

# Faith Today

To Connect, Equip and Inform Evangelical Christians in Canada

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2012



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## Writing for Hollywood

How Canadians  
in the film  
industry bring  
their best to  
the big screen

Churches Helping  
Refugees p. 22

Why Global Food  
Prices Are So High  
p. 27

Choices at Canadian  
Colleges and Univer-  
sities (advertising  
feature) p. 32



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# CONTENTS



## Faith Today 27

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To Connect, Equip and Inform Evangelical Christians in Canada  
January/February 2012

### IN EACH ISSUE

- 7 **FROM THE EDITOR** / Bringing Faith to Life by *Gail Reid*
- 8 **FAITH FORUM: LETTERS AND MILESTONES** / Salt and Light; Deconstructing Hell
- 10 **KINGDOM MATTERS** / Technology Brings Overseas Missions Closer; Calgary's HymnTyme Winds Down; Bible Society Launches New App; Children Learn True Worth Through Recycled Art
- 14 **THE GATHERING PLACE** / Don't Turn Them Away by *Bruce J. Clemenger*
- 15 **NEWS FROM THE EFC** / Anti-trafficking Action; Support for Egypt's Christians; Interfaith Breakfast; Witness in a Multi-religious World; Initial Comments on Polygamy Decision; Ontario Youth Care
- 16 **HINGE: REFLECTING ON CHURCH & MISSION** / Rethinking Discipleship by *Bruce J. Clemenger*
- 17 **ACTIVATE: CHANGE YOUR WORLD** / The Challenge of Poverty in Canada by *Julia Beazley*
- 32 **EDUCATION ADVERTISING FEATURE** / Preparing Students for Life and Ministry
- 43 **DISPATCHES FROM THE GLOBAL VILLAGE** / Christians an Influential Minority in Egypt by *Brian C. Stiller*
- 44 **WOMEN ALIVE** / Maturing Spiritually by *Michelle (Nagle) Arthur*
- 45 **A CHURCH YOU SHOULD KNOW** / Morningstar Christian Fellowship, Toronto, Ont. by *Charlene de Haan*
- 47 **RELIGIONWATCH** / Good News and Bad News by *James A. Beverley*
- 48 **PROMISE KEEPERS** / One! The Journey to Love One's Wife by *Kirk Giles*
- 50 **BOOKS & CULTURE** / Book & Music Reviews
- 52 **THE NETWORK** / Classified Ads
- 54 **CHRIST & CULTURE IN CANADA** / Challenges Good for Theology by *John G. Stackhouse Jr.*

**BONUS ONLINE AT [WWW.FAITHTODAY.CA/DIGITAL](http://WWW.FAITHTODAY.CA/DIGITAL)**

**When the Door Slams Shut: What it's like to be sent to prison for 20 years, even with God alongside.** By *Jay Handel, with Arnet H. Hales*

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**Cover Photo:** Simeon Muller. Kevin Miller directs Ben Eisner while producer David Rempel looks on during production of the feature-length documentary *Hellbound?*, which filmed in over two dozen locations across Europe, Canada and the USA this year.

### FEATURES

- 18 **Writing for Hollywood** by *Alex Newman* / How Canadians in the film industry bring their best to the big screen.
- 22 **Partnering to Help Refugees** by *Renée James* / The need is great, and Canada's churches can make a difference.
- 24 **Small Town, Big Lessons** by *Renée James* / What one Ontario town learned about refugee sponsorship.
- 27 **Will the Gift of the Land Keep Coming?** by *Stuart Clark* / An expert on global hunger helps explain the current international food situation.
- 28 **The Joseph Principle: Giving Today for Needs Tomorrow** by *John Longhurst* / How Canadian churches co-operate to alleviate worldwide hunger.

## 22



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## 10



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## Bringing Faith to Life

Good movies hint at how God can transform a heart. Effective Christian co-operation also glorifies Him.

**W**hether written or portrayed in film, the best stories are about transformation. The successful story presents the characters and the situation so change is clearly needed – if not wanted. The more impossible it seems, the more satisfaction when it occurs.

In our cover story “Writing for Hollywood” by Alex Newman, Canadian filmmakers and writers share how they try to convey this in compelling ways. Some focus on the conflict and obstacles in the way of change. Others explore how the human heart is sometimes changed or healed. Both approaches aim to encourage audience discovery rather than impose a Christian message.

The notion that people can change lies at the heart of the Christian gospel and should be at the centre of every “good and beautiful” story, says screenwriter Clare Sera, formerly of Vancouver. Kevin Miller, a writer in nearby Abbotsford, explains, “The best stories hinge on a moral dilemma. Christianity has a lot to say about that and presents opportunities to work it out.”

As Christians we believe in “the ability to rise after being broken,” says Jack Gilbert of the Act One Writing for Film & Television Program in Hollywood. “The hero is the one who chooses grace, even though it’s sometimes reluctantly.”

All of us struggle with challenges that require God’s inter-

vention. It’s encouraging to hear that, even in Hollywood, there are Christians using film to subtly remind viewers of all faiths about God’s transforming love and power.

Also in this issue “Partnering to Change Canada’s Refugee Landscape” and “Small Town, Big Lessons” by Renée James highlight the impact of churches working together, as well as the challenges and transformation involved in such co-operation. Like so many outreach projects, both the giver and the receiver benefit. In this case the givers themselves have learned life-changing lessons.

More examples of how co-operation among Christians can make a huge difference are found in the articles about world hunger, “Will the Gift of the Land Keep Coming?” by Stuart Clark and “Giving Today for Needs Tomorrow” by John Longhurst.

Finally, don’t miss John Stackhouse’s column “Challenges Good for Theology” in which he clarifies, with his usual wit, how public questions about the nature of love, charity, death and the hereafter are good for Christianity in the long run. **BT**

The notion that people can change lies at the heart of the Christian gospel and should be at the centre of every “good and beautiful” story.

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

# Faith Today

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**Salt and Light**

*Re: Putting Christ Into Good Friday (Nov/Dec 2011)*

John Stackhouse has unintentionally illustrated a serious problem in too many of our churches. His summary of our responsibilities could be roughly paraphrased as (a) be politically correct in our multicultural society and (b) be theologically correct in our worship. What has become of salt and light? Where is the Great Commission?

Of course we are to treat everyone with respect, but we also have a responsibility to respectfully offer them the Good News. A quick survey of countries where the church is growing suggests that being out of step with the surrounding society may be an advantage. Perhaps we value our comfort too much – comfort in our society and comfort inside the security of our churches. If we moved

out of our comfort zone, we might face opposition, but also be more fruitful.

*George C. Bush  
Halifax, N.S.*

**Deconstructing Hell**

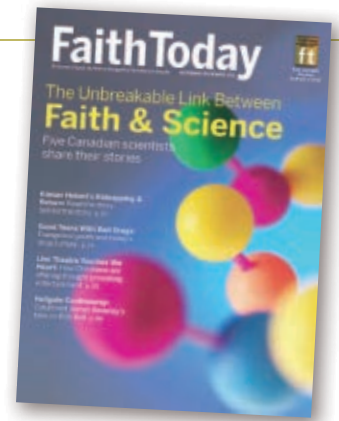
*Re: No Avoiding Hellgate Controversy (Nov/Dec 2011)*

Rob Bell's book *Love Wins* has raised two thorny issues among Evangelicals. Keeping them separated would help us carry on a more constructive dialogue than we are now having. Some Evangelicals are bothered by how Bell deconstructs the notion of unbelievers being consciously tormented in an eternal torture chamber called hell. Others are most disturbed by the suggestion Bell might be a universalist (believing that all people will eventually be saved).

For me, Bell's most valuable contribution comes with his deconstruction of the traditional

notion of hell. I have met many people in leadership positions in evangelical churches, denominations and educational institutions who concede privately that we need to rethink this doctrine. But almost invariably they play it safe by touting whatever line the institution they represent has mandated. Bell's book is helping to break this sad silence among evangelical leaders. On this score, if one finds fault with Bell's reasoning, we can fall back on some of the more heavyweight theologians who have done the same, like John R. W. Stott, N.T. Wright, and Michael Green. I think we can come to some kind of a new consensus on the traditional notion of hell if we participate in an honest, open and heart-felt dialogue.

I suspect we will keep disagreeing vigorously on the second issue of universalism. I



am willing to leave the answer to this second question within the mysteries of God.

But erasing the memory of the traditional ideas about hell will go a long way toward allowing us to actually present the gospel as "Good News" in our world today.

Instead of picking up on where Rob Bell might have failed, we would do better focusing on how he has helped contemporary Evangelicals move forward with a positive message for the world. As religion journalist Cathleen Fal-sani says, "God put Bell here

**Milestones**

**APPOINTED**

**Daniel D. Scott** as managing director of Save the Mothers, a Canadian charity founded by Dr. Jean Chamberlain Froese that works in Uganda to improve maternal health. Scott is a Presbyterian minister and an associate professor at Tyndale University College in Toronto.

**Fred Stewart** as executive director of The Renewal Fellowship, an evangelical group in the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Stewart has pastored in Hamilton and Pickering, Ont., and has worked in banking, consulting, computers and business. He succeeds Calvin Brown.

**LeAnne Thorfinnson** as head of the camp ministry at Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship of Canada, serving 10,000 children each summer and another 7,000 during the rest of the year. (In April 2011 Inter-Varsity accepted a gift of five Circle Square Ranches from Crossroads Christian Communications

Inc.) Her official title is vice-president, camping, Circle Square Ranches and Pioneer Camps. She holds MBA and MEd degrees and has worked in the banking industry and for Ontario Pioneer Camp.

**Michael Thompson** as general secretary of the Anglican Church of Canada. The Ven. Dr. Thompson is rector of St. Jude's Anglican Church in Oakville, Ont. He succeeds Michael Pollesel. Based in Toronto, the general secretary serves as chief operating officer for the church, co-ordinating communications and programs among departments and dioceses.

**LAUNCHED**

**Convivium: Faith in Our Common Life**, a new magazine from the Cardus Centre for Cultural Renewal, a Christian think-tank focused on societal health. Published six times per year, it seeks to be "an authoritative voice for the role of religion in Canadian society." Fr. Ray-

mond de Souza is editor-in-chief. Cardus has a head office in Hamilton, Ont.



**Doug Koop**

**RESIGNED**

**Doug Koop** as editorial director at *ChristianWeek* after helping to lead it since its founding 25 years ago. *ChristianWeek* is a national newspaper based in Winnipeg, currently

formatted on magazine-sized newsprint, published by the non-profit group Fellowship for Print Witness.

**Doug Pritchard** of Toronto as co-director of Christian Peacemaker Teams, a ministry which brings diplomacy and nonviolent direct action to conflict zones such as Colombia, the West Bank, Iraq and along the United States/Mexico border. Pritchard served as co-director since 2004 and as Canada co-ordinator since



## Letters to the editor

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to tell people how much God loves them. And that there is nothing they can do to make God love them more or less. That is the 'Good News' of Jesus."

*Jack Heppner*  
Steinbach, Man.

## faithbook

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1997. Co-directors now both work from the Chicago office, but a Canadian program co-ordinator and administrative co-ordinators continue in the Toronto office.

### RENAMED

**Edifide Christian Educators Association** is the new name for the Ontario Christian School Teachers Association. The new name combines the word "educator" and the Latin word for faith, "fide." The association, an affiliate of Christian Schools International, aims to equip and encourage a wide range of Christian teachers. It's based in Ancaster, Ont.

**Camino Global** will be the new name of CAM International of Canada, a ministry founded in 1890 as Central American Mission (the Canadian office incorporated in 1968 and is based in Toronto). *Camino* is a Spanish word that means "journey, path or way," and the new name alludes to the focus on Spanish-speakers worldwide (currently 300 staff in nine countries).

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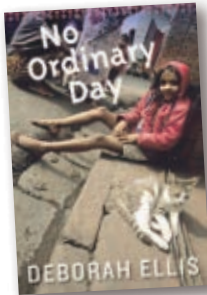
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## Book Boosts Leprosy Mission

**D**eborah Ellis writes award-winning novels for children that explore themes of courage in the midst of suffering. So far this Canadian author has donated more than a million dollars in royalties to organizations such as Unicef, Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan and Street Kids International.

So when she first contacted The Leprosy Mission Canada to let them know of her intention to write about leprosy, they were “thrilled,” says Glenn Waterman, director of development for the organization.

“Deborah Ellis has been a donor for quite some time,” Waterman explains. “She asked if we could put her in touch with some of our contacts in India. She went over to our hospital in Kolkata, did an immense number of interviews, and the rest is history.”



Ellis – winner of the Governor General’s Award and member of the Order of Ontario –

used her research to craft a youth novel about a young girl’s experience living with leprosy. *No Ordinary Day* is now included in the Mission’s gift catalogue. All royalties from book sales will go to the 119-year-old organization. The book will also be in the curriculum guide for the Ontario Catholic School system as a resource.

The word “leprosy” often brings images of Bible stories to mind. But the disease has not yet been fully eradicated. Thought to be infectious, it is curable through multi-drug therapy, but 90 per cent of leprosy’s victims live in developing countries where access to already scarce medical resources is limited.

According to an author profile in *Quill and Quire*, Ellis “attributes her generosity and her determination to confront the kinds of situations that most of us can barely watch on the news, in part, to simple curiosity.”

“I see courage as a choice that we make, and often we’re just not up to making it in the best way that we know how,” the magazine quotes the author. “So I’m interested in what drives people to decide to be courageous, and why sometimes we just can’t do it.” **FT** –Patricia Paddey



**Miguel Ortiz chats with Kevin Penner using Skype.**

PHOTO: ALAN C HOOD / WYCLIFFE CANADA

## Technology Brings Overseas Missions Closer

**B**ack in the 1980s it took three months for missionary Don Hekman’s letters to arrive from Chad to his sons’ boarding school in Kenya. Now colleagues can reach their offspring in seconds by cell, Skype or email.

“Thanks to technology the sense of isolation for overseas missionaries is really being cut down,” says Hekman, outgoing president of Wycliffe Bible Translators (WBT) of Canada, based in Calgary, Alta. Hekman’s observation is more than anecdotal. A study released

by WBT in October 2010 confirms new communication technologies are easing the emotional burdens of missionary work overseas.

The survey, which returned responses from more than 800 active WBT missionaries around the world, found roughly a third of them use email daily to communicate with family, friends and supporters back home. More than half said the ability to maintain an online connection to home extends longevity in the field.

Sharyn Thomson, a Canadian WBT

## New Group Resource on Poverty

**I**f you are looking for resources to help wrestle with the issue of poverty in Canada, a new booklet published by Citizens for Public Justice ([www.cpj.ca](http://www.cpj.ca)) can help. *Living Justice: A Gospel Response to Poverty* offers 12 guided reflections and group activities.

Contributing author Greg Paul, pastor and member of Sanctuary Ministries

in Toronto, Ont., hopes the book will provide Christians with a spiritual rationale for not only talking about poverty, but engaging with the marginalized in their own communities.

The 106-page paperback is a Canadian ecumenical effort with representatives from various Christian traditions: Anglican, Evangelical,

## Calgary's HymnTyme Winds Down

linguistics consultant working in Burkina Faso, remembers 15 years ago when a call to her mother in Vancouver required a drive to the city. At \$2.50 a minute phone calls were an occasional treat. Now, with Skype costing less than two cents a minute, Thomson calls her mother from her rural home as often as she likes. "Knowing she can reach me gives my mother real peace of mind," Thomson says. "I feel better too – I'm less cut off. It's made the years I've been on my own in the village much easier."

Hekman points out technology also extends missionaries' time on the field by giving them ready access to medical advice and even counselling services. It has also enriched relations with supporters as missionaries move beyond the familiar newsletter and explore the possibilities of Facebook, blogs and Twitter. "I've even seen cases where interviews with missionaries happen live during Sunday morning worship at a supporting church, with the missionary projected on the screen," says Hekman.

Of course, all of these benefits depend on having reliable Internet access, something that was far from certain a few years ago. The survey results give heartening evidence that even this is improving. Nearly 70 per cent of those surveyed had more than 40 hours per week of Internet access while in the field. "Member care is a huge issue for all missionary agencies," says Hekman. With new technology this issue is becoming much more manageable. **FT**

–Stephanie Douglas



PHOTO: TYLER SIMPSON

**A**fter 10 years of singing "for the glory of God, and to worship, enrich and encourage people," Calgary's popular hymn singing time is winding down. "We're probably going to move to three times a year," says HymnTyme founder Paul Ungless. "We're only getting about 700 people out now."

For a decade the unique Calgary event has drawn up to 1,200 people, one evening a month, seven months a year. But recently the crowds have begun to thin. "Because it's mostly seniors [who come], it's hard for some of them to get out at night or to drive in the bad weather," says Ungless, 75.

Rotating venues among the city's larger churches, HymnTyme began in answer to a deep-felt need. With many churches and denominations moving away from singing traditional hymns and towards predominantly contemporary choruses and worship songs on Sunday mornings, the older demographic found they missed the music

**When we started, we had no idea it was going to become anything like it did: Paul Ungless.**

of their youth.

Featuring a high-calibre, 12-piece band (trumpets, sax, trombone, piano, drums, bass guitar and lead guitar) and a female trio, each HymnTyme runs from 5:30 p.m. until almost 8:00 and includes at least 12 hymns, a 15-minute talk by a layperson, and guest appearances by solo artists and other groups.

"When we started, we had no idea it was going to become anything like it did," says Ungless. The first few meetings attracted just over a hundred people. "When we got to 300, we were very enthused and encouraged." The evening runs on volunteer efforts. Admission is free. An offering is taken, and Ungless says they've managed to more than cover their costs, donating some \$10,000 to charitable organizations throughout HymnTyme's history.

The event's success has certainly been due in no small part to Ungless' own dedication. According to [hymntyme.com](http://hymntyme.com) their mission has been lofty, but meaningful. "We envision the people of Calgary and surrounding areas meeting together regularly, singing praises to God, being blessed by a worship band, special musicians and testimonies. As a result they will creatively contribute to their churches and communities, living lives of purpose and growing meaningful relationships that will reach their peers with the gospel of Jesus Christ."

"It's been a wonderful 10 years," concedes Ungless. "When the people come to you and say, 'Please don't quit. We just love it,' you know it's been good." **FT**

–Patricia Paddey

Roman Catholic, Christian Reformed, Lutheran, Mennonite, Presbyterian and United Church.

It follows a simple format throughout: a brief Scripture passage followed by a reflection and discussion questions; activities to help groups apply the biblical teaching to their own context; and finally a closing prayer. Each offering is about six pages but could easily fill a two-hour meeting.

The book defines poverty in its broadest terms, speaking not only of material or physical poverty but also about its emotional, spiritual and communal counterparts. Although the latter are not strictly defined by social or economic conditions – you can be emotionally poor and middle class – there is no question the book focuses on the challenges facing the economically disadvantaged.

The strength of the book lies in the activities that come after each reflection.

While there are many excellent books on poverty and the gospel, this is one of the few that suggest ways Christians can creatively and immediately apply what they have learned to their own neighbourhood. The book costs \$13.25 including shipping and handling, and can be ordered through the CPJ website. **FT** –Stephanie Douglas

# Bible Society Launches New App

Just because the fellow in the next pew is tapping away on his mobile device during Sunday service, it doesn't mean he's being inattentive to worship. He could be reading his Bible.

One of the newest Bible apps comes courtesy the Canadian Bible Society (CBS) and Faith Comes by Hearing.

The Canadian Bible Society App, a free program for smartphones and other mobile devices, presents Scripture in text and audio formats in either English Standard or King James Versions. The audio version comes dramatized or non-dramatized.

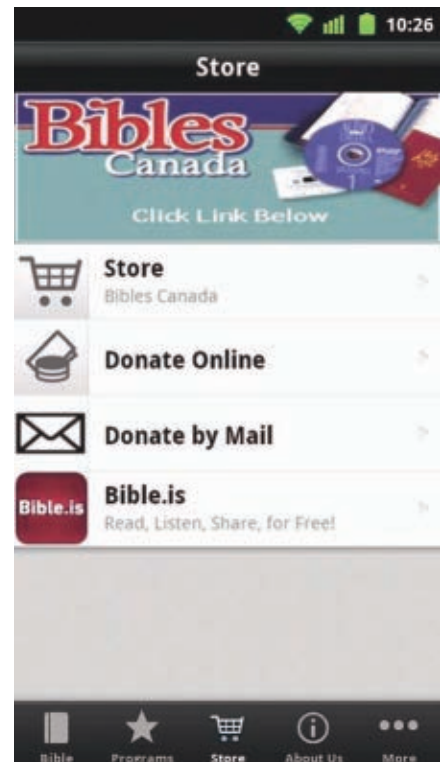
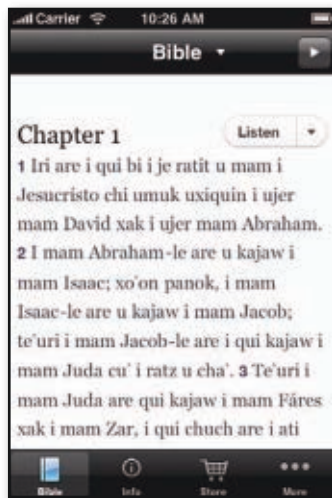
"There are several Bible apps out there,"

says Edna Rabago, e-philanthropy and social networking co-ordinator for the CBS, "but the Canadian Bible Society's is a Bible engagement tool." The app includes

a daily Bible reading guide, a list of "God's promises" and information on "where to look in the Bible" for help in meeting various life circumstances. Plus the app also includes "inspiring stories of lives that have been changed by God's Word," says a Society news release.

At the tap of a finger the app connects users with the Society's Facebook and Twitter feeds, web resources, and their online store [biblescanada.com](http://biblescanada.com), which features more than a hundred translations of the Bible in various formats. The Society reported hundreds of downloads of the app even before it had officially launched.

Available for the iPhone, iPod Touch, iPad or Android phones, the app is just another example of what you can expect



to see more of from the Society in future, says Giorgio Gori, director of strategic services for CBS.

"As we move more and more into the digital world, these are the kinds of things that we'll be bringing forward," Gori explains. "It's also an example of us working through partners. Both the digital [development] and working with partnerships – you'll see more of those things in the days ahead." **FT** –Patricia Paddey

## Urban Covenant Aims to be "Christian United Way"

When Jusep Sim agreed to be a member of the worship team for the Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization in Cape Town, South Africa, last year, he could not have imagined his participation would lead to a career change. One speaker in particular made a huge impression on him.

"Dr. Timothy Keller spent the 12-14 minutes he had on stage talking about the importance of cities," Sim remembers, "and how the world is migrating to them. He said the Church needs to make an impact in cities."

Returning to his Toronto home Sim

couldn't shake the notion God was calling him to a new thing. With a background in fundraising he recognized the invaluable support the United Way provides to a multitude of civic charitable organizations.

Unfortunately, "Most overtly Christian organizations don't fit with the United Way of Toronto," he says, in part due to its rules on fundraising and hiring policies.

Sim resigned from his job and became the volunteer founder and chair of Urban Covenant, a public foundation to promote, advocate for, and provide resources to Christian charitable organ-

izations that work in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

"The mission field has changed," explains Sim. "Never before in history has 'go ye into all the world' required only a bus pass. It's not a mistake that God is bringing the nations to our country – and that they're migrating to our urban centres. There is an amazing harvest right on our doorstep. We have to embrace it."

Urban Covenant received registered charitable status in April and has partnered with five other charities: Yonge Street Mission, Toronto City Mission, The Scott Mission, Matthew House and the

# Children Learn True Worth Through Recycled Art

**R**e:create, a new arts program in Bobcaygeon, Ont., uses recycled materials to teach unchurched children about their potential in Christ. For Youth for Christ field worker Melissa Shepski, program founder, art is a form of worship – something she hopes to reveal to children through the 10-week program starting in January.

“When my hands are busy creating, my head has a chance to focus on what God wants to tell me, whether it’s a powerful word or a simple ‘I love you,’” says the seamstress and mother of two.

The concept behind Re:create was formed when Shepski helped lead an arts camp for kids aged 6-12. “I ended up picking projects that were mostly made out of recycled items,” says the 27 year old. “I didn’t think much about it as I usually create art out of old stuff.”

The idea for a program grew that would teach its participants what it means to be new creations in the eyes of God. “My vision is simply this,” says Shepski. “To inspire kids to think outside the box, to teach them to see objects in a new light, and to look at things not as they are, but for what they could be – both in

art and in life.”

She intends to do this by taking old scraps of fabric, tar paper, used juice boxes, macaroni and washed-out soup cans, and turning them into creative projects. Fabric flowers, tar paper paintings and juice-box bags are a few of the anticipated

outcomes. Assisted by up to six volunteers



PHOTO: MELISSA SHEPSKI

**A participant shows off one of his artistic creations.**

Shepski will also incorporate a simple Bible lesson to help the children realize their worth in Christ. “I want to help them start to understand their full God-given potential,” she explains.

“As we take time to make ‘new life’ in our art, I hope to share with them that God wants to do the same in their lives.” **FT**

–Emily Wierenga

## Peace Officers Find Fellowship

**F**or nearly 30 years the Fellowship of Christian Peace Officers–Canada (FCPO) has sought to minister to peace officers in their daily work and times of crisis, and help them to minister to those around them. In late August roughly 50 of the group’s nationwide membership of approximately 1,200 gathered in Bridgewater, N.S., for “Faith of Our Fathers,” their national conference and convention.

“The conference went fantastically,” reports Special Constable John Allen, the group’s Maritime regional representative. “We had a great representation from all across the country, including for the first time from the high North, and we also had some of our brothers up from our sister association in the United States, which was unexpected and most welcome.”

The conference brought together many different speakers and leaders to guide the participants through seminars on leadership within their trade, and round-table discussions on Christian principle-based ethics in law enforcement and government administration.

The keynote speaker was Chief Superintendent Ron Mostrey, regional human resources officer for the RCMP in Ottawa, who spoke on his walk with Christ while navigating the trials and tribulations that face career peace officers. He described the early idealistic days as a new recruit trying to change the world, as well as the portion of his career spent trying to prevent the world from changing him.

The conference provided peace officers of all ranks and roles spiritual and practical tools to help them in their often challenging vocation, but it was also a time of fellowship and celebration.

“And then, of course,” adds Allen with a laugh, “there was the large quantity of food, more food and even more food.”

The first FCPO ministry was established in the early 1970s by members of the Los Angeles Police Department, and in 1983 several interested Canadian individuals banded together after discussion with members of FCPO-USA to form the Canadian group, based in Tillsonburg, Ont.

The ministries of FCPO vary from chaplaincy programs to the operation of a cross-country helpline called Ears Across Canada, providing peace officers in need “someone who understands the issues in the life of a peace officer, willing to listen, willing to pray with [them] and offer assistance where possible,” according to the organization’s website. **FT**

–Ryan Paulsen

Jesus Network. A diverse board is in place and has held its first fundraising event, a public concert featuring Kelita, Marlene O’Neill, Hiram Joseph and others.

Sim estimates the November 5 launch event attracted 700 attendees and raised about \$40,000 from a free-will offering, a far cry from the \$150,000 they had hoped to raise, and which will just offset expenses to date.

While it could be some time before Urban Covenant’s partner agencies see substantial financial support, Sim is optimistic. “No one charity and no one church can do it alone,” he says. “We need to continue to network, to build relationships and to keep pressing on.” **FT**

–Patricia Paddey



## Don't Turn Them Away

Caring for vulnerable children and youth is our shared responsibility.

One after another they took their place as witnesses in the Ontario hearing room, to tell their story. Some were still in government care, youth for whom the Ontario government has not found a permanent home. Others appearing that day had recently “aged out” of the system and were on their own. Across Canada they number in the tens of thousands.

This crisp December morning was not the usual sort of legislative hearing. The chair, the researcher and those who asked questions of the witnesses were themselves youth who were about to leave care or who had recently left government care.

Also around the hearing room table were invited guests including government ministers and deputy ministers, provincial legislators and staff whose work touches the lives of youth in care.

Most witnesses had been moved from one foster home or group home to another (for one it was 16 times) and have felt the bullying that often takes place in schools because they are in care.

For these youth their 18th birthday does not entail the usual celebration – it's the day they are told to pack their suitcase and leave. Estimates suggest 30 to 50 per cent will end up homeless. Those who are able remain in school, despite the transitions and disappointments. They may continue to receive some support until they reach 21 – around the time they are midway through college or university – when they too will be on their own.

As I listened, the story of Jesus telling the disciples not to turn the children away kept coming to mind. To those in the hearing room, it looks like our doors are closed and

locked, and we are either ignorant of their situation or choosing indifference.

Remarkably, the youth speaking were not angry. They were constructive. The changes they were pleading for would not benefit them directly, and they knew it. As one said, they were there for their younger sisters and brothers, all the other children in government care.

I also found myself thinking, “This is not how I would treat my kids,” while at the same time affirming that these are my kids. They are *Canada's* kids, *our* kids.

Who will be there to see them graduate? Where can they go home for the weekend? To whom can they turn for advice, to process an event or get a hug? Where will they wake up on Christmas morning?

Circumstances beyond their control have deprived them of a family, and the government has become their legal parent. While this is necessary, it is not and was never intended to be a permanent plan for any child. The Children's Aid Society in Toronto, the first in Canada, was originally developed to look after children in need in their communities, not by creating institutions but by finding permanent homes.

They are not “those kids.” They are our kids. So we need to pray about what we or our churches can do. Let's ask the question about how our family and church community can connect with our local children's services agency, how we can engage with children and youth in government care and their workers. Let's be prepared to be enriched as we offer of ourselves to them – as Jesus did for us all.

For more information about how you can get involved and how your church can hold an Adoption Sunday, see the EFC's ASK IT (Adoption Sunday KIT) website at [adoptionsunday.com](http://adoptionsunday.com). **FT**

It looks like our doors are closed and locked, and we are either ignorant of their situation or choosing indifference.



### 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](http://theEFC.ca).

**BRUCE J. CLEMENGER** is president of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. Read more of his columns at [theEFC.ca/clemenger](http://theEFC.ca/clemenger).

## Anti-trafficking Action

The EFC recently recommended the Federal Government change Canadian laws related to prostitution and human trafficking.

Canada must work “not just to help victims of trafficking and exploitation, but to empower them to truly break free of the chains that have constrained them,” explains Julia Beazley, EFC policy analyst.

The EFC released its recommendations in a report entitled *Seeking Justice, Rescuing the Enslaved: Recommendations for a National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking*. The 32-page report discusses “the realities of human trafficking for forced labour and sexual exploitation in Canada,” says Beazley. The discussion is especially important now that Canada’s prostitution laws are being challenged in the courts.

The report was submitted in a November consultation held by the Department of Public Safety. Free copies can be downloaded at [theEFC.ca/HTseekingjustice](http://theEFC.ca/HTseekingjustice).

## Support for Egypt’s Christians

The EFC’s Religious Liberty Commission issued a prayer alert in November regarding Egypt’s early election results. Election observers predict the next government will be an Islamic, shariah law-based body, leaving Christians to wonder about their safety and future in Egypt. Read more at [theEFC.ca/alerts](http://theEFC.ca/alerts).

## Interfaith Breakfast

EFC Vice-President Don Hutchinson and staff from the EFC’s Centre for Faith and Public Life attended the third annual National Interfaith Breakfast on Parliament Hill in November, along with numerous other Christian leaders. Former MP Mario Silva addressed the topic of “Ending Religious Intolerance and Persecution” on the 30th anniversary of the United Nations *Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief*.

## Witness in a Multi-religious World

EFC President Bruce J. Clemenger and Vice-President Aileen Van Ginkel participated in a November symposium in Toronto on the groundbreaking document entitled *Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World*. This document’s recommendations for conduct in mission and witness are supported by the World Evangelical Alliance, the World Council of Churches and the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue (representing the Vatican). All three groups signed the document in June. Read more at [theEFC.ca/christianwitness](http://theEFC.ca/christianwitness).

## Informing MPs on Persecution

EFC Vice-President Don Hutchinson, chair of the EFC Religious Liberty Commission, addressed the House of

Commons Subcommittee on International Human Rights in November, in conjunction with their study on the persecution of Christians in Egypt, Iraq and Iran. The request to appear came days after Canadian Brian Stiller, global ambassador for the World Evangelical Alliance, had arrived in Egypt, facilitating current “on the ground” testimony for the presentation – an “evidence of God’s providence,” says Hutchinson. Read more from Brian Stiller’s report from Egypt in the *Global Village* column elsewhere in this issue of *Faith Today*.

## Initial Comments on Polygamy Decision

EFC Vice-President Don Hutchinson shares initial comments on the B.C. Supreme Court’s 357-page decision in the reference to Canada’s polygamy law in his blog “Women and Children First: Polygamy Remains Illegal in Canada,” dated Nov. 23 at [theEFC.ca/activateCFPL](http://theEFC.ca/activateCFPL).

## Affiliate Presidents Gather

The EFC held its annual gathering of the heads of EFC affiliate institutions in Vancouver in late October. EFC speakers included President Bruce J. Clemenger, Vice-Presidents Aileen Van Ginkel and Don Hutchinson, and Director of Research Rick Hiemstra. In the morning current research on the Church in Canada was presented with guest Dr. Michael Wilkinson of Trinity Western University. The afternoon featured a presentation by the EFC’s Don Hutchinson on religious freedom and another on the perception of Evangelicals by Doug Todd, a journalist with the *Vancouver Sun*. In the evening a forthcoming EFC video on adoption was previewed, and Clemenger spoke on the “Evangelical Difference.”

## Ontario Youth Care

EFC President Bruce J. Clemenger attended Youth Care Hearings in November sponsored by Ontario’s Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth. The hearings were hosted by youth who will soon, or have recently, aged out of government care and for whom no permanent home was found. Such youth number in the tens of thousands across Canada. It is estimated more than 40 per cent become homeless. The report of the hearings will be released in the spring.

## Young Adult Research

Aileen Van Ginkel, EFC Vice-President of ministry services, participated in a November meeting of the Youth and Young Adult Ministry Roundtable, a network that operates on the EFC platform. The meeting followed the Canadian Youth Workers Convention in Vancouver. A key discussion point was the research initiated by the roundtable on the ongoing spiritual health of young adults who have been “raised Christian.” 



# Rethinking Discipleship

By Bruce J. Clemenger

We live in a culture that seeks to separate belief from expression, but Christian discipleship calls us to integrated lives of witness to the gospel.

**T**he most significant stumbling block to the Church in Canada has been and continues to be the influence of secularism. Secularism presumes that:

- life can be divided between inward belief and outward action
- Christianity is a personal faith that can be separated from the rest of our lives
- being a Christian is evidenced by a series of theological confessions and not a life of discipleship
- the gospel is only about personal salvation and does not also include the reconciliation of all of creation

These widespread presumptions are the fruit of a prevailing secularist condition with its accompanying confessions within which we live.

The evangel, the confession of salvation through belief in Jesus and the affirmation of the Lordship of Christ manifest in a life of discipleship, stands in radical opposition to this value system, this ethos.

Even the word “ethos” is not adequate to identify this all-encompassing spirit of the age. Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor calls it secularity. Part of our difficulty is that we don’t entirely understand the transition away from Christendom because we are still immersed in the shift. If you read reports about Canada’s centennial celebrations in 1967, you’ll read about Scripture readings and rededicating the nation to God. If done today, imagine the reaction.

Today we live in post-Christendom Canada, and in this emerging ethos the animating doctrines and the structures and institutions through which culture is expressed are being re-oriented and recast. The ethos of our society confesses the pre-eminence of individual autonomy and challenges any presumed overarching claims to truth or final purpose.

I recently returned from Indonesia, the most populous Muslim nation in the world. I attended the Global Christian

Forum that was held in a predominantly Christian province of that vast country. The delegates to the forum were welcomed by the governor and the Indonesian government official responsible for Christian affairs. Both are Christians and welcomed us all as brothers and sisters in Christ, both citing John 17 and praying that our meetings would bear fruit. (In Canada the Prime Minister is critiqued for simply saying “God bless Canada.”)

Are there religious tensions in Indonesia? Yes. Does the predominance of Islam undermine the integrity of the Church? Certainly not in the way that secularity has permeated Christianity in the West. While

some expressions of this ethos are external (from public school curricula to the image of celebrity), in its cultural expression it is like leaven that permeates and works within to affect transformation.

In some countries Christians are forbidden to evangelize. In Canada an increasing number of Christians don’t think we should evangelize. In some countries Christians are forbidden to gather. In Canada many Christians believe gathering is not essential or even necessary. (For those who do attend church, the average age is increasing. And the percentage of children and youth who leave the church by the time they are in their early 20s is staggering.) In some cultures the confession of Christian faith without social expression is inconceivable. In Canada the separation is being encouraged.

A reconsideration of discipleship is critical for all of us who live in this ethos and is, perhaps, an entry point by which we can examine the doctrines nurtured by our culture. The Christian mission, as articulated at the recent Lausanne Con-

gress, is characterized by “our love for the whole gospel, our love for the whole Church, our love for the whole world.”

That is an all-encompassing response to the gospel. It’s also a description of what it means to be a disciple.

In some evangelism and discipleship courses I have attended, evangelism was about how to introduce a person to Jesus.

Discipleship was a program of Bible study that would bring a new believer to the place of being able to introduce another to Jesus.

While this is a critical part of discipleship, in itself it is a very narrow and a truncated understanding consistent with the narrowing

of the expression of our faith.

At the EFC we have begun using the phrase “be-living the gospel” to describe the integrated lives we are called to live: belief and practice, word and deed, proclamation and demonstration. The evidence of our faith is how we live: the evangel difference. This is discipleship.

When some disciples of John the Baptist came to Jesus to ask Him if He was the chosen one, He told them to tell John what He was doing. That was the evidence of who He was.

It is time we take an old word that is so familiar, discipleship, and think afresh what it means and how it is manifest in our secular environment. **FT**

At the EFC we have begun using the phrase “be-living the gospel” to describe the integrated lives we are called to live

**BRUCE J. CLEMENGER** is president of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC). His summation of the Hinge Conference (November 2010), in which he also addresses our transition to a post-Christendom context, is available free in video or audio formats at [theEFC.ca/hinge](http://theEFC.ca/hinge) sessions, along with a variety of other resources.



# The Challenge of Poverty in Canada

By Julia Beazley

## What did Jesus mean when He said the poor would always be among us?

Journalists, politicians and concerned Canadians have all recently struggled to learn the proper pronunciation of Attawapiskat, and to comprehend the deplorable conditions of this northern Ontario community suddenly thrust into the national spotlight.

The severe poverty and critical needs for health, housing and sanitation are more reminiscent of conditions seen in the developing world a decade ago than anything we imagine our fellow Canadians facing at the start of a long, cold, 21st-century winter.

The people of Attawapiskat are not the only Canadians lacking the most basic needs of human life. What has been declared a state of emergency is, sadly, indicative of conditions in other First Nations communities across Canada – and for too many other Canadians living on the streets. Several hundred thousand Canadians live without homes, and increasing numbers are at risk of finding themselves homeless.

Jesus said in Matthew 26:11 the poor would always be among us. What does that mean for us today?

Last spring the EFC participated in a multifaith forum on faith and poverty. This Parliament Hill event was one of several responses to a *Federal Poverty Reduction Plan* for Canada, produced by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources (HUMA). The multifaith forum allowed us, along with representatives from other faiths, to speak to government and together share in the call for collective action to address poverty in Canada.

Members of Parliament from all parties worked collaboratively on the HUMA report, making 58 recommendations for how the Federal Government could act to reduce poverty in Canada. Foremost was that the Federal Government take a strong, long-term leadership role to address poverty in our nation. An earlier

report from a Senate committee, titled *In From the Margins*, had drawn similar conclusions.

Regrettably, the government response to the HUMA report failed to directly address the recommendations. There has been little parliamentary movement with respect to a poverty reduction plan or housing strategy. Apart from a handful of private member's bills, Canada's Federal Government has displayed a reluctance to act.

To be clear, the Federal Government is not silent on poverty. There are much-needed and essential funds being delivered to support housing initiatives, shelters and so on. But it's time to move beyond what has been a piecemeal approach, one which is proving inefficient and insufficient. The Federal Government alone has the political gathering power to initiate a co-ordinated national action plan to deal with poverty and homelessness in cities, big and small, and on First Nations' reserves from coast to coast to coast.

But is the challenge of poverty just for government response? Jesus' words were for both church and government. Each has a unique responsibility and role to play in meeting the needs of vulnerable Canadians, and in finding solutions to poverty and homelessness. The role of each is so critical – the failure of either will mean the crisis in Canada will continue to worsen. And, the failure of one does not excuse responsibility on the part of the other.

At the same multifaith forum on poverty, Greg Paul, author of several books on poverty and executive director of



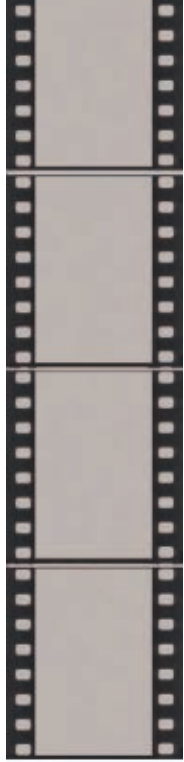
Julia Beazley

Sanctuary Ministries of Toronto, gave a talk entitled "Who is at the Centre?" He spoke from Matthew 26 and challenged us to reconsider Christ's words about having the poor always among us.

What if Christ's proclamation was not a statement of the futility of seeking to eliminate poverty, but rather a vision for what the church is meant to be? What if Jesus said the poor will always be among us because they belong in our midst, at the very centre of our church communities? What if welcoming, including, and sharing with those who are poor and excluded is to be central to who we are as the people of God?

While Christmastime is typically a season marked by generosity towards people in our communities who are living in poverty, what is our role when the decorations are put away and the trees taken down? When the bleak, cold days of January and February set in, are they still among us? Are we among them? **FT**

**JULIA BEAZLEY** is policy analyst on Canadian and international poverty at the EFC's Centre for Faith and Public Policy based in Ottawa. For resources and ideas on poverty in Canada, visit [theEFC.ca/povertyresources](http://theEFC.ca/povertyresources).



# Writing for Hollywood

How Canadians in the film industry bring their best to the big screen. **By Alex Newman**

Obviously, God likes a bit of good drama. Thumb through the Bible and you'll encounter His larger-than-life characters Joshua, Moses, Jezebel and Mary Magdalene. And the situations they find themselves in – people struck dead for lying, turned into pillars of salt for a bit of nostalgia, bushes set on fire to proclaim God's arrival. Those stories of conflict, action, betrayal, jealousy, loss, redemption, forgiveness and murder would eclipse most Hollywood blockbusters.

With such a God – who authored the full range of human emotion after all – it's no wonder so many committed Canadian Christians feel equipped to work in Tinseltown. As screenwriter Clare Sera, a Vancouver transplant now living in Los Angeles, puts it, "God exaggerates all over the place. Pluck out your eye, He says, because His heart feels that – not because He really wants us to slice the cornea. God is such a beautiful, passionate artist."

The notion that people can – and often do – change lies at the heart of the Christian gospel and should be at the centre of every "good and beautiful film," Sera says. At virtually every story meeting she attends, one question is always asked: "What's the universal theme, the moral? It's a human question, and they all want it answered."

For Sera the big human question is one of identity, a theme that figures largely in her mostly comic writing – a 20-year career that includes television and film (*Curious George*) for a variety of producers (Walden, Warner Bros. and Paramount). "Knowing who you are, or discovering it along the way, is the first step toward [a character's] change and redemption," says Sera. "It's the same with faith."

But the story doesn't have to be written by a Christian, she adds. "Some of the most beautiful grace-filled movies

have been done by non-believers. It is possible for a human to actually explore His grace whether it's in His name or not."

It also takes more than faith to be a screenwriter. No matter how well intentioned, you need to be able to write and write well. And to do that you must understand what drives a story. The best stories, says Abbotsford writer Kevin Miller, "hinge on a moral dilemma that opens up for the character in the beginning. Obviously Christianity has a lot to say about that, and presents opportunities to work it out [because] every story is really a quest for meaning."

Getting there requires meeting conflict, and obstacles, and making difficult choices. A story without any choices, or easy choices, says Miller, "is a bad script, and bad writing." Too often Christians are tempted to write about choices that automatically result in doing "the right thing, because we can't model the wrong thing. If you show that side of life, it might lead someone into temptation."

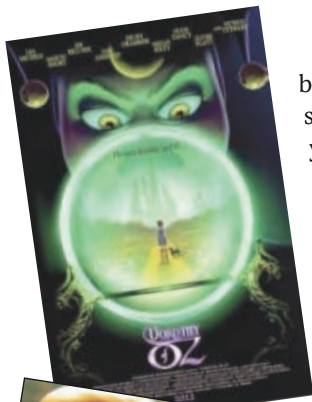
It's a fine line to walk, though. Cheryl McKay, a Hollywood-based screenwriter (with dual American-Canadian citizenship) who tends to write more blatantly Christian themes, says she won't write something "that will cause an actor to sin [in the role], but I want sin to be addressed for what it is and not glorified."

McKay prefers to approach scriptwriting from a more positive angle, by exploring themes that inspire and show how to change or heal the human heart. She says movies are a natural outlet for Christians, given that "Jesus spoke through parables. Stories are powerful because a character takes a journey and we can go through it with them."

One of McKay's scripts was adapted from Jim Stovall's

**Karen Pascal (far right) on location with the crew of *Journey to Christmas*, a four-part TV documentary series, in Israel.**





book *The Ultimate Gift*, which chronicles the series of character-building tests a spoiled young rich man must undergo to inherit from his grandfather's estate. Ranging from greed to selflessness, superficiality to depth, isolation to friendship, the story whisks you along on the character's emotional rollercoaster. The film was so effective it prompted many viewers to become organ donors, but McKay says the starting point was always story, never message.

While Miller's films may be grittier than McKay's – *Expelled* (a documentary about science and faith and featuring Ben Stein), *Hellbound?* (which promises to turn Hell on its head) and *Spoiled* (about our dependence on oil) – he too believes the artist's job "is to dig deep to find out what the story's about ... message should be discovered, not imposed."

Getting hung up on delivering a message – as opposed to telling a story of human behaviour – frequently trips up Christians who want to write, Miller finds. "Evangelicals have always been creative in sharing the gospel, but they've also reduced art to a tool and a means to an end."

And though he admits there's been a lot of great Christian writing, "The biggest killers of creativity are fear and self-consciousness." Christians should be able and willing to grapple with the big life issues, he says, something filmmakers like American P.T. Anderson do regularly. His film *Magnolia*, for example, is a complicated tale of forgiveness and reconciliation in shattered lives. The fact Anderson is not a Christian doesn't matter because "If people can come away with meaning or insight into life, the storyteller has accomplished his goals."

Although a great film with themes of grace and redemption can be written by non-believers, Christians have the potential to be the greatest screenwriters, according to Jack Gilbert, who oversees the Act One Writing for Film & Television Program.

For one thing Christians believe in the ability to rise after being broken. "Every person at some point is offered grace," Gilbert explains. "The hero is the one who chooses grace, even though it's sometimes reluctantly. [Grace] is often not an easy choice, involving complexity, and a struggle to figure things out."

For another, Christians tend to "ask different questions than others," says Gilbert, who not only has a theol-

ogy degree, but ran – and continues to consult with – the prestigious Warner Bros. Writers' Workshop. "Every story involves a question. If it can be answered too easily, it's probably not a good story."

And finally there's the notion of purpose. Christians understand life is not random chaos, Gilbert says, and the best writers, regardless of faith, understand this. One of his students in a 2004 Act One writers' course, Rob Kirbyson, grapples with this issue in his scripts. The Winnipeg writer tells how in junior high school he searched for meaning and purpose after his father died. For years he railed against Christianity holding the answer, but eventually concluded, "All humanity craves to believe in some-

thing. This Christianity was the closest thing to understanding who that could be."

Kirbyson maintains, in fact, that all writing comes from deeply held beliefs,

and there is "no way" to separate faith from writing. The themes important to him before becoming a Christian have remained. Faith has refined them. "Every life has meaning and purpose, which is very Capraesque, but it's ultimately because we all need to know God."

That message rings loud and clear in *Snowmen*, Kirbyson's first feature film, produced in 2010 and released to wide acclaim in several film festivals and a limited theatre run. The film is riveting because of the storyline: three schoolboys trying to set a Guinness World Record to build the most snowmen. The imagery is drawn from Kirbyson's Winnipeg childhood – lots of snow, someone sick. But the story focuses mostly on one child, bald from chemo, who is convinced his parents have given up on his survival. He is determined to never be forgotten. Initially enlisting the help of friends to complete this one outstanding act, the boy is ultimately able to draw in the entire community.

For Karen Pascal, an award-winning documentary filmmaker, faith parlays into social justice themes, but always aims to "engage with pathos and comedy, and compelling characters – and the story should tell itself."

From *Forgive Us Our Debts* (about Third World debt) and *Cops Don't Cry* (the toll of a policeman's job) to *Shadows and Lives* (about eating disorders) and a series on C.S. Lewis, the Markham, Ont., filmmaker has produced docs for Vision, Global, CBC, W Network, and now Christian broadcaster Crossroads Communications.

Because documentaries trade in facts it's tempting to impose a message, especially since the producer/writer can control how the story unfolds. They include what they want, and then "connect the dots to give the story an arc."

Despite the documentary form's "incredible power to persuade and impact," Pascal is careful not to evangelize. Her recent documentary, *Journey to Christmas*, is a case

**“The artist’s job is to dig deep to find out what the story’s about.”**



**Some of the movies involving Christian writers or filmmakers: *Dorothy of Oz* (2012, Clare Sera); *The Ultimate Gift* (Cheryl McKay); and *Snowmen* (Robert Kirbyson).**

in point. Produced for Crossroads Communications Pascal could easily have featured committed Christians exploring the roots of Christmas through archaeology in Israel. Instead she chose to profile five people at various stages of faith – one Jewish, one a Christian-become-agnostic, another in complete doubt about Christianity. By encouraging their questioning Pascal feels she was able to create a “very honest film.”

This theme of honesty or truth is a common one for Christian writers. Miller, for example, contends that truth includes writing about the dark side of life. “We simply can’t live as if evil, destruction and horror don’t exist. In [Philippians 4:8] the first thing the Apostle Paul urges his readers to dwell on is whatever is true. The truth includes things that are noble, pure, lovely. But it also includes things that are anything but lovely.”

His feature film *After*, for example, is a gritty psychological thriller – a cautionary tale in fact – that “explains one man’s attempt to come to terms with his life at the very moment of his ill-timed death.” Set in modern times beneath the city of Moscow in the Byzantine passages of the underground sewer systems, the film is challenging. And does not have a happy ending.

Miller cautions, though, about the temptation to deal in “myths of redemptive violence. This includes clinging to the image of a vengeful God, a God who mirrors and relishes our own violence. Such art doesn’t fulfill its prophetic function by holding up a mirror to society and showing us who we really are,” he says.

Nor does he advocate preaching. “Plenty of films like *There Will Be Blood*, *500 Days of Summer*, *A History of Violence* and *Black Swan* reveal something dark in the heart of human-kind – and some of them even suggest a way out. I’d like to see more art from Christians that takes this approach,” says Miller.

Clare Sera believes there’s yet another reason why Christians should be in Hollywood: “It’s a trap to think I will write the movie which will save the world, rather than being fully

human and letting people see how that looks through me, through my frustrations, the ups and downs, how hard it is to keep relationships going and strong. So often I’ve been told I’m a light for people who don’t know what the light is. And that’s why we need Christians out here.” **BT**



PHOTO: JAMES O'KEEFFE



PHOTO: FRED HAYES



PHOTO: VINCENT WALLACE

**Clockwise from top: Clare Sera wrote and directed a short film called *Pie 'n Burger* starring Ashley Johnson; Cheryl McKay; child star Bobby Coleman receives performance notes from Robert Kirbyson on the set of *Snowmen*.**

**ALEX NEWMAN** of Toronto is a senior writer at *FaithToday*.

# Partnering to Help

The need is great, and Canada's churches can make a difference.

By Renée James

**B**y the time the *Sun Sea* docked near Victoria, B.C., in August 2010, James Grunau had already emailed as many different church groups as he knew, asking for help. Grunau is the executive director of Journey Home Community, an agency that offers housing, resettlement assistance and relational support to asylum seekers or refugee claimants in the Greater Vancouver area – on average, one family per month. Aboard the *Sun Sea* were 492 potential refugees from Sri Lanka, mostly Tamils. Many Canadians already had negative attitudes toward these refugees in response to early national media coverage. Journey Home Community needed to accommodate 10 families – all at once. “How were we going to do it?” Grunau recalls.

Grunau also serves as Canada's facilitator at the Refugee Highway Partnership, an international network that seeks to mobilize the worldwide church to bring hope and provide refuge for forcibly displaced people around the world. From that chair he understands the necessity for partner-

ships that strengthen refugee ministries such as Journey Home Community and partnerships that equip churches to serve refugees. He sent the emails and waited.

A pastor's wife responded. A Tamil, she had come to Canada in the 1980s as a fast-tracked new Canadian, escaping the Sri Lankan riots of that day. She said yes to Grunau's plea for help. “She became the fireball recruiter for us,” Grunau remem-

bered. “She brought a number of her church people on board as volunteers, reached out beyond her church, found interpreters – all [partnerships] that have lasted to this day.”

bers. “She brought a number of her church people on board as volunteers, reached out beyond her church, found interpreters – all [partnerships] that have lasted to this day.” Church partnerships fuel the work of refugee agencies like Journey Home Community or Matthew Houses in Ontario. For example, in the early 1990s Baptist Women of Ontario and Quebec, a mission organization whose core constituency is women in Convention Baptist churches, supported Anne Woolger's vision for a home in Toronto that would offer hope at the end of the refugee highway – support that was badly needed. Journey Home Community grew out of Willingdon Church, a community with Mennonite Brethren roots in Burnaby, but today it also partners with churches from Christian Missionary Alliance, Baptist, Evangelical Missionary and other denominations.

Yet such partnerships are not for the faint of heart. The need is huge and the process can be long. On average, church sponsorships may take up to five years to process, from the time the application is made to the moment that sponsored man or family arrives. In some cases they never do – their application is denied. Claimants, especially if they appeal, can live in limbo for years hoping they'll beat the 50/50 odds and be allowed to stay in Canada.

And for every pastor's wife who responds positively to calls like Grunau's, others hesitate. Grunau is familiar with that hesitancy. He's heard the arguments: claimants aren't going through the regular process; if you let one ship in, you must let everyone in; let's be careful of how widely we open our doors

“Engaging Jesus moves us into a loving caring for people; moves us into engaging our world.”

## Refugees 101

**T**he United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) defines refugees as persons who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, are outside the country of their nationality, and are unable to, or, owing to such fear, are unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of that country.

**Canada resettles** 10-12,000 refugees

per year, either through asylum or settlement/sponsorship (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada).

### Settlement/Sponsorship

- Government-assisted refugees: These are people chosen by the federal government, usually on the recommendation of the UNHCR, to resettle in Canada. The government provides them with a year of federal income assistance and some basic services. 7,500 to 9,000 refugees are assisted annually.
- Privately sponsored refugees: Churches and groups of citizens

may sponsor refugees provided they show the ability to financially care for these refugees for a year. About 4,000 refugees are sponsored in this way every year.

### Claiming Asylum

- Refugee claimants: In 2010, Canada, as part of the United Nations Refugee Convention, allowed across its borders approximately 23,000 people who had fled their homelands and claimed asylum at a Canadian border or immigration office. Normally, just less than half these claims are accepted. An even smaller number are allowed to remain

# Refugees

because we aren't super-rich; our funds would go further in overseas missions.

He's quick to counter those arguments. In fact, claiming asylum is a legitimate process governed by international law. Canada's ability to respond to the needs of refugees may be debatable, but no one can ignore that developing countries, far less able than Canada, currently host 80 per cent of the world's refugee population (according to the United Nations High Commission on Refugees). As for costs Grunau counters with a question: "Would you like to spend the rest of your life in a refugee camp with your children, with no opportunity for improvement, for freedom?"

Both Grunau and Woolger agree. Any church – urban or rural, big or small – called to do refugee ministry needs to have patience, heart and a willingness to think outside the box. "The Church must lead the way," affirms Grunau. "Engaging Jesus moves us into a loving caring for people; moves us into engaging our world." **FT**

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

through pursuing other avenues of appeal while the rest must return to their homeland.

**Globally** (UNHCR *Global Trends* 2010) 43.7 million – the total number of forcibly displaced persons worldwide, including refugees. That's one in every 150 persons in the world. 10.5 million – people who meet the UNHCR's definition of refugee. 49 per cent are women and children. 98,800 – refugees resettled worldwide among approximately 22 countries. **FT** –RJ

PHOTO: DESIGNPICS.COM



# Small Town, Big Lessons

What one Ontario town learned about refugee sponsorship.

By Renée James



PHOTO: MARYJANE MCCREA

**Omar Al-Badri and his family – Thornbury's second refugee family – are practising Muslims from Iraq. A cross-denominational committee guided Thornbury on its journey of sponsoring refugees in this small town in Ontario.**

**T**hornbury, Ont., nestles in the heart of the Blue Mountains region, a four-season recreational oasis. Most would say this affluent community is a self-serving playground for the semi-retired and retired well-to-do. Perhaps. That didn't stop Rev. Canon Stephen Haig at St. George's Anglican Church in Clarksburg from dreaming out loud about refugee sponsorship: "I was looking for a way to

make a difference. Refugee sponsorship was one real way that [Thornbury] could be the hands of God in our world."

One meeting later his dream had gained traction. Priests and ministers from several churches in the area invited their respective congregations to consider the outreach opportunity offered by refugee sponsorship. Congregants and parishioners spread the word outside church walls. By June 2009 a

cross-denominational committee was steering Thornbury on its journey to sponsoring its first refugee family.

James Grunau directs Journey Home Community in Burnaby, B.C. He believes any church or community called to invest in refugee ministry must possess heart – a prayerful openness to newcomers and a willingness to think and act outside the box.

Rev. Sharon Chapman pastors First

## Ready to Sponsor? Some Questions to Consider

**S**ince 1998 Ian Smiley has helped 70 people come to Canada as privately sponsored refugees. He chairs the Refugee Sponsorship committee at Bromley Baptist Church in Ottawa, a church whose history of hospitality began in the 1970s when the congregation sponsored

boat people from Vietnam.

Sponsors are legally bound to support their sponsored refugee for a year. Like most churches Bromley is usually approached by a refugee's family to co-sponsor a family member. "Many churches are downright scared to do this,"



Baptist Church, Thornbury, and chairs the committee. She agrees. “We [the committee] prayed together, struggled, argued, challenged and then took the leap.”

Some in the community voiced the obvious negatives: no public transportation, the high cost of real estate, a lack of available housing, the depletion of job opportunities, Thornbury’s white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant culture, no ESL program and one overpriced grocery store. Yet “God’s voice spoke loud and clear,” Chapman remembers. “In spite of these negatives we moved ahead.”

A woman came forward and offered her family’s heritage home for a three-year period. Located on Thornbury’s main street, her mother had welcomed a boat family from Vietnam into that very house almost 40 years earlier. In February 2010 the Kemus, a refugee family from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, arrived – two parents with their four children. Today the Kemus live in Toronto, and Thornbury has welcomed its second refugee family – from Iraq – into that heritage home.

## Lessons Learned

Thornbury’s experience yields big lessons for churches and communities who want to sponsor refugees.

**Find partners:** A necessity in non-urban communities like Thornbury, church and community partners can share the work. Thornbury’s deep embrace of refugee sponsorship meant a broad base of volunteer retirees surrounded the Kemus from the moment they arrived, ready to be eagerly present to the family. The area’s network of small businesses helped with sourcing jobs. Schools went out of their way to make their environments supportive for the children who needed to learn English. The community newspaper ran numerous articles and the Rotary Club supported them monthly.

Offering the gentle gift of hospitality

says Smiley. “They’re afraid of being ripped off.”

Bromley has never been ripped off. Smiley knows any request for help is a desperate one. He also thoroughly screens every request. Here are the questions he asks every potential co-sponsor:

- Are they financially capable of supporting the family once they’ve arrived?

## Resources to Get You Started

### Agencies

**Journey Home Community** provides housing, resettlement assistance, and relational support to refugee claimant families arriving in Burnaby and New Westminster. [journeyhomecommunity.ca](http://journeyhomecommunity.ca)

**Matthew House, Toronto.** Since opening in 1998 over 1,000 refugees from 84 nations have found shelter here. Under its founding director, Anne Woolger, it has inspired refugee claimant shelters across Canada including three other Matthew Houses in Fort Erie, Windsor and Ottawa. You can link to other Matthew Houses from their site. [matthewhouse.ca](http://matthewhouse.ca)

**Micah House, Hamilton,** has served over 400 refugees since opening in 2006. It provides short-term housing and resettlement assistance. [micahhouse.ca](http://micahhouse.ca)

**New Hope Community Services Society, Vancouver,** began as a joint effort of Faith Fellowship Baptist Church, El Redentor Fellowship Baptist Church and the Baptist Foundation of British Columbia. It provides transitional housing and holistic support to refugee claimants and new Canadian immigrants. [newhopecs.org](http://newhopecs.org)

### Websites

**Canadian Council for Refugees:** all the statistics you’ll ever need plus analysis and commentary on refugee trends in Canada. [ccrweb.ca](http://ccrweb.ca)


**Citizens for Public Justice:** analysis and commentary on the politics of Canada’s current immigration policies and programs from a Judeo-Christian perspective. [cpj.ca/en/our-work/diversity-newcomer-issues/refugees](http://cpj.ca/en/our-work/diversity-newcomer-issues/refugees)

**Citizenship and Immigration Canada.** [cic.gc.ca](http://cic.gc.ca)

**Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada.** [irb-cisr.gc.ca](http://irb-cisr.gc.ca)

**Refugee Highway Partnership:** an excellent resource for any church or group considering refugee ministry, including white papers on the biblical imperative for refugee ministry, and how youth can get involved. The site provides links to local agencies supported by the partnership. [refugeehighway.net](http://refugeehighway.net)


**The United Nations High Commission for Refugees:** global news, statistics and stories. [unhcr.org](http://unhcr.org)

**Women’s Refugee Commission:** advocates for laws, policies and programs to improve the lives and protect the rights of refugee and internally displaced women, children and young people, including those seeking asylum. [womens-refugeecommission.org](http://womens-refugeecommission.org)  –RJ

– the core of refugee ministry – requires the abundance of keen eyes and helpful hands that partnerships bring. But eyes and hands are not always enough.

**Balance expectations:** The Kemus moved to Toronto before their one-year sponsorship period ended. Angry at what they’d perceived to be Thornbury’s withholding of information and funding, they lashed out. That anger, coupled with a

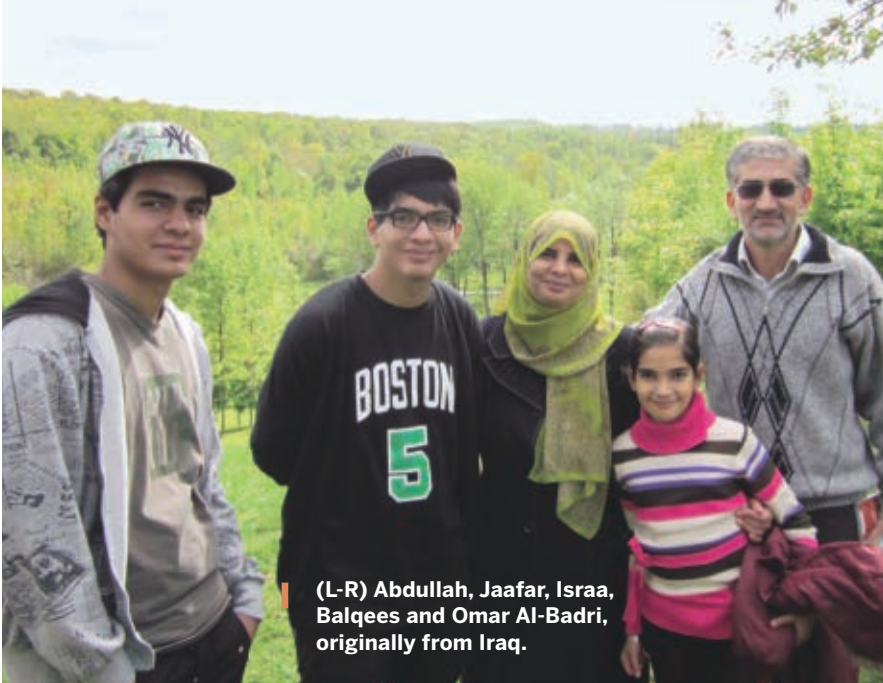
growing sense of isolation and frustration with their lack of independence, may have contributed to the family’s decision to leave early. The community reeled. “There were tears . . . deep hurts,” Chapman recalls. Many felt the community had failed. Chapman puts it this way: “We wanted to make [the Kemus] Canadians. We wanted to make them look like us. We had to be willing to let [the Kemus] be who they

- What sources of income do they have? Being on welfare doesn’t qualify as an acceptable source of income.
- Is there a strong family network in place?
- Why are they doing this? It helps if they are persons of faith – not necessarily Christians, but grounded in strong beliefs 

–RJ

needed to be and to let them go.”

**Assess motivation:** But “letting go” assumes an ability to give that requires nothing in return. Thornbury’s second refugee family – from Iraq – are practising Muslims. Church members who had voiced their opinions the first time – “It’s too expensive” or “My dollars work harder overseas. Let’s send money to camps in their home country and support them there instead” – now wondered, quite loudly, why this second family should be welcomed. The Kemus are Christians who had gladly shared their testimony with churches in the area. That wouldn’t be the case now: “Mis-



(L-R) Abdullah, Jaafar, Israa, Balqees and Omar Al-Badri, originally from Iraq.

PHOTO: MARYJANE MCCREIA

sions is evangelistic, so if we can’t share that message with them, why are we doing it?”

The committee, albeit smaller in numbers, rallied and forged ahead despite the concerns. An imam went with the welcome team to the airport to greet the second refugee family. And the committee’s to-do list now includes facilitating regular access to a mosque.

David Morgan knows how to organize

volunteers on renovation projects. A retired architect and a reader at St. George’s, he ensures the heritage home is physically maintained. He prepared to welcome the second refugee family by researching Islam. He’s changed. He’s become more appreciative of his faith and the faithfulness of this second family impresses him. He easily delights in the hospitality they extend whenever he checks in. “They always welcome me . . . and invite me to stay for tea.”

**Offer hospitality:** This wouldn’t surprise Grunau, who suggests Christians don’t have the corner on hospitality. We aren’t being faithful if we don’t share Jesus, but sharing Jesus isn’t the only reason we offer hospitality to refugees.

“Christian responsibility is multifaceted – spiritual, economic and physical.

God didn’t send Jesus just to save our souls, but to give us life in all of its fullness,” Grunau says. “To ignore the physical and social dimensions of people is not doing the job that we’re called to do. To only care about the spiritual is not offering wholeness.”

Perhaps the biggest lesson of Thornbury’s journey is simply what the entire community modelled and offered from the start. The act of forcible displacement – every refugee’s experience – cuts across all cultural, social, political, economic and religious borders. So does the act of hospitality. **FT**

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



**We prayed together, struggled, argued, challenged and then took the leap: Sharon Chapman.**

David Morgan knows how to organize

## Expert Inspiration

**Anne Woolger of Matthew House, Toronto:** My heart’s desire would be that Christians do some serious research into the plight of refugees in Canada, and draw their own conclusions. Four quick points: (1) Get to know refugees. Volunteer at a Matthew House or other community places that assist claimants, and find out first-hand what their reality is, what forces them to resort to smugglers to seek passage to a safe place. (2) Get informed about current and proposed legislation affecting refugees (including Bill C-4), and then get in touch with your MPs and advocate. (3) Urge your family, friends, co-workers and church community to publicly say they support the fair treatment of refugees. (4) Pray for justice. Is there good news on the refugee scene? I have seen more and more Christians, especially the younger generation, getting involved. A lot of people in their 20s and 30s are look-

ing for meaningful ways to volunteer and make a difference, and a number are looking to the refugee scene. In Toronto we have had a larger than average number of young volunteers from Chinese backgrounds. It has been encouraging and inspiring to see them wanting to reach out cross-culturally.

**James Grunau of the Refugee Highway Partnership:** The need is huge, the opportunity is great, and God is opening doors and calling us to reach the nations He is bringing to us. We must put a face to the issue. People need to meet refugees by name and correct the negativity surrounding these people. That said, this is inspiring work. A big part of what fuels me is watching what God does – from the contacts He bring to us, to the resources He provides and the direction He gives – things we cannot provide for ourselves. This is about transformation. God is as interested in what He’s doing in your life as He is in what you’re going to be doing in the lives of refugees. **FT**

# Will the Gift of the Land Keep Coming?

An expert on global hunger helps explain the current international food situation.

By Stuart Clark

A farmer and his son plant onion seeds in Pakistan's Swat Valley, an area hit hard by flooding in 2010.



PHOTO: CANADIAN FOODGRAINS BANK

**H**igh food prices. We hear those words a lot these days. Whether it's the price of food in the local grocery store or the cause of riots or hunger in the developing world, it's clear something's happening to the price of food.

For most of us living in Canada, higher food prices are irritating and inconvenient. But in the developing world where people can spend up to 75 per cent of their income on food, prices can mean life or death.

People in the developing world have all sorts of coping mechanisms. They cut back on more expensive (but nutritious) foods, withdraw children from school to save money on school fees, stop buying medicine or skip meals altogether.

## How Did We Get Into This Situation?

One way to understand what's happening is to think of the global food supply as a bucket of water. For the past 60 years

farmers were able to keep that bucket almost full. Some years it was overfilled. They could do this because there were only two holes in the bucket – one for food for humans, and the other food for animals (that become food for us).

Today farmers are having trouble keeping the bucket full. For one thing agricultural production is growing more slowly than before as sustainable new technologies prove harder to find. For another, increasingly unpredictable weather means the harvests are unpredictable too.

But the biggest change is the holes in the bucket are bigger. The world's population has grown, and the consumption of food for animals has increased even faster as incomes around the world rise and people eat more meat and dairy products.

On top of that the bucket has a new hole – grain is now being converted into biofuel for our cars. In the United States 40 percent of the corn crop is now converted to ethanol

to be blended into gasoline. That food used to be eaten by people and animals.

The combination of less reliable annual filling of the bucket, together with larger and more holes, means the water level in the bucket – the food we need to eat – has been dropping. Worryingly, in recent years the bottom of the bucket has been almost visible. In the United States – one of the world's largest food producers – the corn stockpile has dropped to less than 20 days' supply.

As the bucket level drops, the price of food rises and becomes more unstable. Here in Canada it can mean a few cents price rise. But in the developing world the consequences can be catastrophic.

It wasn't always this way. In the past the world's richest countries agreed to keep a quantity of food on reserve to keep prices stable but also to protect against food crises like drought or other natural disasters. Today limited or non-existent reserves mean that margin is razor-thin.

Is this just the way it has to be? The Old Testament prophets taught the measure of justice in Israel would be reflected by the adequacy of fruits of the land, and how those fruits were distributed so everyone shared in the bounty – rich and poor alike.

Things are more complex in our modern and interconnected world. But the same principle still applies. God doesn't wish for anyone to go hungry. There is enough food in the world for all.

### What Can Be Done?

In the past the answer was to increase production through technological innovation. We may be reaching the limits of how much more food can be produced, given unpredictable weather, current demands and water and land use patterns.

But if we can't dramatically increase the amount of food grown, there are still things we can do. We can eat less meat thereby reducing the amount of food going to feed animals. We can encourage our government to consider creating food reserves for use during emergencies, or limiting the amount of food being used for biofuels when food prices are too high.

Finally, we can reduce the amount of food we waste. It's estimated 50 per cent of all food produced in Canada is thrown away – over six million tonnes of food a year, or about 183 kilograms per person. Being more careful about how we treat food is a symbolic and practical way to show concern for those around the world who don't have enough to eat.

We have entered a new world for our food supply. It is far less predictable and reliable than the old one. God grant us wisdom as we look for ways to keep enough water in the bucket. **FT**

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**STUART CLARK** of Winnipeg is senior policy advisor at Canadian Foodgrains Bank, a partnership of 15 churches and church agencies (many of them also affiliated with The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada) working together to end global hunger. Together with support from the governmental Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Foodgrains Bank has provided more than one million tonnes of food assistance for people in the developing world since 1983.

## The Joseph Principle:

# Giving Today for Needs Tomorrow

How Canadian churches co-operate to alleviate worldwide hunger.

By John Longhurst

**B**y early September Canadian Foodgrains Bank, a partnership of 15 churches and church groups working together to end global hunger, had committed \$8.8 million to help people suffering due to drought in east Africa. By that date it had received just over \$500,000 in donations.

### How Was That Possible?

Easy. It's called the Joseph principle.

The principle takes its name from the Old Testament story of when Joseph advised the Egyptian pharaoh to store food in good harvest years so there would be enough to eat in bad ones. The Foodgrains Bank operates in a similar way, except instead of storing grain, it stores money.

Every year people across Canada generously donate to the Foodgrains Bank. The money is deposited into one of the

15 member accounts in the Bank, or into the general account, ready for use for emergency hunger needs, or for ongoing programs that help people improve their lives so they won't need food aid.

Over the past few years Canadians have donated more than \$9 million annually to the Foodgrains Bank. These funds, together with money given in previous years, plus matching funds provided by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), are stored until needed – like now when millions are suffering due to drought in east Africa.

### Beginnings

The idea for a bank operated by the Joseph principle came from Winnipeg businessman and philanthropist Arthur DeFehr. DeFehr, who received the Order of Manitoba in July in part for his work in founding the Foodgrains Bank, came up with

## Students Loving God and Fighting Hunger

Activities such as the 30 Hour Famine help young adults focus on world hunger and develop compassion.

By Liz Montroy

**L**eaving the house without eating breakfast? Going to work or school and having to watch others eat? Not eating for 30 hours? This may not sound like fun, but to a youth group on the west side of Vancouver, it is a

chance to spiritually and mentally grow and make an impact on the world.

The 30 Hour Famine is a fundraiser run by World Vision in which individuals do not eat for 30 hours to raise money for hungry people around the world.



**Kenyans receive food from a Foodgrains Bank-supported food distribution site.**

PHOTO: BARB SUMMERS

the idea in the mid-1970s after returning to Canada from a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) assignment in Bangladesh. He had a hunch that Prairie farmers would be willing partners in the idea.

“The farmer is allowed to participate as a farmer,” he said on the occasion of the Foodgrains Bank’s 20th anniversary.

“People want to be part of a process. It makes a huge difference if people are asked to give from what their life is about.”

In consultation with others DeFehr produced a draft proposal for the food bank. In 1975 MCC adopted the proposal, naming DeFehr chair of the first interim board.

Six years later, in 1983, MCC opened the bank to other denominations and the Canadian Foodgrains Bank was born.

### **From Shipping Food to Sending Money**

In the beginning the Foodgrains Bank literally collected grain and other com-

To World Vision this event is “Students around the world loving God and fighting hunger. It’s that simple.”

Three leaders of a Vancouver youth group also see its value. “Through actually going without food ourselves, we somewhat enter into something that is reality for many people in this world, and opens us up to greater compassion for those in need,” says Petra Anderson. “In that sense we also respond to God’s care and compassion for the poor, and His call to us to look out for

those in need.”

Jeff Woodyard believes it takes more than money to solve child hunger. “It takes people with a passion to make a change,” he said. “World Vision is helping a generation get passionate and involved with changing our world.” Woodyard vowed to the seven members of his youth group that if they raised \$3,000, they could cut, shave or dye his hair however they wanted. “It gets a laugh out of people when we tell them our prize if we reach our goal,”

said Sarah E., a group member.

However, Sarah and her friends also view this event as a challenge and a chance to tell their friends and family about world hunger, and to get them involved as well. Laura E. points out world hunger can be fixed as there is enough food in the world – it’s just not distributed properly. It is wasted in developed countries and, as Laura puts it, “We hold a responsibility to make up for the amount we waste.” She also believes

**Continued on page 30**

## Students Loving God and Fighting Hunger

Continued from page 29

everybody has the ability to support this cause, and that as humans we have a natural response to help others in need.

Alisha Fung, one of the group leaders, recognizes world hunger is a huge issue that takes more than one person to fix. "Thinking about [solving] world hunger is a daunting task all [by] itself, but being able to do little things every day seems to make the idea a little more graspable," she says. "I feel like if we all did our part, not only would we be one step closer to ending world hunger, we would be one step closer in our relationship with God." This view can change lives, and by sharing with those around them, this youth group

is sure to make a difference.

Jesus himself associated with the poor, and loves them just as much today as He loves anybody else. In Luke 6:20 He says, "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God." If God loves and cares so much for those who are hungry, then why don't we? In 2 Corinthians 8:9 it says, "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake, he became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich."

North Americans are extremely blessed. We have supermarkets, fancy restaurants and an almost never-ending supply of food. Even so, to God

it doesn't matter if you're rich or poor. He gave up His wealth for other people. Christians serve and model their lives after God. If the Lord loves the poor and hungry, so should we.

Although it wasn't easy, the youth group was poor in food for 30 hours. During this time they experienced what many around the world experience every day. Hopefully they can use what they learned to make a difference in the world and love those who have nothing, just as Jesus did.

"Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the Kingdom He promised those who love him?" (James 2:5). **FT**

**LIZ MONTROY** is a Grade 11 student in Vancouver, B.C.

modities from Canadian farmers, just as in the days of the Old Testament patriarch Joseph. Farmers trucked their produce to elevators where it was loaded onto railway cars, transported to ocean ports and then shipped overseas.

Although millions of people in the developing world were helped in this way, it was not the most effective way to provide assistance. Not only was it costly to ship the grain overseas, it took a long time to get it to areas of need. Plus, the type of food sent from Canada was not always the most appropriate for people in other countries.

Today farmers still grow food for the

Foodgrains Bank, but the food itself is not shipped overseas. Instead they sell it, and then donate the proceeds to one or more of the member's accounts. Together with cash donated by other Canadians, the Foodgrains Bank uses the funds to procure food in the developing world – a process that not only gets the appropriate food to hungry people quicker and less expensively, but also supports local farmers and economies.

### Partners

Key to the success of the Foodgrains Bank is its partnerships, first with the 15

churches and church organizations that make up the membership, but also with the Canadian government, which consid-

## Foodgrains Bank Members

- ADRA Canada (Adventist Development and Relief Agency)
- Canadian Baptist Ministries
- Canadian Catholic Organization for Development & Peace
- Canadian Lutheran World Relief
- Christian & Missionary Alliance in Canada
- Christian Reformed World Relief Committee of Canada
- Emergency Relief & Development Overseas (Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada)
- Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada
- Mennonite Central Committee Canada
- Nazarene Compassionate Ministries Canada
- Presbyterian World Service & Development
- Primate's World Relief & Development Fund (Anglican Church of Canada)
- The Salvation Army
- The United Church of Canada
- World Relief Canada



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ers the Foodgrains Bank its primary non-governmental organization involved in food aid programming in the developing world.

By being part of the Foodgrains Bank, the member organizations are able to access matching funding from CIDA, which provides a grant of \$25 million each year to the Bank.

In Canada the Foodgrains Bank also works with the Canadian Wheat Board, the Ontario Wheat Board and other grain industry organizations. Overseas it works through its members and with an array of local partners – the local groups that carry out the food programming on the ground – and with the United Nations World Food Program. The Foodgrains Bank also gratefully receives support from hundreds of businesses across the country, including some of Canada’s largest agro-business corporations.

Of course none of this would be possible without the support of individual Canadians, who donate on a regular basis to help people who don’t have enough to eat, and the over 200 growing projects where farmers and others get together to grow and harvest a crop for the Foodgrains Bank. Canadian farmers donated \$4.8 million from the sale of 19,523 tonnes of foodgrains in 2010-11, while other Canadians gave \$4.3 million.

It all adds up to the Foodgrains Bank providing over 1.1 million tonnes of food in 78 countries since 1983. “We’re grateful for each and every person who donates,” says Foodgrains Bank Executive Director Jim Cornelius.

Between emergencies like in eastern Africa and the many that never receive media attention, not to mention the almost one billion people in the world who simply don’t have enough to eat, “The support of people across Canada is extremely important,” he says. **FT**

**JOHN LONGHURST** of Winnipeg directs resources and public engagement for Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

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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 levels for students preparing for paid and volunteer Christian ministry or advanced studies.

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

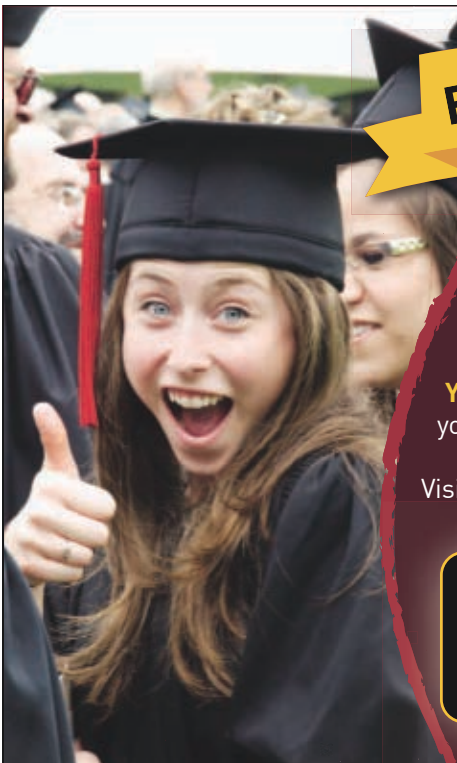
For more information visit [www.AcadiaDiv.ca](http://www.AcadiaDiv.ca).

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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.

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ity life. This is no accident. We know that discipleship happens best in community, and thus 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](http://www.bethany.sk.ca).

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## CONTEMPORARY ISSUES. TIMELESS TRUTHS.

- **Communicating the Gospel in a Multi-Religious World**  
- Dr. Ajith Fernando
- **Christianity and Islam**  
- Dr. Wafik Whaba
- **Evangelism and the Missional Church**  
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**Dr. Craig A. Evans,**  
Distinguished Professor of New Testament, Acadia Divinity College. Author of hundreds of scholarly articles and more than 50 books including *Jesus, the Final Days (2009)*, and *Guide to the Dead Sea Scrolls (2010)*, and more. Evans is known for his expertise in the historical Jesus and his world. He has given lectures around the world and has appeared in several news programs and documentaries.

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I had begun to learn the meaning of Colossians 2:6, "As therefore you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him."

That year of Bible school became foundational in discovering what it means to live abundantly in Christ and to live by faith in all areas of my life such as career, marriage, children and daily living.

I now serve as a teacher at that Bible school and have the privilege of leading students to the same truth that sets us free, Christ Himself.

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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.

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istry 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.

We aim to prepare students to live out that relationship concretely, practising real-life, hands-on Christianity.

Visit [www.horizon.edu](http://www.horizon.edu).

## Best preparation possible McMaster Divinity College

McMaster Divinity College is an evangelical, accredited seminary offering graduate-level degrees in theological, biblical and ministry studies. We believe that ministry in the 21st century – whether pastoral ministry, chaplaincy, religious education, research or scholarship, or any number of other ministries – has become increasingly complex and diverse and will require that those called by God have the best preparation possible. This is accomplished through McMaster Divinity's MTS, MDiv, MA and PhD programs.

At this graduate, professional school comprising evangelical faculty dedicated to helping prepare people for Christian leadership, you will be encouraged to attain excellence in academic studies, to achieve competence in leadership, to develop essential disciplines of worship and devotion, to grow toward spiritual maturity, authenticity and sensitivity in relationships with God in Christ and with other persons and to enthusiastically present the gospel in a contemporary culture.

This is our mission, purpose and passion.

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## Bible truth is foundational Peoples Christian Academy

Professionally conducted surveys consistently tell us that between 65 and 85 percent of young people (late teens and twenties) are walking away from the faith. Gordon H. Clark wrote, "The school system that ignores God teaches its pupils to ignore God; and this is not neutrality. It is the worst form of antagonism, for it judges God to be unimportant and irrelevant in human affairs. This is atheism." (A Christian Philosophy of Education) Our forefathers understood this to be true, and that explains why the history of education is rooted in theology and religious philosophy. This "fourth R" (religious viewpoint) of education has always been as present as the other three (reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic). It cannot be avoided. Ultimately, the world/life view of an individual is informed by the educational system in which he or she is trained.

Peoples Christian Academy, an all-grade school serving the northeast Greater Toronto Area, is committed to a clear presentation of Bible truth in all its programs and practices. The internalization of God's Word becomes an inbred protective and corrective influence in a young person's life. In Psalm 119 King David says it well: "Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You!"

Visit [www.pca.ca](http://www.pca.ca).

## Training effective workers Prairie

Prairie Bible College began in 1922 and specializes in training effective workers for churches and other Christian ministries. We offer accredited four-year Bachelor of Arts programs in a variety of areas, including ministry, theology, intercultural studies and worship. Prairie also offers several foundational one- and two-year programs.

In 2006, Prairie opened the first college in Canada offering practical two-year programs deliberately integrating Bible and ministry education. With programs in health care, human services and business administration, Prairie College of Applied Arts & Technology (PCAAT) has created even more options for students to pursue valuable careers and ministry opportunities. Mission teams from PCAAT go to

India, Mozambique and Guatemala, and a trip to the Philippines is being planned.

Prairie has been providing commercial aviation training for over 15 years. In a recent audit, Transport Canada indicated that our students scored higher on flight tests and written exams than other students from across the nation. With almost 50 students, a fleet of seven aircraft and close ties to several mission aviation agencies, Prairie School of Mission Aviation is well equipped to train pilots for service here at home and around the world.

Find out more at [www.prairie.edu](http://www.prairie.edu).

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Providence University College provides a premier, Christ-centred university experience. With students from 22 countries and 15 church denominations, you can experience the cultural and denominational diversity that the Providence community has to offer.

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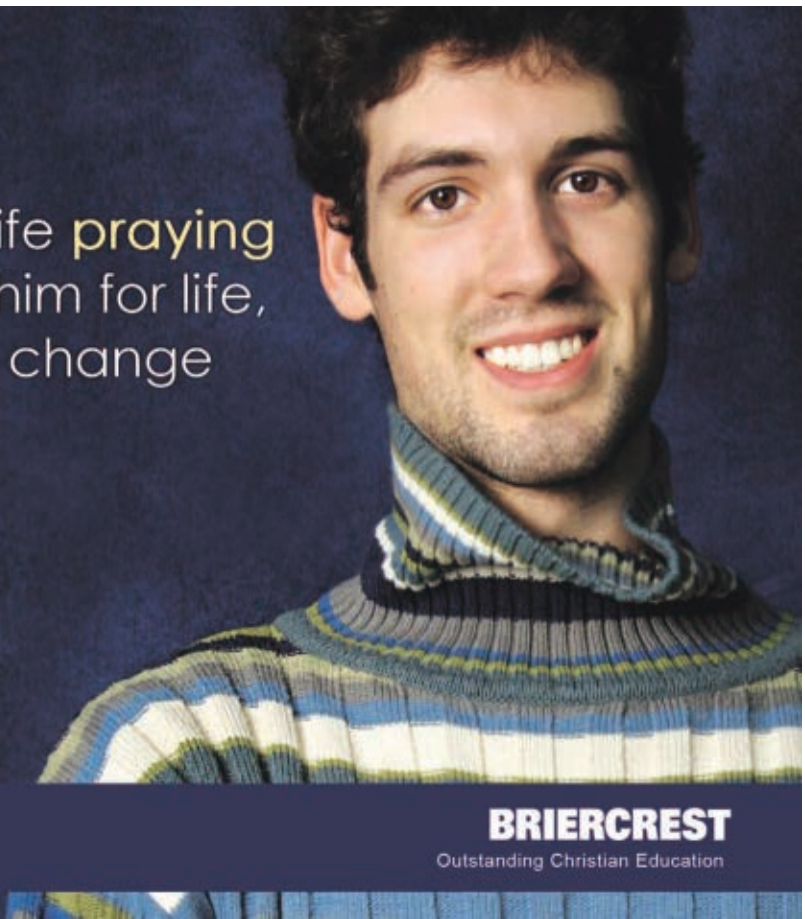
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Regent College is an evangelical, international graduate school of Christian studies based in Vancouver and affiliated with the University of British Columbia, Canada's third largest university. It was founded in 1968 as the first graduate school of theology in North America to make education of the laity its central focus. Regent College is a place of academic rigour, cultural engagement

and vibrant faith that transforms intellect, imagination and character.

We offer four graduate programs: Diploma in Christian Studies, Master of Christian Studies, Master of Divinity and Master of Theology. Our summer programs attract visiting faculty and students who wish to spend part of their summer deepening their faith and exploring topical issues facing Christians in all vocations. Our conferences and public lectures extend the research of our faculty and renowned keynote speakers to the wider

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### Experiential leadership Steinbach Bible College

“Instead of being told how to be a leader, you learn how to be one” – that’s how one student describes Steinbach Bible College’s (SBC) newest course: Experiential Leadership. The course places students in both simulated and real-life situations where practical leadership skills such as communication, teamwork, creativity and problem-solving are put into action. Students learn about leadership in theory and practice as teams plan and carry out assignments. The course is designed to mimic popular reality programs such as Dragon’s Den and The Apprentice.

Homework includes activities such as serving at a soup kitchen, spending a night on the streets or designing a social enterprise solution for an inner-city ministry. Students video-blog their experiences. Through weekly tasks, students grow in their understanding of leadership.

Response from the students is positive: they enjoy the support they receive, and they recognize the value of receiving and giving positive criticism. Students are also discovering how people with different gifts can work together to achieve a goal.

“I can imagine almost all of us will be in some sort of leadership in the future,” writes one of the students.

SBC continues to strive for innovative and practical ways to challenge our students today and prepare them for life beyond college.

Visit [www.sbcollege.ca](http://www.sbcollege.ca).

### Contemporary issues meet timeless truths Tyndale Seminary

Whether you serve God as a pastor, a teacher, in business or in the professional

sectors, you face the tension of living out the gospel in today’s culture while staying true to the timeless truths of Scripture. With a long history in Toronto’s diverse, multid denominational setting, Tyndale has experience with the changing face of culture and ministry. Tyndale Seminary has been equipping Christian leaders for over 100 years. Whether you are in full-time ministry or a volunteer position or serve in other ways, you can be educated where you are.

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[info@SBCollege.ca](mailto:info@SBCollege.ca)  
Steinbach, Manitoba

### Integrating study and service Vanguard College

Education is both knowledge and experience. That's why at Vanguard College we believe the best way to prepare for life and ministry is to experience it while you learn. In our mission to develop innovative, Spirit-filled leaders, we work to combine practical ministry training with building a solid theological foundation for a life-long relationship with God. Our faculty is passionate about instilling biblical truth, and our field education program is designed to provide opportunities to live what you learn.

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# Christians an Influential Minority in Egypt

Whether you travel the chaotic streets of Cairo or cruise down the ambling waters of the Nile, it is obvious that Egypt – ancient, rich in culture, smells, sounds, architecture and ruins – is in the middle of a political and social revolution.

You can still feel the revolutionary spirit in Tahrir Square, the downtown public plaza in Cairo that became both the place and symbol of the revolution that toppled President Mubarak’s 30-year reign.

The Arab Spring, as it became known, was a long time coming. During a recent visit in my role as global ambassador for the World Evangelical Alliance, I yearned for an index of names and definitions to keep parties, policies, histories and leaders straight. It will also be a long time before the impact of the Arab Spring is fully realized.

## On Our Knees

- For basic facts about Egypt and suggestions to incorporate in your prayers, visit [operationworld.org/egypt](http://operationworld.org/egypt) and [persecution.net/egypt.htm](http://persecution.net/egypt.htm)

Islam will undoubtedly rule in Egypt for the coming years. The world will be watching to see if the victorious Muslim Brotherhood party allows Islamic fundamentalism a stronghold in the government. The Salafi al-Nour party demands enforcement of shariah laws which force women to be veiled, impose cruel punishment for even minor offense and press to impose a special tax on Christians, to list only a few. Tens of thousands of mosques (121,000) dominate Egypt’s culture and politics – and thus imams wield incredible power to incite hatred or promote peace.

Christians comprise 10 per cent of the population, led by the Coptic Church, the

oldest, continuing church institution in the world. It has a deep and profound influence, making up 90 per cent of Christians in Egypt. Evangelicals, a word here synonymous with “Protestant,” make up 10 per cent of Christians or one per cent of the population.

But the influence of Christians is disproportionate to their numbers. In commerce and wealth, for example, the latest estimate of listed companies reveals 32 per cent are owned by Christians.

As guest of the Evangelical Fellowship in Egypt, I met with a number of ministry leaders there. I was astounded by the size and influence of some ministries and businesses. They are strategic and forceful, led by dynamic, deeply spiritual, creative and entrepreneurial people. I also had the privilege to visit several ministries that show the depth and power of a country better known for its oppression of Christians than for the positive influence Christians have on the nation. But the impact is deep and real. I’ll note just four.

The Bible Society of Egypt is at the forefront of evangelism in Egypt. The vision and dreams of the Society would amaze North Americans.

Then there’s CEOSS, the Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Service. In Egypt “Coptic Evangelical” means Presbyterian. It is run from a large, impressive centre with 500 staff and 5,000 volunteers. Their range of ministry is amazing. I visited one of their projects in the slums of Cairo and met with leaders of an organization called The Islamic Vision. Its leader described how CEOSS had convinced a number of imams that female sexual mutilation and marrying children were unhealthy



practices. An imam sitting to my left told me he had learned from Christians how important it was for their society to treat women properly and protect them from abuse. He now preaches that message.

I also saw first-hand the missional vision and strategy of Sat-7, a television service throughout the Middle East and North Africa that produces and sends Christian programming via satellite to millions of Muslim homes. Carefully avoiding direct clashes with Islam, they provide programs that give an understanding of God’s love. It is brilliant evangelism.

The Evangelical Theological Seminary in Cairo, formed in the 1840s, is one of the oldest colleges in Egypt. With qualified faculty, imaginative leadership and 300 some students, this school is well situated for building congregational and mission agency leaders.

In Egypt the Holy Spirit is building, often in surprising ways, a church that by His grace will not only stand and survive persecution, but help shape Egypt. And what happens in Egypt does not stay in Egypt. It winds its way throughout other Arabic-speaking countries, cultures and people. May the Arab Spring not lapse into a Christian winter, but become an autumn-time of harvest. **FT**

**BRIAN C. STILLER** of Toronto is the global ambassador for The World Evangelical Alliance.

## Canadian Connections

- CBM Canada (Christian Blind Mission) supports various projects in Egypt, including helping 100 families with a blind family member in Cairo and Elmenia, starting a humanitarian relief program with CEOSS and distributing food through community development centres operated by the Episcopal / Anglican Diocese of Egypt. [www.cbmcanada.org/180311\\_egypt.htm](http://www.cbmcanada.org/180311_egypt.htm)

- Back to God Ministries International, in partnership with MERF (Middle East Reformed Fellowship) and Words of Hope, shares the gospel through media. The MERF staff in Egypt (and other locations in the Middle East) produce a daily radio program also available on the web at [www.dardasha7.com](http://www.dardasha7.com). Staff also provide discipleship through cell phone and online follow-up for hundreds of responders each month. [Backtogod.net](http://Backtogod.net)

For more about how EFC affiliates are working in Egypt visit [theEFC.ca/globalvillage](http://theEFC.ca/globalvillage)



## Maturing Spiritually

Let's be self-disciplined about making time with God and using it well.

I still remember the day in Grade 7 when my mom compared catty 12-year-old girls to women in her workplace, revealing an unfortunate secret. "You'd think it would change as girls get older," she said, "but there are women I work with who act the same way. They gossip, form cliques and spread rumours just like the girls in your class."

She wasn't trying to discourage me. My mom was helping me realize growing older doesn't guarantee growing in maturity. It's a vital thought to ponder: As a woman alive in Christ, are you growing more mature spiritually as you grow older?

The Holy Spirit is at work within us, yet we too play a part in our spiritual growth. Paul's words to the Philippians remind us how God involves us in this process: "Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed – not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence – continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose" (Philippians 2:12-13).

Paul notes we must work out our salvation as followers – disciples – of Jesus Christ. Discipleship requires we be taught and trained to become more like the One we are following. It does not happen by accident or osmosis. Discipleship requires discipline.

Spiritual growth doesn't automatically happen when we darken the church door. Church can easily become an item to check off our to-do list, and small group can be reduced to a mere social outing. My sisters, it is not meant to be this way! God calls us to mature in our faith and be disciplined in our pursuit of Him while He pursues us.

### Being Disciplined Spiritually Requires Spending Time With God

Why is it that when life gets crowded our relationship with the Lord is one of the first things to dwindle? It's been said that if Satan can't get you any other way, he'll make you busy. While the enemy certainly doesn't deserve credit for our decisions, who of us has not seen this to be true in our own lives? A jam-packed schedule with no room for margin distracts us from Christ, whether we admit it or not.

We must, as Colossians 3:2 reminds us, "Set [our] minds on things above, not on earthly things." Are you disciplined to focus on God, or does He get your leftovers time and again?

It may sound rigid to schedule time with God – maybe even unspiritual. The reality is we make time for what is important to us. While we may be quick to insist Jesus is first in our lives, our schedules often reveal a contradictory truth. Let's discipline ourselves to schedule and keep a daily, non-negotiable appointment time with God.

Next, we should seek ways to nurture the spiritual disciplines of prayer, Bible study, confession, repentance, solitude, service, submission and worship (to name a few). Showing up to meet with God is the first step. Engaging with Him comes next. As we grow in these spiritual disciplines we need to live out what God is teaching each of us. James 1:22 is a great inspiration: "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says."

Doing what it says includes disciplining ourselves to throw off everything that hinders, and the sin that so easily entangles, to run with perseverance the race marked out for us, as Hebrews 12 reminds us. That chapter also brings great encouragement when we are struggling:

Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? If you are not disciplined – and everyone undergoes discipline – then you are not legitimate children at all. Moreover, we have all had parents who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live! Our parents disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it (Hebrews 12:7-11).

Therefore, my sisters, press on! If your faith has plateaued, discipline can nurture a vibrant walk with God once again. At first it may seem contrived, but trust God will honour your desire to know, love and serve Him more. Let's set the example for other women in our lives to rise above immature 12-year-old tendencies and become mature women alive in Christ. **FT**

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**MICHELLE (NAGLE) ARTHUR** is executive director of Women Alive, a ministry equipping Canadian women and teen girls to become dedicated followers of Jesus Christ, living out their God-given potential in their personal, professional and spiritual lives. Find spiritual growth resources and encouragement at [womenalive.org](http://womenalive.org). Read more in this series at [theEFC.ca/womenaliveFT](http://theEFC.ca/womenaliveFT).

# Morningstar Christian Fellowship, Toronto, Ont.

“Where the Nations Meet” is a fitting tagline for a church that gathers 70 nations into a congregation of 1,200, reflecting the demographics of their neighbourhood on the east side of Toronto.



PHOTO: ABEL BALUYOT

■ Rather than pointing community people to the church, Morningstar wanted to point people to a home already in the community that works like a church, caring for its neighbours, offering free gardening, free Freezies and free BBQs.

In the early 1980s when Churchill Heights Baptist Church relocated to a new neighbourhood, they set about to become intentionally intercultural. About five years ago the name changed to Morningstar Christian Fellowship ([morningstarfellowship.ca](http://morningstarfellowship.ca)), reflecting what they have become.

Robert (Bob) MacGregor arrived as senior pastor in 2000 with a brewing conviction for a multi-site ministry. The leadership encouraged this vision through traditional cell groups, which began focusing more on outreach in their Bible studies and prayer. Many cell groups chose to adopt a missionary. “Connection Groups were redefined to become more focused on reaching the community,” he says.

## Love Your Neighbour

Mario Villanueva, a missionary in Spain, returned in 2005 to strengthen Morningstar’s outreach ministries. The church had regularly hosted Operation Mobilization’s Summer Toronto Challenge – a great opportunity to establish visibility in the neighbourhood. But Villanueva and his team encouraged a new idea. “Instead of pointing community people to the church, what if we point to a home already in the community – a home that works like a church, caring for its neighbours? What if we had lighthouses all over our city shining as beacons of the truth?” They sensed the need for a lifestyle shift within the whole congregation.

A ten-day Bridge Builders’ training module equipped Con-

nection Groups to erect relational bridges from a Community Lighthouse to its neighbours. Each group wrestled with the question “How can we join God on mission in our neighbourhood?” They toured local mosques and temples, learning how to share Christ with the world’s major religions right on their doorstep. Five Lighthouse Communities, bathed in prayer, were commissioned by the church as mission centres within five neighbourhoods.

## Community Lighthouses

In July 2011, preceded by the distribution of flyers, 250 congregants – families, college youth, seniors and singles – took to the streets wearing yellow t-shirts. “We represent your neighbours (name of identified Lighthouse household) and want to offer acts of kindness in your community,” they said as they introduced themselves.

As people dropped their guard conversations were stimulated. Work orders were accepted such as street or yard cleaning and planting gardens. Invitations were extended to a free community BBQ at the Lighthouse in their neighbourhood. “Our desire is to bless you and bless your community,” they explained.

Not only were community relationships initiated, interaction among congregants was strengthened. Each host Lighthouse was now exposed to its missional purpose. In fact, a small sign on the lawn identified each Community Lighthouse. Neighbours’ expectations soared as follow-up events led to fall corn

roasts and Christmas pageant invitations. Conversations deepened as people recognized the Lighthouse as a safe haven to discuss life's issues. Each Community Lighthouse carries the DNA to become a church plant in the neighbourhood.

Tapscott, just a few miles northwest of the church, is already meeting as an active church.

Many people in the congregation were afraid of reaching out to the community. Such exposure was a risk. But each evening they gathered back at the church, sometimes with tears of joy, rejoicing in what God was doing. Many were revitalized to view all their relationships more missionally.

Joseph Enverga, one member of the congregation, says, "It was simply awesome to see the feet of the church leave one set of doors to enter into five [communities] offering free gardening, free Freezies, free BBQs."

Congregants are asking to be part of the next launch of additional Lighthouse Communities in summer 2012. Training

on how to witness and share faith continues in the winter.

### The Community Angle

An email from a neighbour states, "I just want to extend my deepest thanks and appreciation to the Community Lighthouse.

They blessed the members of our co-op. I was impressed with the sense of community they displayed. They came, they gave, they served, expecting nothing in return."

One household asked if Morningstar "could deliver a plant to the lady next door who recently lost her husband." A visitor driving through the neighbourhood stopped to ask a yellow t-shirt, "What's the gimmick?" While conversing with a couple of Morningstar congregants, other Lighthouse ministers washed her car! The bank manager was blown away by all the community work

and began attending Alpha.

"Everything we do has a community angle," says Pastor MacGregor. The church offers Baby Blessings for the community (different than Baby Dedication for members) in which community parents are invited to covenant around expectations in

raising their children along a learning pathway.

Other programs such as Pregnancy Care, One Parent Plus, and Power 4 Parents all influence the community. The church gym is open almost every evening for pickup basketball, soccer or table tennis. Seven summer sports

campus reach out into the community.

The Morningstar Music School, operating in its sixth year, keeps tuition low to be affordable for low income families in the neighborhood. Half the 70 students come from the community. Voice, piano, drums, strings, brass, dance and guitar are all part of the repertoire. Annual recitals see community family members sitting proudly in the audience. When one music teacher shared her life story with a student, the teen came to Christ.

"They came,  
they gave,  
they served,  
expecting  
nothing  
in return."

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### A Shining Light

Bob MacGregor is quick to admit the challenge of creating an outwardly focused lifestyle for many more congregants, not allowing the Lighthouse Ministry to become just another program. As the vision spreads throughout the congregation, "There is a greater appreciation for who we are as the people of God."

Dave Hunt, executive pastor, admits going public creates a sense of vulnerability. One Lighthouse has already experienced some vandalism. Morningstar's prayer is that each Lighthouse will create a thirst to be engaged with God on mission in the community. Each Lighthouse is "a shining light in a fallen world." **FT**

**CHARLENE DE HAAN** is a freelance writer in Toronto. She is also the executive director of CAM International of Canada and founder of stepUPtransitions.ca.

Read all the profiles in this ongoing series at [faithtoday.ca](http://faithtoday.ca).

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## Good News and Bad News

Defending the Good News is going remarkably well.

**A**mid all the bad news we hear, I've got some good news about defending the Good News of Jesus Christ.

By bad news I mean how "anti-faith" our culture has become. Just ask missionary kid Tim Tebow, a quarterback for the NFL Denver Broncos, about the criticism he receives for his quick public prayers after every touchdown. Or read *To Change the World* by Virginia professor James Davison Hunter (Oxford University Press, 2010), in which he argues persuasively that Christians face a complex uphill battle to influence our culture.

Thankfully, the scene isn't totally dark. Christian apologetics (the academic term for defending Christianity) has great vitality and impact these days – a good-news antidote to these other depressing realities.

Christians have always taken seriously the Apostle Peter's call to "be prepared to give an *apologia*" (1 Peter 3:15). Paul defended the gospel with philosophers in Athens (Acts 17) and before a skeptical Roman governor (Acts 26). The apostle built on the model of Jesus who often used reason to stymie his objectors. Second-, third- and fourth-century church leaders (such as Tertullian and Augustine) duplicated the New Testament pattern in their brilliant replies to Gnostic heresies and pagan religions. The apologetical enterprise has continued ever since, from Aquinas to William Paley and down to C.S. Lewis (d. 1963), Ravi Zacharias and Alvin Plantinga.

Today there are apologists who deal effectively with Islam (Andy Bannister does this with RZIM Canada), Buddhism (Jim Stephens, a convert from Soka Gakkai) and Hinduism (Steve Tsoukalas), while still others defend the biblical picture of Jesus (Craig Evans at Acadia Divinity College in Nova Scotia), argue for the historicity of the resurrection (N.T. Wright, Gary Habermas and Mike Licona) and present proofs for the existence of God (William Lane Craig, J.P. Moreland and Richard Swinburne). These are just a few.

There are others working on moral, social and political fronts. Frank Beckwith has done astounding legal and philosophical defence of the rights of the unborn. Likewise, J. Budziszewski offers an impressive rationale for traditional marriage, as does Robert Gagnon (a quick

search on the Internet will give you details).

On a broader scale Nancy and Richard Pearcey, a duo in the tradition of Francis Schaeffer and Charles Colson, display remarkable skills in combating the unbelief of western elites. Over in British Columbia, Paul Chamberlain does the same kind of work at the Institute for Christian Apologetics at Trinity Western University.

One reason to celebrate Christian apologetics is that not all spiritual traditions take intellectual life seriously. For example, there is no rich and broad intellectual stream in Scientology, Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Science or the New Age movement. Here the sleep of reason brings utter disaster. Christian Science parents keep their kids from medical help, New Agers adopt quackery in their rituals (check out the recent tragedies involving James Arthur Ray), Jehovah's Witnesses refuse blood transfusions, and Scientologists are allowed no critical thoughts about their leaders.

What about claims that apologetics doesn't work or that, at best, it's only good for Christians who already believe? Well, encouraging Christians is a decent enterprise, but in actual fact this work also gets results from atheists, agnostics and those of other faiths. William Lane Craig provides glowing testimonies of people transformed through his debates. I have led people out of cult groups and to Jesus through use of reason, fact and evidence.

Of course, a few qualifications are needed. First, apologetics must take a back seat to the illumination of the Holy Spirit. It's only effective because the Spirit uses our defence of the gospel to open blind eyes and melt hardened hearts.

Second, defending the faith is not as important as living it by loving God and neighbour. Paul in 1 Corinthians 13 notes that love trumps knowledge, which should keep all apologists from nastiness and pride. Loving others is more important than winning points.

C. S. Lewis captures these priorities in his prayer for apologists:

From all my lame defeats and oh! much more  
From all the victories that I seemed to score;  
From cleverness shot forth on Thy behalf...  
deliver me.

Thoughts are but coins.

Let me not trust, instead of Thee, their thin-  
worn image of Thy head...

Lord of the narrow gate and the needle's eye,  
Take from me all my trumpety lest I die. **BT**

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



# One! The Journey to Love One's Wife

God calls husbands and wives to pursue oneness in marriage. It starts with putting God first.

Last year my family welcomed two foster children into our home. We were dedicated to loving these two young boys (in addition to our own four children) the best we could. I felt good about our commitment to care for the fatherless, but what I didn't realize was the toll it was taking on my wife.

One night Shannon and I sat down to talk after dinner. She expressed how difficult her day was with our foster boys, and I decided to defend them and remind her of the difficult life they have had so far.

In that moment I could see something in the eyes of

my bride – a look of hurt and disappointment because I was not really listening to her. God was reminding me that while caring for the fatherless was important, He had called me to be “one” with her – not with them.

God has commanded us to do a lot of good in all our relationships, but that idea of “oneness” shows how special marriage is.

The pressures of our culture and our lives often make it more difficult for couples to pursue oneness. We need to be reminded that, when it comes to marriage, men are called to love as Jesus loves (Ephesians 5:25). Whether the marriage is going strong or whether our spouse is not responding the way we want her to, it should not change our role in pursuing oneness with her.

The only way we are ever going to achieve oneness is when we make marriage more about God than about ourselves. The odd twist in this is the more we make it about Him, the more we sense His presence in our own lives and the more joy we can have in our marriage.

I have been a very slow learner over the past 17 years re-



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garding this truth. Here are some ways God has been helping me pursue oneness by pursuing God in my marriage.

*Who do I love more – myself or God?* The actions and attitudes I carry in my relationship reveal what is happening in my own heart, and who I truly love. Anyone can love someone when a relationship is going well – it is our love for God that gives us the strength to keep loving our spouse when there are challenges in a relationship.


*Who do I love more – my wife or God?* There are some well-meaning men who almost worship their wives. They would do anything for them, including buying them the most expensive things and going into debt in the process. All of this at the cost of being obedient to God and His desire for their family and finances. I know other men who have been given an ultimatum by their spouse – choose me or Jesus. These are difficult and painful moments for these men.

Whatever the situation, I am learning my wife does not need the pressure of me treating her like a goddess, and the greatest gift I can give to my marriage is the gift of knowing I am allowing God to be just that in my own life.

*Who or what am I pursuing?* There are times when either spouse can manipulate things in a relationship. Let's be honest. When a man tries to be romantic, how many times is he hoping for something a little more that night? As I reflect more on how God has been pursuing me with His love, I am filled with a greater sense of pursuing my wife so she can experience my love for her – not just so I can have my own fulfillment.

*What is my level of sacrifice?* My willingness to sacrifice so my wife can see my love for her is directly related to my own walk with God. The only way I know how to do this day in and day out is to ask God to help me die to myself so Christ can live through me. I am far from perfect in this, but I know that when I ask God to show me how to die to self, He always starts by showing me things in how I relate to my wife.

*How do I bring God into our marriage?* It is one thing for me to grow in my own personal relationship with God, but what role do I play in encouraging my wife spiritually? Jesus consistently wants to help His Bride, the Church, grow spiritually. As a man who is growing in following Jesus, I am learning to do the same. It has taken me a long time and a lot of false starts, but I regularly pray for my wife, and also will often send her emails with various passages of Scripture to encourage her. I want her heart and mind to have God's truth as the foundation because the world is so focused on bringing lies into her life.

As Valentine's Day approaches, I want to challenge all men to ask God to show them how to make marriage more about Him than about themselves. 

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**KIRK GILES** has been married to Shannon for 17 years, and they have four children. He also serves as president of Promise Keepers Canada (PromiseKeepers.ca), a ministry dedicated to ignite and equip men to make a godly impact in families, workplaces, churches and communities.

## THE EFC ON SOCIAL NETWORKS

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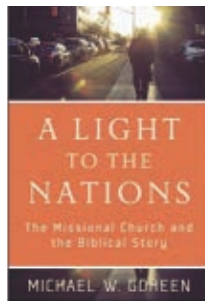
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## A Light to the Nations: The Missional Church and the Biblical Story

**Author: Michael W. Goheen**  
**Baker Academic, 2011.**  
**256 pages. \$26.50**

The word “mission” comes from the Latin *missio* which means “to send,” as we read in John 20:21: “As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” In this book Vancouver professor Michael Goheen gives a biblical basis for



the Church to better understand what it means to be sent by a saving God. He points out it is the Church that is sent, not the Christian individual, though the missional call has personal implications for each churchgoer. Therefore Goheen proposes a “missional ecclesiology,” a specific way of thinking about the Church.

Right from the beginning when God calls Abraham, He has in mind a people to bless the peoples of the Earth. The missional call for Israel is to be “a light to the nations” (Isaiah 42:6). However, Israel fails. Jesus comes to regather Israel. The 12 Apostles replace the 12 tribes. The death and resurrection of Christ sets in motion a new community sent to “all the nations.” At Pentecost the Spirit is poured out on all people. The church is “eschatological Israel.”

We tend to individualize and privatize our spiritual lives after conversion. However, Goheen’s reading of Scrip-

tures indicates a corporate and communal dimension to our lives in Christ. We are saved not only from our lost state, but also to be part of God’s people. God’s people have only one purpose: to be a missional entity, a people called to shine God’s light before others.

If you are looking for a book to state the seven steps to a missional church, this is not it. Instead, Goheen narrates where the missional people of God stand in the light of God’s cosmic drama of salvation. Our part is not to manoeuvre human plans, but to join the continuing story as the sovereign God unfolds it.

—Pye Chew

## Day by Day These Things We Pray: Uncovering Ancient Rhythms of Prayer

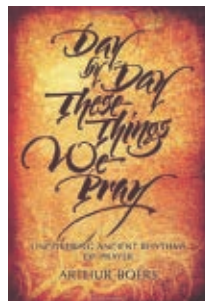
**Author: Arthur Boers**  
**Herald Press, 2010.**  
**238 pages. \$18.50**

This book was originally published as *The Rhythm of God’s Grace:*

*Morning and Evening Hours of Prayer* by Paraclete Press in 2003. This revised and expanded version bespeaks an evident hunger in the hearts of believers to uncover the ancient tradition of

fixed-hour prayer which, the author writes, “continues to inform, inspire, and hearten believers around the world.”

A professor of leadership at Tyndale University College & Seminary in Toronto, Boers acknowledges Evangelicals shy away from anything that smacks of liturgy, including



ancient disciplines like the “daily office.” As my Pentecostal pastor parents insisted, “It makes ‘us’ too much like ‘them,’” by which they meant mainline denominations such as Anglicans.

Boers judges nobody, calmly stating that setting aside specific prayer times honours God. Fixed-hour prayer may not be for everyone, but “the cost is often its own reward.” A Scripture-filled and thoughtfully arranged ritual of prayer and worship unites believers around the world who are praying at the same time. After all, God is not a God of disorder, and “everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way,” the Apostle Paul says.

Boers describes his visits to such north European Christian communities as Lindisfarne, Iona, Taizé and Northumbria that emphasize prayer, retreat and renewal. In the final chapter he details his own experiences with morning and evening prayer. “In an era of pilgrimage and seeking, when many . . . struggle with deep questions, the church

needs to provide havens of prayer and help people by creating structures and support for their spiritual life.”

This book’s usefulness is enhanced by a listing of recommended resources, along with practical tips including the structure and content of fixed-hour prayer. A final appendix explains how to prepare a hospitable space for corporate celebration. This book is compact enough to fit snugly in my shirt pocket, making it available at a moment’s notice.

—Burton K. Janes

## A Second Cup of Hot Apple Cider: Words to Stimulate the Mind and Delight the Spirit

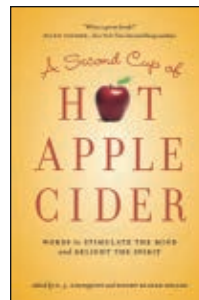
**Editors: N. J. Lindquist and Wendy Elaine Nelles**  
**That’s Life! Communications, 2011.**  
**336 pages. \$19.99**

Some books surprise you with their ability to take your breath away. This anthology is such a book: 51 short pieces – fiction, non-fiction,

poetry and even a play – written by 37 members of The Word Guild, a Canadian organization of writers, editors, publishers and speakers who are Christian.

I was impressed with the honesty and transparency, especially in the true stories. We meet a host of fellow Canadians – our neighbours! – whose lives are as unpredictable as our own. A mother of young children gets a diagnosis of cancer. A 36-year-old magazine editor has a stroke. A man who is forced to take early retirement asks what’s next? A woman prays for patience and a few days later breaks her back. A man tries to surprise his wife with a five-day bathroom renovation. What binds all the pieces together is a cord of faith as we see how God is involved in the very real circumstances of life.

The book wonderfully reflects Canada’s mosaic population with pieces from First Nations to home-born Canadians to immigrants, young to old, urban to rural. Though the writing styles are varied, the book was skillfully edited to



preserve the individual voices while providing a smooth read.

The short selections make this a perfect book for even indifferent readers. It would be a fabulous addition to an office waiting room, your bedside table, briefcase, backpack or purse. But be sure to buy more than one, for you will probably have the urge to share this gem of a collection with others. More details on this book and the preceding one at [hotapplecider.ca](http://hotapplecider.ca). —Violet Nesdoly

### Close Enough to Hear God Breathe: The Great Story of Divine Intimacy

**Author: Greg Paul**  
**Thomas Nelson, 2011.**  
**224 pages. \$18.00**

In this book Toronto urban ministry leader Greg Paul sets out to make some of the central concepts in Christian

creative non-fiction will have to face the reality that readers will judge it on two sets of criteria. *Close Enough to Hear God Breathe* has moments of brilliance, moments when the author's stories make theology sing. But, on my reading, such moments were few. More often the writing felt to me a bit strained, as if the stories – some of which are quite powerful – didn't quite fit the theological categories, but the author insisted on their inclusion.

At many points I found myself wanting Paul to skip the story and give me the theology. But I reminded myself that my own familiarity with theology meant I was not his target audience – and that others would perhaps understand theology better as he unfolded it from the stories he told.

As accessible theology, Paul's book is spot on. He even includes a chapter-by-chapter reader's guide at the end, with questions to aid his readers in their reflections. People who are new to Christianity will certainly find this book a fresh and accessible introduction.

—Ken Badley

### Kicking at the Darkness: Bruce Cockburn and the Christian Imagination

**Author: Brian J. Walsh**  
**Brazos Press, 2011.**  
**224 pages. \$18.99**

When my alma mater, Memorial University in St. John's, NL, bestowed an honorary doctorate upon singer/songwriter Bruce Cockburn in 2007, deputy public orator Annette Staveley quoted one of his song lyrics to

dub him "a grim traveller in a dawn sky" whose discography "bears witness to the horror and the holiness of the human condition." His intense "imagery offers us glimpses of the divine."

In *Kicking at the Darkness*, University of Toronto chaplain and professor Brian Walsh carries on a respectful dialogue with Cockburn's lyrics. After all, Walsh has studied the music for 40 years. The result is a tantalizing glimpse of the divine, as Staveley said, along with an unveiling of the ingredients that make up the so-called Christian imagination.

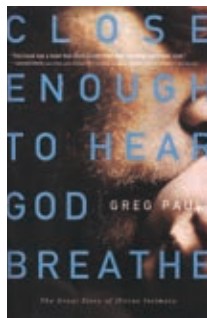
The burden of this book is an exploration into the responses this contemporary psalmist (Cockburn) gives to four worldview questions: Where are we? Who are we? What's wrong? What's the remedy? In short, Walsh suggests 1) we are in a world of wonders, called forth by love, 2) we are angel beasts, rumours of glory, called to image the Creator God of love, 3) we live in the falling dark, a world of betrayal, idolatry and ideology, hooked on avarice, and 4) we are given That love took on flesh in this glittering joker, Jesus, dancing

in the dragon's jaws.

An accomplished wordsmith himself, Walsh includes some of his own sermons, including the lovely and poetic wedding sermon, "Lovers in a Dangerous Time" (echoing another Cockburn lyric) as well as a communal prayer.

Admittedly, I was a tad suspicious of this book when I first picked it up. In recent years, there has been a flood of books purporting to explicate the theology of various artists. However, I need not have worried. Walsh steers clear of writing Cockburn's biography, or even explaining his spirituality. Rather, Walsh offers a nuanced conversation with the artist's entire oeuvre, bringing it "into creative dialogue with biblical faith."

Though we are indeed living in "the falling dark," perhaps it's time to, in Cockburn's words, "kick at the darkness 'til it bleeds daylight." Doing anything less is a vacuous pursuit of Christ. —Burton K. Janes



and some of its effects on human affairs. Then he recounts God's plan to bring redemption through the work of Jesus and God's plan for the ultimate consummation of history. Paul works through each of these four themes in turn, always light on explanation and heavy on stories.

Did the author succeed at making theology accessible? Yes, in fact, perhaps too well.

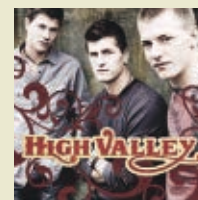
Anyone writing theology as

### Canadian Music Awarded

Three brothers from Alberta, known in country music circles as the group High Valley, cleaned up at the 33rd annual Covenant Awards, held by the Gospel Music Association of Canada in Calgary in October. High Valley won five awards related to its album *High Valley*, including group and artist of the year.

Ontario artists Ali Matthews (folk), The City Harmonic (modern worship), the three tenors group Tenore (fan choice), and Toronto Mass Choir (urban/R&B) also won at least three awards each, as did British Columbia's Brian Doerkson (praise and worship). More details at [gmacanada.ca](http://gmacanada.ca).

—Bill Fledderus




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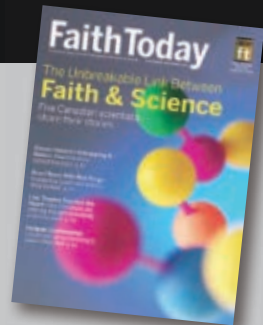
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## Challenges Good for Theology

Why Richard Dawkins, Osama bin Laden and Mitt Romney have helped clarify what Christians believe.

I love jazz and wish everybody shared my passion for it. I also love hockey, wine, cars, chocolate, philosophy, Stickley chairs, spy novels, chocolate, Mac computers, post-Impressionist landscapes, waterskiing, sardonic humour and chocolate. These things seem self-evidently wonderful to me, but I have learned not everyone else shares my tastes, alas.

As a theologian I wish everyone cared about theology. We feel and think and act according to what we think is the case, and theology is basically the best account we Christians can give right now of the basic truths of reality.

So why would I be glad for the likes of Dawkins, bin Laden and Romney – a New Atheist, a radical Islamist and a Mormon?

To answer that properly I have to take you back to Edmonton in 1976. I'm a kid at Mount Carmel Bible School, sitting in a course on doctrine, and trying hard not to yawn the jaw right off my face. Hour after hour, chapter after chapter, I'm hearing about stuff I already sorta know and certainly agree with, since I've been well church-ed by that point and have no gripes with orthodoxy as my tradition taught it.

A few weeks into the term, however, we started another course, this one on cults and other religions. The course had its weak points, such as including Roman Catholicism in the curriculum. (I'm sure Mount Carmel doesn't do that now!) But the best thing it did was crucial – it got me interested in theology.

Now that I began to see the Bible as Jehovah's Witnesses saw it, or the culture as secular humanists saw it, or the divine as Hindus saw it, I realized how poor my ability was to say clearly what we Christians did and didn't believe, and to say why we preferred our interpretation.

Encountering people of other viewpoints – and especially people we can't avoid such as Dawkins, bin Laden

and Romney – has provided all of us with the opportunity to dig deeper into Scripture, to ask questions of each other and the Church's teachers, and to speak more precisely and winsomely to our friends about what we believe and why we believe it.

I have had lots of opportunities to speak publicly about the Christian view of the world because the sharp alternatives nowadays have provoked journalists to ask, "Well, what do mainstream Christians say in response?"

But what's been true for some of us in public has been true for all of us in private. We are confronted with startlingly different opinions about the nature of love, sex, family, civilization, politics, money, responsibility, justice, charity, death, the hereafter – and each of these occasions gives us opportunity to share gospel truths.

So, yes, it vexes me to read a long cover story in *The Atlantic* that undermines the biblical view of marriage. It annoys me to watch yet another television show featuring a religious character who either mouths sub-Christian platitudes or sharpens his machete for his next victim. It makes me shake my head to hear smart people say such dumb things about the Crusades, or science versus the Bible, or the

We are confronted with startlingly different opinions about the nature of love ... charity, death, the hereafter...

"power of now."

But Jesus and the Apostles made their way through a world strewn with alternative gods and philosophies. And they apparently didn't spend a lot of time trying desperately to learn about all of them and respond with point-by-point critiques – valuable as that activity can be for some of us in certain relationships.

What they *did* do is what I learned to do in Bible school – know the gospel. Know the Bible that articulates the gospel. Know the grounds on which I can commend the gospel to my neighbours. And know the Jesus who is at the heart of it all.

The Bible tells me to study diligently so I can handle accurately the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15). Thanks to folks like Dawkins, bin Laden and Romney we're all studying at least a little more. And for everyone around us who can thereby hear the gospel more plainly and persuasively, that's a very good thing. **FT**

**JOHN STACKHOUSE** teaches at Regent College. His book *Making the Best of It: Following Christ in the Real World* is now available in paperback from Oxford University Press.

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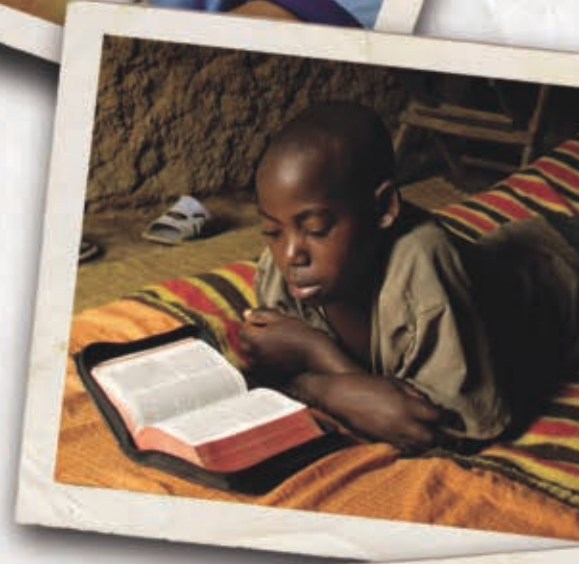



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# When the Door Slams Shut

What it's like to be sent to prison for 20 years, even with God alongside.

By Jay Handel, with Arnet H. Hales

**N**ine years ago Jay Handel committed an unthinkable crime. By his own hand he murdered his five children and then tried to take his own life. Arnet Hales of Port Hardy, B.C., felt God calling him to minister and began writing to Handel in 2002 while he was still in the court process, prior to being found guilty. The first letter was “simply a brief statement of who I was, and why I was writing,” says Hales. They have remained in contact by mail and phone ever since.

“We have shared together through the difficult time of his own restoration, and to say the least, my own as well,” says Hales, now 62, who was working through his own memories of being sexually assaulted as a child in Swift Current, Sask. Over the years Hales has “had the privilege of introducing Jay” to M2W2, a Christian prison ministry, and to Crossroads Bible Institute, a home study program for prisoners.

“It has not been an easy journey for either of us,”

says Hale, “but it has been a journey founded in what Menno Simons, in 1539, called true evangelical faith.” The journey has also led Hale and his family to found Hope Builders Christian Restorative Ministries, an initiative which seeks to bring hope on Vancouver Island to both those who go to prison and those who must stay behind, partners and children. The ministry appointed Jay Handel as one of its founding directors and looks forward to his parole in 13 years.

Hales has recently been reflecting on some of their earliest correspondence, and has permission to share it below, in an attempt to help readers understand the prison experience better. Handel also recently summarized what such correspondence can mean, when he wrote to Hales: “My dear friend, You came when I needed you most. You stayed in the midst of my own doubts and tribulations, and you continue to give from your heart of kindness and goodness to one who is undeserving.” Hales, for his part, reports that their journey together “has been for me a living out of God’s call to us to love mercy and walk humbly in Micah 6:8, and I am honoured to call Jay a friend, as he calls me.”

\* \* \*

**S**lam! My God! What have I done? I am alone, lost and forsaken. All I have worked for is destroyed. All my hopes are nothing, and all that I love is ripped away from me. Nothing that was part of my life remains, and there is no chance to rebuild what I once had. How can I survive the emptiness of this existence without that love in the face of the terror that overwhelms me?

The time moves so slowly, and the seasons are the only rhythm that makes any sense. It’s cold. There are no changes to the day that enable me to come out of this stupor that holds me in its grip. How I miss my family. Counting tiny vent holes on the ceiling only keeps me amused for a brief time, and once you have made it to five thousand or so, the eyes go buggy and unable to focus.

If there ever were a time to die, now would be it. The trust of quiet and calm must be built before the razors are given out for a shave. That time has passed. I have them now and the time for their use approaches. I must speak to my mother and tell her it’s ok for this added death to occur. It’s all over for me, and I love you. Be strong, be sure it must be this way, and know the pain will lessen

as your life goes on. There is no reason for me to live, and the pain is too great for me to bear. The time will come.

\* \* \*

**S**lam! My God! What has happened to me? You have cast me into the abyss, and the time spent being dragged back has bruised my soul and twisted my mind even more than it was to begin with. All of you, leave me be! Stop abusing me! You have no reason and you have no authority to do what you are doing. The food is covered in filth, the strip searches, denial of phone calls, no showers for up to five days at a time, taunting and curses combined with threatening gestures and physical threats. The constant stress of waiting for it to happen, but it doesn’t.

The endless repetition gives way to thoughts of self-recrimination. How I miss my family. Then come the questions: “How are you doing today?” “Do you have anything to say?” Leave me be. You aren’t interested in what I have to say. All you want is to be the one to get the admissions on paper. [Curse] you! You alternate abuse with patronization and expect a soul destroyed, and a mind crumbled, to act as if

**“How did I get here? How could I have done such a thing? I am reminded every day of the hatred directed towards me.”**

there were a semblance of normalcy to exist in! Nothing is right. Nothing is real. I have never been here before. I don’t know who you are. Why are you asking me all these questions? *Leave me alone!* My God! What have I done? When will it all end?

\* \* \*

**S**lam! My God! How did I get here? How could I have done such a thing? I am reminded every day of the hatred directed towards me. I still cannot speak, and I shake for the greater portion of every day. Nothing is right. Nothing is normal. I know where I am geographically, but not where I am societally or even in the place where I am now living.

Some of the inmates declare their desire to kill me or see me killed while others speak quietly as though they could be trusted. Trust no one. Read the Bible. It is the only book that makes any sense. It’s always there, and it’s the one thing they don’t take away from me. I memorize a Psalm: “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.” It brings

a measure of peace to the most troubled of times I spend alone.

All the faith I had was for nothing. How could God let such a thing happen? How could I have done such a thing? Where does a person find faith when it has been destroyed? What could God be trying to do to me and tell me? That He felt a lesson in insanity was in order? Are so many things wrong in this world that this sacrifice is necessary?

The answer is in the book. The balance of sacrifice and faith is predominant throughout the Scriptures. I must read. I discover so many instances of men – from King David to the Apostles to Saul who is named Paul – whose sins were great and yet even though they include murder, as with David and Paul, they went on to live lives of exemplary faith and devotion to our Lord God.

It is faith that keeps me alive. It is life that restores faith. I read another Psalm, number 25, and it brings me to life again. As I read the two Psalms each day, I am reminded of the need to keep myself well and immerse myself in the lessons of this book. My friend in Port Hardy keeps writing and telling me he knows time will restore my well-being. He helps with the continued contribution of sermons and Bible studies. A 28-page sermon and a 40-page sermon have gone a long way towards giving me the spiritual tools I need to begin my sanity anew. His shorter sermons are jewels of faith I wish to live by.

He has signed me up for a Bible study with the Crossroads Bible Institute. Since that day I have completed my first course (January 2009) and received a certificate of excellence for the undertaking. I have also started the second course with expectations of satisfaction for my accomplishment. What he has told me has come to be, and I can feel the influence of God in my life.

The time I have spent allowing my mind to cycle through its many ordeals has given me an increasingly large ability to understand what I am, and what I am not responsible for. It also allows me to receive God's answers to my own prayers, spoken not only for me, but on behalf of the people I am close to in this life. It has taken time, but the reading, study, and help have all served to be a phenomenal counter to the dread and inhumanity that are the mainstays of the penal system.

As I evolve from an intake inmate to a person who has resisted the degradation for long enough it no longer holds any terror or mystery for me, I still find the repetition of all shown here reoccurs often enough that it serves as a reminder of what

can happen to a human being. The process of the mental function that comes to a destroyed mind/psyche is laborious to endure, but even so will guide you through to the reasonable conclusion that in the end is inescapable.

There are no parts of the human mind able to resist the destruction of insanity without the aid of professional help. When the help is not given, sanity is a long distance to

travel. The medication they finally prescribe will also go a long way to the reasonable functioning of the "twisted mind." Just don't think there is anyone who cares enough to supply that kind of help in time to save you from the terror you endure. You are condemned, and with condemnation comes exile. Shunned, outcast, scorned and ridiculed.

The previous thoughts are never far from the surface, and as you read through them you could not know each thought as presented was able to produce at least two and sometimes three others. Sometimes they are related. Sometimes they are not.

It is the working of the incarcerated mind that gives rise to the need for faith. Faith gives rise to acceptance and understanding. Even when you have been a man of faith all your life, you cannot begin to understand the depth faith contains until you are cast down, degraded, without those whom you love, and facing an unknown future. Even though the great number of people exist who think they know what my future entails, it is only God who can give me the path to tread and the will to put my feet upon it. There is never anyone so alone as the man who has lost his family, and the damage done is compounded when the loss is by his own hand. **FT**

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**Arnet H. Hales** of Port Hardy, B.C., is founding director of Hope Builders Christian Restorative Ministries. He reports that Jay Handel has been transferred to another institution in British Columbia, preventing regular visits between them. However, the two keep in touch by mail and by phone, and Jay Handel remains connected to M2W2 (m2w2.com) and has a permanent sponsor to whom he relates on a regular basis.

**“It is the working of the incarcerated mind that gives rise to the need for faith.”**