration. Rather, he combines the evangelical tradition of understanding conversion as “punctiliar” and the sacramental tradition of understanding conversion as process or pilgrimage.)

Smith also offers helpful thoughts on how to write a spiritual autobiography, making room for a diversity of experience and avoiding the platitudes that sometimes arise in

revivalism.

The final chapter is a welcome exhortation for how the Church is to understand children who are raised in the faith, and therefore do not need to be “evangelized,” and those who are still coming to faith (“seekers”), and so must be given time, space and patience as they journey toward faith in Jesus. –Brad Penner



You Never Know What You Have Till You Give It Away

Author: Brian Stiller
Castle Quay Books, 2010.
176 pages.
\$16.95

Leadership has been defined many ways.

Napoleon Bonaparte said leaders are those who “deal in hope.” Dwight D. Eisenhower said leadership is “the art of getting someone else to do something you want done because he wants to do it.” And George W. Bush said:

“I have a different vision of leadership. A leadership is someone who brings people together.”

Brian Stiller, the former head of several ministries including Tyndale University College and Seminary and The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, doesn’t do anything as predictable as trying to define leadership. Instead, he has written a series of meditations designed to help leaders define it themselves.

Stiller’s new book is an award-winning look at leadership from the inside. As someone who has spent 50 years in various Christian leadership positions, Stiller has seen it all – and offers fellow leaders advice on when to pick up the mantle of leadership to when to resign, and everything in between. Stiller’s advice ranges from the practical to the philosophical, weaving in bits of personal anecdotes, history, Scripture and theology as he helps fellow leaders understand the complexities of the calling to lead.

Written as a series of meditations, the book isn’t intended to be read in one sitting, but rather to be absorbed one piece at a time. The difficulty is, however, that readers will naturally want to leap from one meditation to the next. Stiller is an engaging and wise mentor, and it’s tough to resist the temptation to jump to the next chapter before fully absorbing the last. Nevertheless, those who take a slow journey through this book will benefit most from what Stiller has to say.

–Lloyd Rang



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Now, This

How to respond to YouTube and its kin.

The email shows up in your inbox from a friend. “Hey, check out this YouTube video!”
Yes, indeed. Check it out.

The late cultural critic Neil Postman remarked on the familiar experience of the TV news broadcast in which an announcer grimly reports on a disaster somewhere, and then says, “Now, this...” as the station cuts to a cheery toothpaste commercial.

Postman asked: What does such an experience, repeated over and over again as we watch the news, do to us? What happens to our psyches as we experience the emotional and cognitive whiplash of moving instantly from the sombre to the superficial?

Postman raised his questions in the early 1980s. (His book, *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in an Age of Show Business*, was published in 1985 and recently republished by Penguin in 2005.)

In the late 1980s, after people began to consider his questions, news anchors began to solemnly intone into the camera a phrase like, “... and our thoughts and prayers are with those families as they grieve” – only to instantly put on an idiotic smile, turn to look across the set and chirp, “Now, Kenny has some good news on the weather front!”

If that were stage two, the arrival of YouTube has bumped us to stage three (stages come quicker and quicker these days). Now we as viewers – or, more accurately, voyeurs – instantly jump from a clip of someone’s home video of a hilarious pet to a clip of our favourite comedian to a clip of a highway police chase to a clip of a lingerie show to a clip of a tsunami inundating a village while desperate people clamber to safety or are carried away, screaming, by the flood.

Point and click, point and click, all for our enjoyment.

And it is indeed for our enjoyment, isn’t it? We’re bouncing around YouTube – or Twitter, Flickr, Google Blogs or RSS feeds – usually because it’s entertaining, not because we’re seeking to explore the human condition, inform ourselves about important matters, or sympathize with the victims of life’s perils. It’s all simply stimulus, giving us opportunities to feel things without actually encountering the things themselves, without actually *earning* those emo-

tions. And we do so without those emotions then fuelling some constructive response.

Afterwards we often walk around feeling vaguely sad or irritated or fearful (at least when those feelings aren’t submerged beneath the distraction of some activity). Why? It’s because we’ve experienced some sort of badness and the badness registers on our nervous system, but we haven’t taken the time necessary to get it into analytical focus, decide what we think about it, and then resolve what to do about it.

Channel surfing via any medium produces this same jangling effect. Stimulation without reflection – without stopping for a few moments to stare at it, figure it out and respond to it intentionally – produces only smoky disquiet, free-floating unhappiness and meaningless malaise.

We reduce truly important matters to the flotsam of fleeting entertainment. We reduce other people – real human beings, sometimes enduring real distress or performing real heroism – to cartoon characters. And we reduce ourselves to staring fools, alternately smiling or frowning as the images and sounds flit across our consciousnesses, then clicking out of the computer window and blandly resuming our everyday lives.

We can take two steps to fight this problem.

First, we can decide before we visit YouTube, access our email or turn on the news what we’re going to expose ourselves to, what we’re going to take in, and what we’re going to let affect us. We can prepare for it, make sure we’re in the right frame of mind and in the right situation to truly pay attention, and then respond appropriately.

Second, after having viewed something provocative, we need to let ourselves be provoked – but, as Hebrews says in a different context, provoked “to love and good deeds.” Turning the lead of heavy experience into the gold of valuable response isn’t instant and automatic. It requires the miraculous alchemy of human reflection empowered by the Holy Spirit.

So let’s consume carefully and guard our hearts and minds against the slow killing of the psyche by constant directionless stimulation. And let’s process carefully, practising the self-control and spiritual deliberation to ask, “Now, what?” **FT**

We can decide before we visit YouTube what we’re going to expose ourselves to, what we’re going to take in, and what we’re going to let affect us.

JOHN STACKHOUSE is the Sangwoo Youtong Chee Professor of Theology and Culture at Regent College and author of *Making the Best of It: Following Christ in the Real World* (Oxford).



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Before Deciding to Marry, Check for Traffic Signals

Important decisions require we do more to seek divine guidance

By Donald N. Bastian



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Across six decades of ministry I've listened often to stories from Christians in distress over their failed marriages, and a few particular admissions have turned up repeatedly. For example: "I knew before I married I shouldn't marry him, but I went ahead anyway. I said to myself, 'This may be my last chance.'"

Or, "I knew I didn't really love him, but the wedding was scheduled and the gifts were coming in so it seemed easiest just to let the wedding happen."

The problem of failed marriages in Christian circles may be complex. But there is a line of Christian counsel that should be heard more clearly in pulpits and counselling rooms as a deterrent: Make a deliberate, serious

effort to seek God's guidance as the major factor in the process of deciding.

Think of that guidance as a traffic light. Sometimes a green light says, "Go ahead, the road is clear." At other times it's amber, signalling, "Slow down, you may need to stop." Or it may flash, "STOP, you are in imminent danger."

Don't we believe that when we face life-shaping decisions about weighty matters – such as whether or not to marry – our God, who wants only the best for us, will have ways to signal us?

We have an answer in some counsel the Apostle Paul gave to the Ephesian church, intended for the Christian life in general. First, he says to "find out what pleases the Lord" (Ephesians 5:10). Seven verses later he doubles back to exhort us to "understand what the will of the Lord is" (5:17). That is, find out by careful trial or by proving and testing.

The late New Testament scholar Markus Barth says verse 10 "speaks of recognizing and affirming God's will that includes the activity of the intellect, the will, the emotions, the action, the total life of man." Obviously, those who do the seeking must be open to God's signals – whether green, amber or red.

What can be more deeply satisfying to a Christian contemplating a marriage than to sense the Lord's approval?

So, how does God guide when we commit ourselves to understanding the will of the Lord? His Holy Word will be His first line of response, but not necessarily by flashing a Bible verse at us in neon lights. Rather, it may be by hints here and there whispered to the listening heart.

Who can read Genesis 24, a sort of novella showing how Rebekah was found as a wife for Isaac, without feeling – however different that ancient culture was from ours – the whole search was supported by a deeply prayerful element?

Or who can troll Proverbs and not catch glimpses of the character issues that should deeply concern us in seeking a life's mate? Or who can read Song of Songs without realizing settling on a life's partner includes a God-awakened passion for the one we love which God supplies and smiles upon? But also God promises to guide us by quickening our judgement. This seems to be the issue Paul raises. Nineteenth-century scholar B. F. Westcott explains it this way: "Understand by careful consideration of the circumstances in each case."

Although our human judgement is flawed by the Fall, it is still a gift from God to be exercised wisely in such situations.

An elderly woman, whose deeply satisfying marriage of more than 50 years showed on her face, told me she

felt strangely drawn from the start toward the man she later married. However, she said, until she was sure of the Lord's approval she determined her head would rule her heart, not vice versa.

Sometimes, when Scripture and personal judgement converge, they support an intuition pointing us to the decision we should make – like a lit-up traffic arrow.

Sometimes, when there is still uncertainty, the Lord prompts us to search out counsel from someone older and emotionally removed from the situation.

Once, a young parishioner was not comfortable in a relationship, but she wanted to be sure she was exercising good judgement in deciding which direction to go. I gave her a series of

questions to ask herself. She later married someone else.

Years later she wrote that the question that had settled her mind to say no to the first relationship was "Do you want this man's brothers and sisters to be uncles and aunts to your children?" There was something about family dynamics that didn't seem right.

You may ask if such divine guidance, fully sought and received, will assure every marriage so entered will be a trouble-free romance? Not always.

In a disordered culture like ours even devoted Christians may bring into a marriage scars that threaten the marriage's fuller possibilities. These may be defective relational skills carried over from a dysfunctional family, or the wounds of unacknowledged and untreated abuse, or mistaken ideas absorbed from the culture on how marriage relationships are supposed to work, or just a selfishness never fully addressed at the cross of Christ.

However, these need not imperil a marriage covenanted in the confidence God had ordained it. They may take work to correct, or even require professional counsel. But they will be addressed in the confidence Christian marriage is really a threesome. Its healer is the welcomed presence of Christ himself.

And the same energy that went into the discerning of this fact – the testing and proving – is the energy at the couple's disposal to move through the rutted sections to a smoother pathway.

If couples in the Church could be persuaded to root their plans more deeply in the sober seeking and testing of God's approval before they appeared at the marriage altar, this would remarkably reduce the number of failed marriages. **BT**

**At other times the
light's amber, signalling,
“Slow down, you may
need to stop.”**

DONALD N. BASTIAN of Brampton, Ont., is bishop emeritus of the Free Methodist Church in Canada and blogs at www.justcallmepastor.wordpress.com.