

# Faith Today

To Connect, Equip and Inform Evangelical Christians in Canada

MARCH/APRIL 2012



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## Beyond Our Cultural Comfort Zones

What does it take for us to become a national body of worshippers who celebrate each other's cultures?

**Bible Study Tools on the Go:**  
A quick review of the major Bible software options p. 25

**Renewal in the Mainline:**  
An update on evangelical movements in Canada's Presbyterian, United and Anglican churches p. 28

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# 28

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**Cover Photo:** Jessie and Nigel Paul's wedding last summer involved people and elements from a variety of traditions. PHOTO © DAVE AND KATHERINE KALMBACH - ONE TREE PHOTOGRAPHY [HTTP://ONETREEPHOTO.CA](http://ONETREEPHOTO.CA)

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PHOTO: JIMMY BROYDEN



## Faith Transcends Culture

God is doing some amazing things within the diversity of the Church in Canada.

**M**any Canadians are proud of the multicultural nature of our country – quick to celebrate our many cultures of origin and how they contribute to the richness of our common life.

In our cover story “Beyond Our Cultural Comfort Zone,” senior writer Debra Fieguth asks if our churches are weak in this area. Why are Canadians of different races and ethnic backgrounds able to live and work together – but rarely to worship together?

Historically, our denominations have intentionally (and successfully) planted churches focused on individual demographic groups. It’s easiest, and therefore stewardly, to build a faith community among people who share the same heritage and speak with the same accent.

But as more of our neighbourhoods become a mix of peoples, a congregation that remains monocultural begins to look like an exclusive club instead of a community welcoming all nations at the foot of the cross.

Change takes hard work, but churches making the attempt to become intercultural report they are rediscovering a richness the very first churches enjoyed (and struggled with).

Another privilege we have in diverse Canada is publicly discussing our values. In “The Federal Budget: A Moral Document,” EFC vice-president Don Hutchinson explains how and why The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada is urging the Government of Canada to make families, compassion and charities three important priorities in its budget planning. Each of these three has a role to play “in securing

the continued strength of our nation,” explains Hutchinson, who traces these ideas back to biblical sources.

Offering biblical, constructive contributions for the good of all is also something evangelical movements are aspiring to do in our Presbyterian, United and Anglican Churches. You can read an interesting update about this in “Renewal in the Mainline” by Ryan Paulsen.

While the last few decades have often been dominated by public conflict between mainline evangelical groups and their church leaders, today Paulsen reports on a fresh wind blowing through these movements. The result is a collective focus on Jesus Christ and on encouraging Jesus-centred communities.

It’s as if God has healed their battle wounds and sent them out to heal others. All Evangelicals know how people who are excited by their own faith are contagious – and we can pray the restored vitality of these once-tired brothers and sisters will indeed bring fruit.

“True renewal in the church,” says Rev. Fred Stewart, the new executive director of The Renewal Fellowship Within the Presbyterian Church in Canada, “is not something to be organized and campaigned for, but watched for and embraced when it arrives.”

Let’s all continue to watch for God at work and embrace Spirit-led change in our country. **FT**

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

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## Foster Homes and Beyond

Re: *Don't Turn Them Away* (Jan/Feb 2012)

I am a woman in my sixties who spent my entire youth in foster homes, as did my brother. We had a chaotic life. Fortunately for both my brother and I, we have beaten the odds and have had stable marriages, jobs, children, homes

and friends. My brother turned 18 when I was 16, and we were repatriated to our mother with whom we had kept in contact but had not lived with since I was 18 months old. The Protestant Children's Homes thought it was wonderful that we were going to live with our mother in a two-bedroom apartment in Flemington Park Ontario Housing, talk-

ing about it as a success story.

My mother had never kept a home and had been parentless since she was very young, leaving home at 13. She was very needy. Both my brother and I had to get jobs to make this

work while we finished high school. I had to share a bedroom with my mother. My brother left and got married by the age of 20, and I went on to

university thanks to an amaz-

**Continued on page 8**



## Milestones

### APPOINTED

**Brett McBride** as executive director of UrbanPromise Toronto. He succeeds Colin McCartney, who founded the ministry in 1998 and is now moving on to work at equipping emerging leaders. McBride has been with the ministry since 1999. UrbanPromise works with youth and families in inner-city government housing, and is affiliated with a similar ministry founded by the well-known American evangelical Tony Campolo in Camden, N.J.



**Brett McBride**

ular ministry founded by the well-known American evangelical Tony Campolo in Camden, N.J.

**Bruce Hindmarsh**, an expert on early British evangelicalism at Regent College in Vancouver, has been appointed president of the American Society of Church History, the first non-American in the position. The society was founded in 1888 and includes almost 2,000 members worldwide. For 2012 he serves as president-elect, 2013 as president, and 2014 as past-president. Hindmarsh, a Canadian Anglican, serves at Regent as the James M. Houston professor of spiritual theology.

**C. G. Maclin** as director of Canadian operations for Marketplace Chaplains Canada, a non-profit organization that places chaplains in the workplace. Marketplace Chaplains has just begun expanding into Canada, and so Maclin remains based in Dallas, Tex., but travels regularly to Alberta and beyond.

**Marvin Brubacher** as executive director MentorLink Canada, which helps denominational and local church leaders develop spiritual leaders through intentional mentoring. MentorLink serves in 39 countries with almost 250 ministries, agencies and organizations. Brubacher was president of Heritage College & Seminary in Cambridge, Ont., from 1990 to 2011, and before that was a Baptist pastor in London and St. Thomas for 14 years.

**Jennifer Henry** as executive director of Kairos: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives. Kairos is a charity representing Anglican, Roman Catholic, Christian Reformed, Evangelical Lutheran, Mennonite, Presbyterian, Quaker and United Church groups. Its head office is in Toronto. Henry has worked for Kairos and the coalitions preceding it for almost 20 years, most recently as manager for the "dignity and rights" and fundraising Teams. She succeeds Mary Corkery, who has retired after eight years in the position.



**Jennifer Henry**

### RENAMED

**OneBook** is the new name of the Bible translation ministry formerly called Global PartnerLink. President and CEO is Wayne Johnson of Toronto. OneBook raises Canadian funds to support Bible

translation and literacy projects in 13 of the world's poorest countries, mainly facilitating the work of "nationals" (educated local people) in language groups without a written language. It is a member of the Wycliffe Global Alliance.

### AWARDED

**The King's University College** of Edmonton has received an environmental award for its achievements in sustainability. It earned a bronze rating from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (stars.aashe.org). Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing environmental stewardship are part of its five-year strategic plan, in part because of student input. The Christian liberal arts school has 700 students and includes commerce, sciences and education programs.

### EXPANDING

**Millar College** of the Bible, based in Pambrun, Sask., is partnering with Okanagan Bible College to launch "Millar College of the Bible - Sunnybrae Campus." This new venture would operate from Sunnybrae Bible Camp near Salmon Arm, B.C. First year enrolment opens in fall 2012, with freshmen classes in hermeneutics, communications, theology, discipleship and various Old and New Testament studies. The second and third years of the college program would be added in ensuing years. Steve Janz, a Millar alumnus, is director of the new campus. Millar is a non-denominational, evangelical Bible college founded in 1932.



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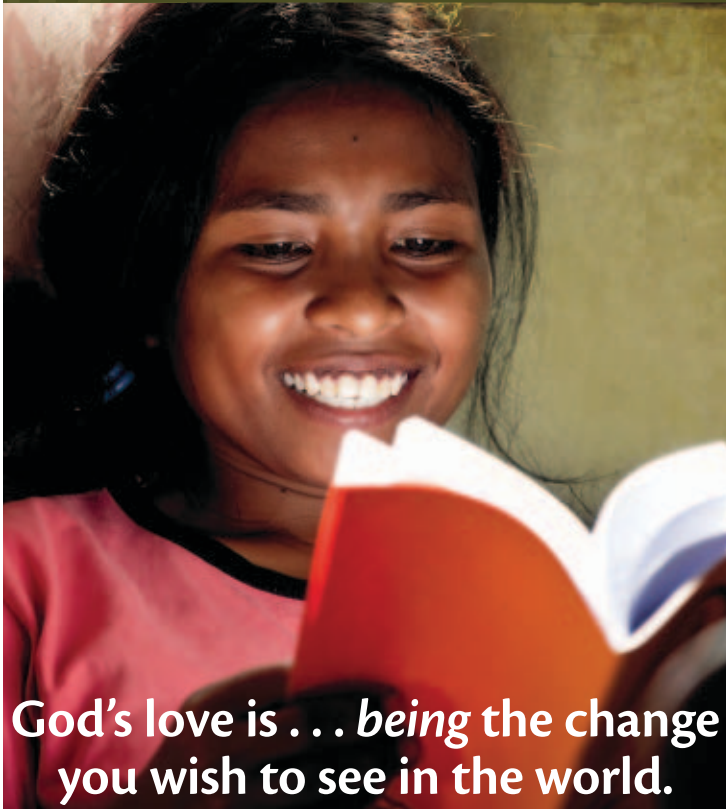
Somehow we made it work for all of us. This was a story few of my friends or my family knew until the last few years. A couple of years ago I was asked to give a short talk on “My Faith Journey” and this opened my eyes, memories and heart to the fact that it was God in my life that had given me the resilience to overcome this upbringing. It was only then that I truly realized that I had a story that was inspiring but not shared.

I am very thankful for what God has done in my life, and I support the EFC in engaging the issue of fostering and adoption.

*Megan McCullough*  
Waterloo, Ont.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The launch of [AdoptionSunday.com](http://AdoptionSunday.com) and its free *Adoption Sunday Kit*, a previously announced EFC project, has been delayed but should be live online soon.

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## Views on Hell

Re: Letters to the Editor (Jan/Feb 2012)

Bell's book *Love Wins* may rightfully encourage Evangelicals to revisit their views on hell, but I suggest that they first revisit their Christology. Who spoke more about hell than Jesus did?

Jerry Hildebrand  
Winkler, Man.

## Defending Good Friday

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

How dare John Stackhouse say that Good Friday shouldn't be a holiday. If it wasn't, a lot of people wouldn't be able to go to service. As long as there are Christians in Canada, Good Friday needs to be a holiday.

Friday is the wrong day for the crucifixion, though. Passover was on Wednesday, which is when Jesus was crucified. Thursday and Friday were days of unleavened bread, and Jesus rose on what we would call Saturday night.

Louise Cassel  
Kingston, Ont.

## Letters to the editor

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# Faith Changes Everything for *Courageous* Stunt Co-ordinator

Professional stuntman Jimmy Broyden demonstrates his full body fire burn. Inset: Broyden with actor Ken Bevel performing a scene in the movie *Courageous*.



PHOTO: JIMMY BROYDEN

PHOTO: SHERWOOD PICTURES

hood. The film's tale of the perils of growing up with an absent father was one of the things that attracted Broyden to the film. The other was the opportunity it provided to flex his muscles as stunt co-ordinator in a low-budget, high-action movie.

*Courageous* beautifully married the Armstrong, B.C. resident's lifelong passion for stunt work with his desire to see families transformed by the Christian message. Broyden himself grew up fatherless in an abusive home. "Right from the beginning I was a wild kid," he says. By age five, he was lighting fires in closets. By 11 he was into drugs, an addiction that quickly consumed him. He tried drug dealing, dropped out of high school, was kicked out of home and attempted suicide. In short, Jimmy Broyden was a troubled young man.

Perhaps not surprisingly for a child obsessed with danger, Broyden nurtured early on the dream of becoming a professional stuntman. By the age of 25 he'd realized that dream, managing his drug habit as best he could between jobs. Broyden might very well have continued that way, were it not for an encounter with a stunt co-ordinator named Bill Ferguson.

understand now how important fatherhood is," says Canadian Jimmy Broyden, father to seven and the stunt co-ordinator for 2011's cinematic tribute to dads, *Courageous*. "Good or bad, fathers

have an impact on their kids' lives." The well-received Christian movie tells the fictional story of four Albany, Georgia sheriff's deputies who are tested by the city's gang problems and the challenges of father-

## Master of Peace and Conflict Studies Launches

Conrad Grebel University College hopes to equip more "catalysts for peace." The school, located at the University of Waterloo in Ontario, is launching a master of peace and conflict studies (MPACS) program. Beginning in the fall of 2012 there will be openings for 12 full-time and part-time students.

Grebel boasts Canada's oldest peace and conflict studies (PACS) department and has offered conflict resolution and peace-building courses

for almost 35 years. A PACS major option has been available since 2005. In high demand, Grebel's 1200 PACS course spaces are filled by about 180 different students.

"When we surveyed our students, they wanted a master's program because it will provide further education on peace principles that will help them in their current work and will also help them get jobs," says Lowell Ewert, director of PACS.

Though the college was started by

Ontario Mennonites, students come from a variety of philosophical, ethnic and religious backgrounds. Graduates apply peace values in public, private and non-profit sector careers. "PACS is attempting to educate students to be salt and light in whatever occupation they choose to pursue," says Ewert.

Grebel's MPACS program has a unique emphasis on building students' capacity to foster positive change in the realm of "civil society" – which encompasses organizations and

It was Ferguson who handed Broyden a Bible and pointed out his need for faith – only days after Broyden’s first tentative encounter with God. So Broyden prayed, asking God that if He were real, He would liberate him from his addiction. Two weeks later, Broyden was drug free.

“As a kid I took drugs to try and kill myself – I punished myself. Then I became a stuntman and got hit by cars and got punished some more. Then I met Christ, and now I know I don’t need to be punished anymore,” explains Broyden.

Freed from self-hatred, his love for action nevertheless endured. Broyden worked for Ferguson for 15 more years. Ferguson became a father figure to him, teaching him the skills of the trade and how to live as a Christian in an industry that is sometimes aggressively anti-Christian. Broyden continued after Ferguson’s retirement, building an impressive resume working on shows like the *X-Files* and with stars like Harrison Ford and Jackie Chan.

Broyden describes working on *Courageous* as a special experience, both because of the different tone on set – there were morning devotions and prayer ministry – and the exhilarating challenge of executing high-octane action scenes safely and on a modest budget.

Most of all, though, it’s the message of the movie he’s proud of. “When people see this movie, I want them to know that the Lord is the foundation, and He needs to be the foundation of our families.” **FT**

–Stephanie Douglas



**Kevin Ranney, director of Grebel's advisory services for Sustainalytics.**

activities not run by businesses or governments. “By mobilizing our community to get involved in organizations that promote the arts, sports, health, education, religion or social justice, our communities are

enriched and made more compassionate,” says Ewert. **FT** –Sandra Reimer

GREBEL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

## New Books Help Children With Parents in Jail

**T**wo books by Prison Fellowship Canada (PFC) will help children with parents in jail learn how to relate to their parents and explain the situation to their friends. The books, *Should I Be Sad?* and *What Should I Say?*, were written by psychologist and author Sandra Keller, whose first book, *Should I Be Sad Without a Dad?*, examined the psychological effects of divorce on a six-year-old boy.

Based on input from PFC chaplains and families, the books look at two key issues. *Should I Be Sad?* features a boy who has trouble handling the monthly call from his dad. *What Should I Say?* features a girl who doesn’t know if and how to tell people about her mother being in jail.

A typical scenario, says PFC executive director Eleanor Clitheroe, revolves around a prisoner’s weekly phone call home. She says when the call comes, the child often says “hello” and “good-bye” and hangs up.

“There wasn’t anything on [the] market for this situation,” says Clitheroe. What was available was about 25 years old and didn’t address the situation directly. “We wanted children to see themselves in [the] book and know they were not the only one with this problem.”

PFC printed 10,000 copies of each short, colourful, easy-to-read book last year, with the cost covered by long-time PFC supporter Bruce Etherington. “He’s intimately involved with our work and knows a lot about prison ministry,” says Clitheroe of the Toronto-area financial advisor.

“It was a natural opportunity to use some of God’s resources to help some of His children,” says Etherington. “It was some of His extra He’s blessed me with to help kids who are dealing with extremely negative images about themselves. I felt it was beneficial to help improve their self-image, to help them know that having parents in prison was not their fault.” Demand was “quite high” for the books which were distributed across the country this past fall. Clitheroe says they were well received.

A second run of the books, available at [www.prisonfellowship.ca](http://www.prisonfellowship.ca), may be possible. And PFC may add two more books to the series – one that looks at what happens when the parent returns home and another focused on prison visits.

“This addressed the four key needs identified for the bulk of the population,” says Clitheroe, although some culture-specific needs may need to be addressed with separate books. **FT**

–Robert White



# Eleven Kids, Five Bucks and One Great Choir



**D**enise Gillard says she founded the Toronto Children's Concert Choir and Performing Arts Company (TC3) in 2001 with "Eleven kids and five bucks." Eleven years later the choir has grown from 11 performers to 50 members. The African-Canadian youth, ages 7-18, perform spirituals, jazz, hip hop, drums, drama and dance.

The choir is made up of young people from a diversity of backgrounds across the Greater Toronto Area who perform in churches and community centres. TC3 has also travelled to Halifax, Vancouver, Detroit, Nashville and England.

When considering members, Gillard doesn't look for a "perfect note or grade point average." In auditions she listens for the ability to hear a note or keep a rhythm. Beyond that, Gillard says she tries to discern a "spark of passion" to succeed. In a second audition at the end of the first year, members must demonstrate what they can give back to the choir and the community through volunteer service, often through TC3 programs.


TC3's mission is, in fact, to empower youth through the performing arts, academics and relieving poverty. Gillard's specific vision is to empower young people who fall

through the cracks. She says she thinks into their future, building self-confidence, preparing them for job interviews and public speaking. Gillard's goal is transformation.

Some participants live on the edge of criminal activity when they enter the choir, yet go on to start their own businesses. Others attend Bible college when they leave TC3. Through tutorials in math and study skills offered through TC3, Gillard says kids are launched on a quest for academic excellence. The power of gospel music builds faith and hope in Jesus' love as they apply their faith to every phase of life.

Gillard's dedicated artistic staff offers work-

shops in churches and community centres. They teach at day camps and partner with a variety of faith-based and secular organizations, drawing approximately 2,000 people into the extended TC3 network.

Not only has Gillard witnessed miraculous transformation in kids' lives, Arrow Leadership recently accepted her to the executive leadership program, and World Vision Canada has offered not-for-profit management training. "It's been quite a journey, constantly changing, but God is faithful," says Gillard. 

—Charlene de Haan

## Samaritan's Purse Canada Helps *Build It Forward* on Television Show

**B**uild It Forward, a documentary series that aired on CMT Canada (Country Music Television) in the fall, chronicled how seven struggling Canadian families were transformed when they "build it forward."

To earn their own low-cost mortgage, the families, all considered at risk for homelessness, volunteered in their community and helped with building projects in the de-

veloping world. The show was hosted by country music star Paul Brandt and brought together several charities, including Samaritan's Purse Canada.

*Build It Forward* taps into Samaritan's Purse's construction experience to facilitate assistance for families in Mexico and Haiti. "We were very pleased to come on-board with Paul and *Build It Forward*. We've built thousands of schools,

## David Festival Celebrates Artistic Worship



PHOTO: ANDREW COOPER

**The David Festival Celebration service offers participants the chance to worship together and showcase their developing skills.**

**C**hristian musicians and writers will attend a festival in Port Perry, Ont., this spring to develop their writing, vocal and instrumental techniques. Organized by volunteers from a number of area churches, the David Festival offers workshops to enable and equip local church-goers – of all abilities – to glorify God with skill through various art forms.

The David Festival began in 2007 when a handful of Christian musicians in Port Perry discussed ways to help local churches develop stronger worship skills. Organizers approached local experts to conduct workshops for church choirs, the most widely used form of worship through the arts in Port Perry's churches. The festival's name refers to the biblical David, who was an accomplished soldier, musician, poet, author of many psalms, and a king cred-

ited with initiating the use of music in the temple.

Workshops offered at the festival include choral instruction for children and youth, worship bands, tenor and bass vocal ensembles, a writing workshop and the visual arts. This year the visual art component will include a historical overview of architectural detail, decorative

objects and iconography in the Church, as well as hands-on creative instruction session.

Writers have explored techniques for writing effective non-fiction as well as creating poetry, and this year will have the chance to learn how to get their writing published. Choir clinics, attended by choristers from several area denominations, teach skills such as breath control, tuning, vocal production and choral sound techniques. Participating churches practise the musical pieces prior to the festival to maximize the learning potential when they arrive. Workshop venues are spread throughout various Port Perry church buildings.

The 2012 David Festival will take place March 23-25. "It's an inspiring day," says Dr. Martin Stewart, who attended last year's worship band workshop. "The instruction and the ideas given to us for enhancing the worship were very helpful – music ideas as well as ideas for driving people into worship." Melody Elsmore, a writing workshop participant, summed up the experience: "I like having our local function, and it was [within] walking distance. It's a fun, informative, interactive way to learn the basics from a proven professional." **FT** –Michelle Zarins

**"Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.**

– Isaiah 1:18 (TNIV)

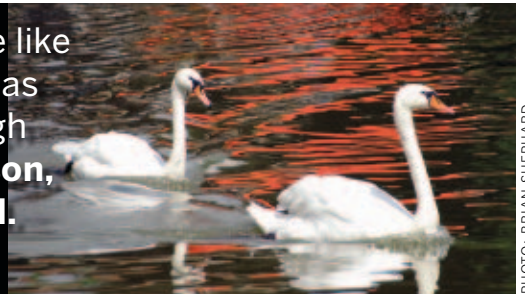


PHOTO: BRIAN SHEPARD

churches, medical clinics and temporary shelters around the world, and this series is a great way to let Canadians know," says Fred Weiss, executive director of Samaritan's Purse. "The participating families had the chance to learn that Samaritan's Purse 'builds' into impoverished people and communities in many ways - housing, health care, vocational training, literacy, spirituality and more," he says.

For Brandt, the show was all about "giving someone the opportunity to help someone else, and at the same time help

themselves." In one episode, participant Jaylene, a single mother and part-time student, writes and performs a song for a local benefit concert. She also collects used instruments to take to Mexico, where she builds a playground structure and shares the gift of music with orphans at an orphanage.

Brandt shares that Jaylene learned she had "a strength she didn't realize before, which is what happens when you step out in faith." *Faith Today* readers can watch episodes at [cmt.ca](http://cmt.ca) (search for "build it forward"). **FT** –Michelle Zarins



# Unexpected Affirmation

The Supreme Court of Canada agrees neutrality is philosophically impossible, which is good news for people of faith.

Canada, like all countries, has a plurality of institutions its citizens participate in: family, place of worship, business, school, government, voluntary associations. Every one of these is oriented by a religion or faith – ultimately who or what they serve – as well as being shaped by the surrounding culture.

How we try to manage all this as a society, a task often faced by all levels of government, can quickly trigger vigorous public debate. Often people search for a neutral standpoint or neutral method to deal with diversity. This is where a recent Supreme Court of Canada judgement becomes important.

It states that “trying to achieve neutrality in the public sphere is a major challenge for the state” and “We must also accept that, from a philosophical standpoint, absolute neutrality does not exist.”

As Christians, we agree. There is no neutral place. It is our confession, in the words of the Apostle Paul about Christ: “He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.”

Neutrality is an attractive fiction. It would make life much easier if it were possible to step above the diversity and from the vantage point of neutrality treat all fairly. But the Court has acknowledged that’s impossible. Government action cannot be perfectly free of bias. The same is true in the media – the idea of “journalistic objectivity” is now widely recognized as an unachievable ideal.

The Court made this admission after a case about mandatory religious diversity education in Quebec known as *S.L. v. Commission scolaire des Chênes*. The EFC intervened

in the case because of the mandatory nature of the educational course.

The Quebec government basically argued it is better to include instruction about religion than ignore it. And I agree. In the late 1990s an education commission here at the EFC promoted this approach. Religion is a vital aspect of the lives of Canadians. To exclude it from the curriculum sends the message that it may not be an integral part of life or that it is a private matter and therefore best shunned from the public square and from education.

The challenge is to help students understand the religious diversity that surrounds them without teaching them that all religions are the same or favouring one religion over others. Either would make the mandatory nature of the course prob-

lematic for parents and children of deep religious conviction.

As our provinces develop and teach such curricula, we must keep in mind the point made by the Court: there is ultimately no neutral ground, no non-religious standpoint from which to teach about religion.

The Court went on to encourage a “realistic and non-absolutist approach.” It explained that “state neutrality is assured when the state neither favours nor hinders any particular religious belief, that is, when it shows respect for all postures towards religion, including having no religious beliefs

whatsoever, while taking into account the competing constitutional rights of the individuals affected.”

This means governments are to be realistic and respectful towards religion.

Yes there may be biases in the curriculum as well as in its delivery. But we – as Christian parents and citizens – can work with governments and schools to minimize these occurrences and to decide on a good process for handling problems of bias. This is realistic and can be done respectfully.

In the end, parents still have the primary responsibility for the education of their child, and they must have the freedom to opt out of the portion of any curriculum that contravenes the teachings of their religion – something the Court neglected to affirm.

Yet our parental responsibility can also be expressed in looking for opportunities for constructive participation with governments and schools to find good ways of educating children about religion. **FT**

The Quebec government basically argued it is better to include instruction about religion than ignore it. And I agree.



### Together for influence, impact and identity

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

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

## Call to Rethink Law on “Human Being”

The EFC has joined calls on Parliament to review the ancient definition of “human being” in the Criminal Code, which says a “child” is a child in the womb but not a human being until it emerges fully from a mother’s body. The EFC published a news release that now also links to related EFC blog postings and an EFC appearance on CBC TV’s *Power & Politics with Evan Solomon*. Visit [theEFC.ca/human](http://theEFC.ca/human).

### Office of Religious Freedoms Needed

The EFC’s Don Hutchinson appeared on TVO’s *The Agenda with Steve Paikin* on January 23 and on CTV’s *National Affairs* on January 4 to discuss the need for the Federal Government’s proposed Office of Religious Freedom. The EFC has been calling for such an office for a decade. Watch the TVO video (37 minutes, includes option to leave comments) at [theEFC.ca/TVOJan2012](http://theEFC.ca/TVOJan2012) and the CTV video (10 minutes, but you can jump ahead to start at the 2.5 minute mark) at [theEFC.ca/CTVJan2012](http://theEFC.ca/CTVJan2012).

### Ideas for Federal Budget

The EFC appeared Feb. 14 before the House of Commons Finance Committee to submit ideas for Canada’s next federal budget. The five-page presentation is available at [theEFC.ca/prebudget2012](http://theEFC.ca/prebudget2012). The EFC is urging the government to address three key building blocks of our nation: families, compassion and charities. These ideas are explained in the latest Activate column in *Faith Today* (see page 17) and also in three blog postings on “Key Components to Maintaining a Strong Canada” at [activateCFPL.theEFC.ca/journal/category/politics](http://activateCFPL.theEFC.ca/journal/category/politics).

### Improving Bible Colleges, Universities and Seminaries

Christian Higher Education Canada (CHEC), a partnership of education institutions formed on the EFC platform, is holding its first national forum in Edmonton, May 28-30, 2012. Administrative leaders, faculty and students will be inspired and challenged to deepen their understanding of their place in Christian higher education as a national movement. Visit [checanada.ca](http://checanada.ca).

### Pray for Egypt, North Korea and Nigeria

The first anniversary of the January 25 revolution in Egypt passed recently, and the World Evangelical Alliance appealed for prayer amid widespread tension and fear. The WEA held a summit on Egypt Feb. 7-8 in Washington, D.C. The EFC recently issued a prayer alert on Egypt at [theEFC.ca/alerts](http://theEFC.ca/alerts).

That webpage also includes alerts about North Korea, where Christians face an uncertain future under the new

leader Kim Jong-un, and about Nigeria, where Christians face increasing violence from an Islamic extremist group.

### Questions on Ontario Bullying Legislation

The EFC sent an open letter to all members of the Ontario Legislature in late January, calling for amendments to *Bill 13, Accepting Schools Act*. The bill is legally problematic and unnecessarily broad. There were two anti-bullying bills before the Ontario Legislature at press time, as the EFC’s Faye Sonier clarified in a recent letter to *ChristianWeek*. Bill 13, if passed, could have significant impact on the religious freedoms of Ontario families and schools. Details (including the letter to *ChristianWeek*) at [theEFC.ca/bullyingJan2012](http://theEFC.ca/bullyingJan2012).

### Discussing Human Rights

EFC Vice-President Don Hutchinson attended the Ontario Human Rights Commission’s policy dialogue on “Creed, Freedom of Religion and Human Rights” in Toronto in January. Public sessions included “Human Rights, Religion and the Law” and “Human Rights and Wrongs: Religion and Creed in the Public Sphere.”


### Human Trafficking Bill Supported

A bill to extend Canada’s Criminal Code to Canadians involved in human trafficking in other countries received unanimous support in the House of Commons in December. At press time it had moved on to consideration by the Standing Committee on Justice. The bill was introduced by MP Joy Smith (Kildonan-St. Paul) and is entitled *Bill C-310, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (trafficking)*. The EFC expressed support in its October 2011 report *Seeking Justice, Rescuing the Enslaved: Recommendations for a National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking*, available at [theEFC.ca/HTseekingjustice](http://theEFC.ca/HTseekingjustice).

### ISPs Now Report Child Porn

In December the Federal Government initiative to require mandatory reporting of Internet child pornography by Internet service providers (ISPs) came into force. Bill C-22 was an EFC-supported measure which received royal assent in March 2011. Today, as a result, suppliers of Internet, email and social networking sites operating in Canada are required to report any tips or concerns about the presence of child pornography on their service to the Canadian Centre for Child Protection.

### New Address

EFC administrative staff began working from our new national office in Richmond Hill, Ont., in February. The new mailing address: Box 5885 West Beaver Creek Post Office, Richmond Hill, ON L4B 0B8. (The old Markham address can also still be used for a few months.) Phone and fax numbers remain the same. The Ottawa office continues unchanged as well. 



# Discussing Church and Mission: The Next Step

By Aileen Van Ginkel

Where do you see God's blessings in your ministry?  
Where do you see thunderclouds on the horizon?

Items available at theEFC.ca/  
hingesessions

## Glenn Smith & Rick Hiemstra – A Changing Canadian Context for Ministry

- Main presentation on mp3 audio or video
- Statistics slides (pptx)
- Question and answer session (mp3)

## Outcomes of the Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization

- Panel discussion (mp3)
- Question and answer session (mp3)

## Arnold Neufeldt-Fast – The Trinitarian Missional God

- Main presentation on mp3 audio or video
- Question and answer session (mp3)

## The Impact of Missional Theology on Missional Paradigms & Practice

- Panel discussion (mp3)

## Gary Nelson – Discovering Our Unique Canadian Voice – Thinking Missionally in Context

- Main presentation on mp3 audio or video

## God at Work in Canada

- Panel discussion (mp3)

## Annual President's Day Briefings on Canadian Trends from EFC/CFPL Staff

- Main presentation on mp3 audio or video

## Cam Roxburgh – People of the Kingdom

- Main presentation on mp3 audio or video
- Question and answer session (mp3)

## Missional Practices Needed

- Panel discussion (mp3)

## The Emerging Consensus

- Panel discussion (mp3)

## Bruce Clemenger – How Do We Move Ahead?

- Concluding presentation on mp3 audio or video

Over the past year *Faith Today* has carried a series of columns on this page to follow up on the Hinge Conference of November 2010, held by The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC). These Hinge columns have shared the fruit of discussions around church and mission that occurred leading up to and during the conference.

The “lead up” conversations were held in the fall of 2009 and spring of 2010 on the campuses of Christian higher education institutions across Canada, including Regent College, Redeemer University College, The King's University College, Providence College & Seminary, Briercrest College & Seminary, Ambrose University College & Seminary and Heritage College & Seminary.

While each conversation had its own unique character – not surprising, given the unique calling from God and context in which each institution carries out its calling – several overlapping themes emerged.

The first and most basic theme was **discipleship** – maintaining the close relationship with God as we respond to Jesus' call: “Follow me!” The second related to the **full-orbed gospel** – the Kingdom message that requires us to step out of our various idolatries and serve God in all areas of our lives. **Relationships** – bridging divides to bring about reconciliation within our churches and far beyond – constituted the third, while the fourth dealt with **missional ecclesiology** – our understanding of the nature and purpose of the Church in relation to its mission from God. The final theme rested on **leadership** – the need churches and ministry organizations have for leaders who nurture discipleship, encourage obedient responses to the Kingdom message, foster healthy relationships, and develop renewed paradigms and practices in the Church.

As our series of Hinge columns winds down, we recognize the discussion has not ended. Indeed, as the EFC staff continues to listen to

what leaders in churches and ministry organizations are saying, we see most of us are operating with more questions than answers. While such a situation raises certain levels of discomfort, a questioning stance also makes us more open to what God is saying in our particular context, and more attentive to moves of the Holy Spirit (in our own circles and beyond as well).

Questions are also great conversation starters. They can help us connect with people in new ways and bring us together to new places of understanding. For the next stage of church and mission conversations,

we are asking leaders in churches and ministry organizations to discern prayerfully these questions:

we are asking leaders in churches and ministry organizations to discern prayerfully these questions:

- Where do you sense God's blessing in your work? What does this tell you about areas of your work that are fruitful and should continue, as well as areas that are not fruitful and should end?
- What thunderclouds do you see on the horizon that could affect how you undertake your work in the future? What new things might God be calling you and/or your church into as a result?

The EFC context will allow us many opportunities to have such conversations with ministry leaders across the country. In the meantime, *Faith Today* readers can easily engage in these questions with each other at Facebook.com/FaithToday or by submitting letters to the editor at editor@faithtoday.ca. We look forward to hearing your answers! **FT**

**AILEEN VAN GINKEL** is vice-president, ministry services, at The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. Free, thought-provoking audio and video clips from the Hinge Conference are still available at theEFC.ca/hingesessions. In the next issue of *Faith Today*, check this page for a new column series.



# The Federal Budget: A Moral Document

By Don Hutchinson

Biblical principles inform the EFC's call on the Government of Canada to prioritize families, compassion and charities in the next federal budget.

**T**he EFC does not generally engage in the number crunching of the government budget process. However, Canada and the world are facing an economic challenge that will require tough decisions on cuts and expenditures – choices between “good” and “bad” for purposes of the economy. Such choices are fundamentally moral ones and should be informed by principle.

Applying biblical principles in public policy has benefitted the nation over decades of EFC initiatives. The difficult choices ahead in the 2012 federal budget process highlight the importance of clearly articulating relevant biblical principles and applying them in public policy.

Thus the EFC is urging the Government of Canada to address three key building blocks of our nation in its next budget: families, compassion and charities.

*Families* – The Bible teaches the family is to provide physical, emotional and spiritual care for its members as it prepares them to serve God and other persons (including civic responsibility), and to care for creation. As a microcosm of society, healthy families are the cornerstone of any successful nation.

Canadian families are facing mounting challenges in the early 21st century, including the fiscal reality of expenses increasing faster than income. For this reason the EFC is encouraging the government to introduce household income splitting earlier than they had planned so single-income households would no longer be disadvantaged under Canada's tax laws.

*Compassion* – In his letter to the Galatians, the Apostle Paul notes a key feature of his work that was approved by other leaders, “that we should continue to remember the poor” (Galatians 2:10). The EFC has encouraged the Government of Canada to remember the poor, knowing

Christians will do the same.

An all-party committee has produced the report *Federal Poverty Reduction Plan: Working in Partnership Towards Reducing Poverty in Canada* which recommends the Federal Government use its unique gathering power (in partnership with the provinces and territories) to establish a national poverty reduction strategy and a national housing strategy. The EFC supports those recommendations.

In 2010 the members of the Canadian Christian Relief and Development Association (CCRDA) sent more than \$537,000,000 overseas, of which only \$32,400,000 (6%) was funding from the Federal Government. And there are also Christian individuals, churches and denominations outside the CCRDA who have expended additional funds. We have encouraged the government to recognize Canada's continuing prosperity relative to other nations, and to continue to partner with organizations making a positive difference without being dependent on government money to do so.

*Charities* – Government encouragement for the charitable sector, particularly through tax deductions, has enhanced the already generous nature of Canadians. Christian charities have played a key role in developing the private character and public square of the nation – the public square through charitable services to others (including feeding, clothing and housing the poor; halfway houses for those released from prison; hospice care; and international development and emergency aid), and the presentation of biblical-principle-based positions on public policy matters.

The EFC has urged the government to give serious consideration to a variety of



Don Hutchinson

proposals made by other organizations aimed at further encouraging the generosity of Canadians, particularly as expressed through the continuing service of their Christian charities of choice.

Individuals, families, churches and charities have a role to play in securing the continuing strength of our nation. We'll do our part. And we call on the Government of Canada to do its part as well. The economic health of the nation depends on it. **FT**

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

## More Details Online

Read the EFC's five-page *Pre-budget Submission* to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance at [theEFC.ca/prebudget2012](http://theEFC.ca/prebudget2012).

Read three EFC blog postings which reflect upon the principles of families, compassion and charities at [activateCFPL.theEFC.ca](http://activateCFPL.theEFC.ca) (scroll to Feb. 7).



What does it take for us to become a national body of worshippers who celebrate each other's cultures? *by Debra Fieguth*

# Beyond Our Cultu

**M**any Canadians work side by side with colleagues from Sri Lanka and China. We attend school with students from Kenya and Afghanistan. We ride the subway with people from Jamaica and Greece. So why, when we go to church, do we encounter mostly people of our own kind?

It's a question church leaders are asking more frequently. "How come we work together and we can't wor-

ship together?" is how Sam Owusu, pastor of Calvary Worship Centre in New Westminster, B.C., puts it.

Some of the answers are uncomfortable. They include an inability, or unwillingness, to look beyond our cultural comfort zones; a lack of understanding of newcomers and why they are in Canada; a desire to maintain the status quo; a lack of skills and training; perhaps even a hint of racism, or at least ethnocentrism.

And the issue isn't unique to Canadian-born Cauca-



**Not a typical Canadian wedding:** When Jessie and Nigel Paul were married last summer, the bride danced Bollywood-style with guests, a local imam congratulated the newlywed couple, and twelve hundred neighbours and friends from 30 cultures attended the wedding in two shifts. See sidebar, page 20.

PHOTO: © DAVE AND KATHERINE KALMBACH – ONE TREE PHOTOGRAPHY [HTTP://ONETREEPHOTO.CA](http://onetreephoto.ca)

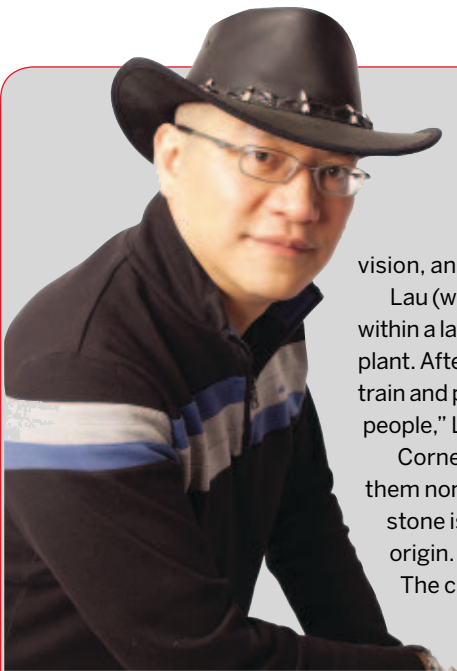
# ral Comfort Zones

sians (white-skinned people). Monocultural churches from dozens of ethnic groups have sprung up all over the country, with denominations encouraging and funding their growth. They in turn have spawned daughter churches and established vital ministries to immigrants from their own countries, yet don't often reach out beyond their own cultures.

"There [are] a lot of churches that talk about this stuff, but few do it," says Baha Habashy, a consultant and coach

who has worked with churches as well as corporations. Even when there's a desire to move in the direction of an intercultural church, it doesn't always happen. "There's a difference between the desire to change and the willingness to change," he points out. "Willingness is when you're willing to pay the price of change. And very few churches are willing to pay the price."

The length and structure of the service, the length of the sermon, the style of music, the way of praying, the use



## Mirroring Demographics in Markham

**W**hen Andrew Lau and members of his congregation set out to establish an intercultural church in Markham, Ont., (immediately northeast of Toronto), they had a mandate but no model to follow. But they had a vision, and set about making a plan.

Lau (who was born in Hong Kong) was the pastor of an English-language congregation within a large Chinese church in 1996, when the church commissioned him to start a church plant. After a consensus-building process, 35 adults met together regularly for a year to train and plan, while continuing their English service. "We had a clear vision of reaching other people," Lau says.

Cornerstone Christian Community Church was established with 60 adults, only a few of them non-Chinese, in a community that was then 85 per cent Caucasian. Today Cornerstone is made up of 300 people (a third of them children) from 30 different countries of origin. Now almost a third of the people are non-Chinese.

The church's growth has mirrored Markham's demographic shift. The municipality of 300,000 now comprises 65 per cent visible minorities, the highest rate of diversity, says Lau, on the continent. "It's no longer white."

The church is also active in the community. "We have a Wednesday night basketball program in the school with 60 to 80 kids," says Lau. "We share the gospel at half-time." And even though everyone knows the Christian foundation of the program, it's so well-appreciated that "parents from other schools are sending their kids."

But Cornerstone's outreach doesn't end in Markham. Every year church teams head to Latin American countries for short-term missions. Cornerstone provides food for 300 children a day, and has developed a holistic ministry that includes things such as microfinancing in Nicaragua.

Baha Habashy and his wife Margaret were attracted to the warmth and friendliness of Cornerstone as much as to its cultural makeup. "We really value friendliness," says Habashy. Unfortunately, "The church of Jesus Christ has lost the skill of being friendly and warm."

Although the Habashys are the oldest members in a "very young church," they value the opportunity to minister to younger members. Egyptian-born Habashy leads a men's group that includes Americans, Chinese, Koreans, Filipinos and others.

Fifteen years on, Cornerstone anticipates a move from its current quarters in Markham Secondary School to its own building, designed as a community centre, on property the church has purchased.

Cornerstone has come a long way from being seen as a "Chinese" church. But there's still a long way to go, Lau admits. "We're barely scratching the surface of what an intercultural church would look like in the future." —DF

of translation – all could be factors of change. "There may be white Anglo-European people feeling uncomfortable because there's a more inclusive way of doing things," says Dan Sheffield, director of intercultural and global ministries for the Free Methodist Church of Canada.

A third factor Habashy sees is the ability to change. "Will the congregation allow that change to happen?"

But whatever the reasons for reticence, leaders agree churches need to face the reality of a rapidly changing country, especially in our largest cities. More than half the residents in the Greater Toronto Area, a metropolis of five and a half million people, were born outside Canada. Vancouver is getting close to that mark, with 40 per cent of its residents foreign born in 2006. And, according to

## Not a Normal Canadian Wedding

**T**he bride danced Bollywood-style with guests. A local imam congratulated the newlywed couple. Twelve hundred neighbours and friends from 30 cultures attended the wedding in two shifts. And on a special table, apart from the potluck dishes and the guest books, was this sign: "Pick up a free Bible in your language."

When Jessie and Nigel Paul got married last summer, they decided to throw the event open to everyone in the multicultural neighbourhood of east Toronto where they had chosen to live and minister. Jessie is a nurse and

Nigel is founder and director of MoveIn, an organization that partners with denominations to plant churches in high-needs areas ([www.movein.to](http://www.movein.to)). The couple live in a concentration of high-rise apartment buildings housing 4,000 residents originating from South Asia, Afghanistan, Africa, Eastern Europe and other places around the globe.

A passion to love their neighbours, combined with Jesus' injunction in Luke 14 to invite the disenfranchised to a feast, motivated the couple to include everyone in the wedding. The response was so positive, they actually held

the last census, half the immigrants in Canada have lived here less than 15 years.

The demographic shift should compel churches to respond. "The future of the church in Canada is not more people like me," points out Sheffield. "The future is going to look less and less like me. If we don't engage with this issue, then we're doing a disservice to ourselves." While he sees some encouraging signs in the movement, "It's got a long way to go."

So what is an intercultural church? Answers to this question range from a church that includes many cultures worshipping together in an English-language, Western-style service to one that includes contributions in the many languages and styles of those worshipping. "The whole intercultural thing is hugely complex," says Robert Cousins, director of the Tyndale Intercultural Ministries (TIM) Centre in Toronto.

"There's a difference between multicultural and intentionally intercultural," he points out. "We have this political philosophy of multiculturalism – the Canadian mosaic. But often you find that when you scratch beneath the surface we respect all the cultures, but we live in cultural silos or ghettos. There's not a lot of integration."

In other words, "An intentionally intercultural church is more than just having different people of different cultures sitting in the pews." When a church is intentionally intercultural, Cousins explains, there's "much more moving in and out of different cultures. An intentionally intercultural church would be a church that is striving to integrate new Canadians into a community church, and allowing them to express their uniqueness in creative ways."

That's what happens at Gateway Baptist in Surrey, B.C., which has an international service in English with some Tagalog, led by a Filipino pastor and attended by about 50 people from 15 countries. Although there are three monocultur-

al congregations (Arabic, Burmese and Korean), the church also holds monthly corporate gatherings with worship led by the different groups.

"Each group will do two to five songs as well as times of prayer in their language," says worship leader Joel Hendershott, who speaks Spanish and enjoys attending a Punjabi church. "Even though I don't necessarily understand everything that's going on, for me it's really a blessing to see people worshipping in their own style or language."

Hendershott's colleague Kallu Manzoul is an elder for the Arabic-language congregation. Originally from Sudan he leads a group of mostly Sudanese, but has preached

to the Burmese congregation and enjoys meeting with the other cultures. "My kids are trying to learn (songs) in Spanish and English and Arabic," he notes.

Most intercultural churches in Canada seem to go the route of maintaining worship services in English with North American contemporary music and hymn singing, but are reaching out to newcomers in other ways. For Southside Pentecostal Assembly in Edmonton, that means offering free English as a Second Language (ESL) classes – something many churches now do – as well as inviting newcomers to the city to take part in a training session that covers many aspects of coping with a move.



**How come we work together and we can't worship together? asks Sam Owusu.**



**Jessie and Nigel Paul: Most of our neighbours had no idea that this was not a normal Canadian wedding.**

was not a normal Canadian wedding."

The day was so rich and colourful, so full of music and

two complete ceremonies and potluck dinners in the green space outside the apartment complex to accommodate all the guests.

"Our neighbours loved the wedding!" says Jessie Paul. For many it was their first Canadian wedding, although "Most of them had no idea that this

dance and prayers in different languages, so unlike the staid and quiet, solemn affairs that many white Canadian Christians opt for, that people from many different cultures enthused throughout the party: "This is like weddings in my country back home!"

The event has firmly established the couple in their neighbourhood, strengthened relationships and opened doors for new ones. "Most of our neighbourhood knows who we are and often invite us over for tea," says Jessie. "We've been able to have conversations with our new friends about Jesus, and there is an openness to learn what the Bible says."

—DF

## Resources on Becoming Intercultural

- *Becoming an Intentionally Intercultural Church: A Manual to Facilitate Transition* (second edition, 2004), edited by Rob Brynjolfson and Jonathan Lewis. Produced by the World Evangelical Alliance using a largely Canadian team. Best used in group work. Free at [worldevangelicals.org/resources/view.htm?id=57](http://worldevangelicals.org/resources/view.htm?id=57)
- *Beyond the Welcome: Churches Responding to the Immigrant Reality in Canada*, produced from a 2010 research project by World Vision Canada and several other groups. Offers a toolkit, congregational assessment, and action plan for churches as well as two reports ("national" or "full research") as well as separate summaries for Montreal, Toronto, Hamilton, Winnipeg and Vancouver at [www.worldvision.ca/Programs-and-Projects/Canadian-Programs/Pages/Public-Resources.aspx](http://www.worldvision.ca/Programs-and-Projects/Canadian-Programs/Pages/Public-Resources.aspx).
- *Churches, Cultures & Leadership: A Practical Theology of Congregations and Ethnicities*, by Mark Lau Branson and Juan F. Martinez (IVP Academic, 2011). Includes helpful Bible studies and personal and group exercises to buttress the authors' well-argued perspectives. Some of the assumptions (about racism, for example) are unhelpfully American. Preview at [books.google.ca](http://books.google.ca).
- *The Multicultural Leader: Developing a Catholic Personality*, by Dan Sheffield (Clements, 2005). A training tool for practitioners of multicultural ministry and others ministering in an urban context. Preview at [books.google.ca](http://books.google.ca).

"We let them tell their stories," says Wanda Crouse, who co-pastors Southside with her husband Doug. "Most people who are new don't have a lot of relationships," she points out. The program leaders also help them acquire furniture and household items, accompany them to inter-

views and attend citizenship ceremonies.

How do you know if your church is ready to make the transition from a dominant culture to an intentionally intercultural congregation? Sheffield uses an assessment tool that asks this basic question: "Do we focus on common ground and minimize the differences, or do we recognize and accept the differences?"

"Culture does matter, and language matters," says David Wells, superintendent of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. Intentionally intercultural churches "take culture seriously." Wells points out that from the very beginning the church was dealing with cross-cultural dynamics: Jews and gentiles, barbarians, Cretans and Romans.

Whether it's a church plant or a transition from a monocultural church to an intercultural one, experience shows leadership is key, and preparation and training are vital.

"A lot of prayer" is what Ghanaian-born Owusu would advise starting with. "Then there should be a time of sharing the vision with the congregation. The thing is that many times our approach is more sociological instead of scriptural. It has to come from the Bible. We have to read the Bible with new eyes." Owusu cites the Great Commission: "We should go and disciple all nations. If your neighbourhood is all nations, shouldn't you reach them?"



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Successful intercultural churches include a mixed leadership from the start. Andrew Lau, senior pastor of Cornerstone Church in Markham (see sidebar) has hired pastoral staff with American, Chinese and Jamaican backgrounds. “We developed our staffing according to the complexion of the community,” Lau explains.

The same is true at Morningstar Fellowship on the eastern edge of Toronto (profiled in the Nov/Dec 2011 issue of *Faith Today*).

“Staff hiring has reflected the demographics,” says Morningstar senior pastor Bob MacGregor, who has a pastor from the Philippines and one from St. Vincent on his staff. That’s a challenge that must be met, says Cousins. “If everyone [in leadership] is Caucasian, there’s a gap between what they’re saying and what they’re doing.”

“You have to ask yourself, do you really want this? Is there a theological conviction?” MacGregor says of the intention to widen a church’s focus. “Then it’s a matter of leadership leading the way, actively recruiting. You’ve got to be proactive.” That means committees and ministries are made of people from different cultures and perspec-

tives, and the people on the platform on a Sunday morning reflect the same mix of colours as the people in the pews.

That can take time, warns Robert Cousins from his office at the TIM Centre. Churches need to make the effort to let people from different cultures express their perspectives and give them opportunity to participate in all aspects of ministry. “Intercultural churches can be a little bit messy,” he notes.

Despite the challenges and hard work, those who have embarked on the journey of developing intercultural churches see the rewards clearly. Wanda Crouse tells of a Cameroonian woman in Edmonton. The woman believed her husband to be dead for several years, but then found he was alive – and her Edmonton church was able to walk with her through the process of locating him and bringing him to Canada.

Crouse has seen more rewards at a church “move-in course” for newcomers to the city. When talk there turned to a relationship with God, one Filipina nanny spoke up bravely: “I really don’t have what you’re talk-

**“Successful intercultural churches include a mixed leadership from the start.”**

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ing about." Crouse was able to explain the faith clearly and lead her to Christ.

MacGregor says Morningstar "get[s] people who literally walk into our church who are unbelievers. I'm not sure why that happens, but they know it's a multi-cultural, welcoming church." MacGregor mentions a Muslim man who attended an Alpha group and became a Christian.

Joel Hendershott enjoys listening to the Scriptures in different languages, even when they're not translated. "The idea is that we believe the Scriptures," he says. "Every tongue and tribe will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. This is a glimpse of that."

For Sam Owusu the joy of bringing people from 75 nations together to worship in a multitude of ways makes it worth the hard work. On a Sunday morning in New Westminster, "It's like you're in heaven." **FT**

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

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# Bible Study Tools on the Go

**Studying the Bible has never been easier, thanks to the latest computer software packages. Here's a quick review of the major options.**

*By Mark Carroll*

A few years ago the average Canadian who wanted to study the Bible would have bought some books or visited a seminary library. Those who were really keen, such as pastors or seminarians, might have also considered Bible study software. But more recently the question has been inverted: With all the good software available, some of it ready to use across multiple platforms such as smartphones, why would you *not* buy such an affordable, effective study tool?

Yes, being surrounded by a stack of impressive-looking books has its (guilty) pleasures. But those pleasures are quickly outweighed by difficulties when you want to travel and work, for example, on a train or in a coffee shop. And who besides students has vast amounts of time to spend in a university library, even an excellent one? Pastors and lay leaders, lacking both the time and ready access to these resources, would find Bible study software especially useful for the convenience and value offered.



PHOTO: ROBERT ROBOTHAM

**Hundreds of commentaries, theological tomes, maps and lexicons can now be found in one app. Knowing which software to purchase is not a simple decision since the number of programs available is quite large.**

However, which software to purchase is not a simple decision. The number of programs available is quite large, and taking time to sift through them to make an informed purchasing decision is challenging.

These reviews compare six different programs. Three of these – Accordance, Logos and BibleWorks – are the leaders in the field and will be referred to as “the

big three” in this review. The others are possible alternatives to these programs.



Glo is an interactive Bible, a successor to the now-defunct iLumina Bible. Glo is not a Bible study library, but is a good entry point to deeper Bible interaction,

the visual aids being especially useful for families with small children. It boasts over 450 virtual tours of Bible lands, 3.5 hours of HD videos, more than 2,300 high-res photos, in excess of 140 maps and more than 7,500 articles to enhance study.

It's also inexpensive. A partial version called Glo Lite is a free download at [www.globible.com](http://www.globible.com). The full product, Glo Premium, is \$49.99 plus shipping.

The interface is user-friendly and offers five lenses for deeper investigation (Bible, media, timeline, atlas, and topical), all of which link intuitively. The design is also very aesthetically pleasing, from the box in which the DVDs arrive to the impressive onscreen experience.

Unfortunately, in allocating resources to design and beauty, Glo appears to have overlooked another key area: functionality. I experienced issues with both activation and installation, and my attempt to resolve the issues through the Glo user forums revealed I was not alone in my experiences. Stories of delayed technical support and poor customer service came up repeatedly.

Glo is also extremely resource-hungry, with full media installation requiring 18 GB of hard drive space. You can choose not to install the media and call it on-demand via the Internet, but this assumes a high-speed Internet connection.

When working to its full potential, Glo is an excellent way to experience the Bible in an interactive and inviting way. It may be necessary, however, to wait a few more years to see if the technical problems are addressed before giving Glo a hearty recommendation. Available for Windows, Mac, iPad and iPhone at [www.globible.com](http://www.globible.com).

## **WORDsearch** **WORDsearch**

WORDsearch is a program designed to streamline the process of time-consuming searches through a large number of resources. It comes with a good collection of materials, but quantity does not equal quality, and users looking for high quality resources may be disappointed by the selection. WORDsearch is also not entirely user-friendly. The website is cluttered and

difficult to navigate, the user interface is clunky, and the most comprehensive package, the boxed Preaching Library priced at \$499, simply does not compete with the big three for value. Available for Windows or Mac at [www.wordsearchbible.com](http://www.wordsearchbible.com).

## **QuickVerse** **QuickVerse**

QuickVerse was once a key player in the Bible software market, but its development has not kept up with the big three. Using it reminded me of watching my sons try to wear my shoes – despite their best intentions, they end up looking awkward. In the same way QuickVerse appears to want a seat at the adult table, but doesn't quite belong there. Its main deficiency in comparison to the big three is its lack of original language tools, with no Greek or Hebrew texts available, even interlinear. At \$349 for the Deluxe/Gold Package, it is simply not enough program for the money. (Other versions only for PC include Essentials at \$59 and Platinum at \$799.)

Available for Windows and Mac at [www.quickverse.com](http://www.quickverse.com) (and for Palm and Windows Mobile Pocket PC phone).



## **BibleWorks**

BibleWorks, the first of the big three software suites, has recently released its latest version. It is an impressive program, offering a rich study experience tailored to those who wish to do in-depth exegetical research in Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic. Unlike Logos and Accordance, BibleWorks does not purport to be an all-purpose library for a vast audience. Instead, the developers have tailored it to do one thing very well, and it delivers on that objective. As someone working toward an advanced research degree in biblical exegesis, I found BibleWorks to be enormously helpful because it puts all of my go-to resources in one place.

The BibleWorks interface is smooth, intuitive and easy to navigate, and the online documentation is top-notch. BibleWorks also includes a highly useful sentence diagramming tool, which is a

lifesaver for breaking down the structure of complex Greek sentences (Logos and Accordance also offer such tools). Unlike Accordance and Logos, BibleWorks is not modular, offering one purchase bundle at one price point (although there are a few add-ons that enhance the core functionality of the program).

BibleWorks is not for everyone. Pastors with little proficiency in the original languages, for example, may not find it as useful as Logos or Accordance – but it serves its niche market well. The only downside for me as a Mac user is that BibleWorks is a PC-only program, although it can run on a Mac with a PC emulator. The full Windows version of BibleWorks 9 is \$359 at [www.bibleworks.com](http://www.bibleworks.com).



## **Accordance**

With Accordance the difference between the small players and the big programs becomes very clear. Accordance is elegant and clean, with access to many excellent resources that allow a high level of customization and good value for money.

The user experience with Accordance is excellent. The program can be downloaded and installed in minutes, and it worked exactly as it was supposed to the first time. Among its many excellent features, the most useful is the amplify function, which allows you to select as little as one word and as much as an entire workspace window for in-depth study across all the Accordance modules. This feature, it seems, is what WORDsearch is attempting to emulate, but Accordance simply does it better. Online support documentation is comprehensive and helpful, and the tutorial videos cover every aspect of operation in an easy-to-follow way.

Accordance is also one of the most efficient programs I have used – Bible or otherwise – and its resource use is surprisingly small for a program of its stature. It offers cross-device compatibility to iOS platforms such as the iPhone and iPad, and syncs smoothly between the various devices. To be clear, Accordance is not fully cross-platform as it is designed only

for Mac and iOS. However, it can run on a PC with the use of an emulator program. Mac versions are available for \$149, \$249 and \$349 at [www.accordancebible.com](http://www.accordancebible.com).



Logos is the giant of the Bible study software field, providing an array of resources from academic tomes to popular Christian living books. Despite its already impressive collection of resources, Logos continues to win market share, most notably through an affiliation with Zondervan Publishers, who are making their entire catalogue available. As it continues to grow Logos could easily replace entire shelves of books, allowing for a truly portable library.

Logos has recently released Logos 4, their new interface that allows for true cross-platform use and syncing between PC, Mac, iOS, and Android. I cannot speak to the user experience directly, as Logos did not provide a review copy of the software. However, Logos users speak highly of its intuitive interface and search capabilities that shrink many hours of physical research into a few minutes. With nine base packages available, ranging from \$169 to \$4,290, there is an entry point for everyone with each providing excellent value for money. Available for Mac or Windows at [www.logos.com](http://www.logos.com).

### The Tool for You?

While the field of Bible study software may be somewhat cluttered with programs, the big three have earned their place at the top of the list. While BibleWorks and Accordance have carved out their own niche markets – original language exegesis and Mac users respectively – Logos continues to be king of the overall heap because of its ability to provide an enormous amount of material meeting the needs of a vast user audience. There is, however, no bad choice among the big three, and users from academics to pastors to lay people can benefit from their use. **FT**

**MARK CARROLL** is a freelance writer in Langley, B.C., and is available on Twitter @markjcarroll.



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# Renewal in the Mainline

An update on evangelical movements in Canada's Presbyterian, United and Anglican churches.

By Ryan Paulsen

**H**eadlines related to Canada's Presbyterian, United and Anglican churches over the past few decades have often been dominated by internal controversy. Outsiders might conclude conservatives and evangelicals in such churches are focused on making combative public stands against the increasing liberalization of their upper denominational echelons.

However, interviews with the leaders of renewal movements within these denominations suggest otherwise. They seem focused instead on encouraging Jesus-centred community within their church families. That's not to say renewal leaders are ignoring major church issues, but most seem willing to allow certain tensions to co-exist without necessarily forcing them to a head.



## Anglican Renewal

In many ways Rev. Nick Brotherwood seems a theological conservative who is not afraid to let his integrity stand in the face of church authority. The rector of St. Stephen's Church in

Westmount, Que., recently resigned his position as canon in the cathedral due to differences of opinion with some of his bishop's decisions.

However, he continues to serve as assistant director of the Institute of Evangelism at Wycliffe College, one of North America's largest Anglican seminaries, and team leader at Fresh Expressions Canada, an initiative focused on making the Anglican Church more "mission shaped."

In these roles he gets to see – and help shape – new trends in worship across the denomination and beyond, speaking at synod meetings, interdenominational conferences and seminars about new ways to do church in the 21st century.

Renewal was a key aspect of Anglicanism from its start when it broke away from Roman Catholicism and shifted to English-

language liturgies and prayers, according to Brotherwood.

"If you look back to the origins," he says, "the DNA if you like, the English reformers, [Thomas] Cranmer among them, were trying to contextualize the Christian faith for a 16th-century English population that [was] worshipping in Latin. His idea was 'No, let's make this genuinely English.'"

Similarly, Brotherwood suggests, it's part of "our job to try to contextualize the faith for 21st-century Canadians. It's about being the contemporary expression of this pretty incredible historical tradition. The challenge is, 'Okay, how do we do this where we are now?'"

Part of that challenge, in all three mainline denominations, is decades of declining numbers of adherents and revenues.

For John Bowen, professor of evangelism at Wycliffe College and director of the Institute of Evangelism in Toronto, there's nothing particularly abnormal about an institution experiencing internal ebb and flow in vitality, membership and attendance. "I think on a sociological level," Bowen explains, "there is a cycle in the life of institutions. They usually begin with a burst of life, and over time they become [stagnant], and then people recover the original vision, and new life comes into it, and that cycle tends to be repeated."

For Bowen there are plenty of reasons to be hopeful about the re-emergence of vitality in the Anglican Church. "There are signs of life all across the Anglican Church of Canada – people in churches being excited about their faith, and having an impact on the world, not least in evangelism."





PHOTO: SUE CARELESS



## United Renewal

Other renewal leaders encourage a similar positive attitude.

Rev. Dr. Diane Walker, a pastor in the Niagara region of Ontario, has been involved in renewal in the United Church of Canada for decades, the last of which she was editor of the magazine

*Fellowship*, “celebrating the historic Christian faith in the United Church of Canada.”

When Walker took the helm of *Fellowship*, one of the items on her agenda was to make a subtle but significant amendment to its tagline. Originally it had read, “Upholding the historic Christian faith in the United Church of Canada.”

The change from “upholding” to “celebrating” may seem trifling, but Walker sees it as an important recognition of what renewal movements ought to do – turn a positive eye to the fundamental issues, rather than bog down in political discussions about denominational doctrine.

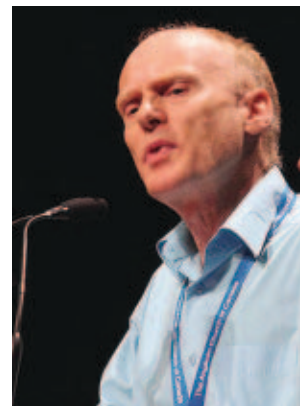
“I think when people start to get anxious,” she says, “they start to get fractious, and they look around for something to distract

themselves. When the decline was well on its way in the ‘80s, instead of focusing on what was happening as far as our numbers and our outreach and our vitality, we picked one thing to distract us, subconsciously, and fought over it instead of dealing with the real issues.”

That “one thing” in the 1980s was a crisis over homosexual ordination, but critics see many other examples of theological and numerical decline continuing into the present – so much that they envision a total collapse in a few decades.

“We’re decreasing really quickly as a denomination,” says Greg Brawn, a renewal leader in London, Ont. “The hope of some of the younger people in the renewal movement is to build [internal evangelical] connections so that when the United Church ceases to be (maybe 25 years from now, and nobody really knows what that would look like), they would be able to be a new entity that exists out of the ashes of the current United Church.

“Nobody knows whether that might be just a connection of clergy and congregations or whether it’s a new denomination, or whether it’s a group that joins with another existing denomination.”



**Encouraging Jesus-centred community within their church families. Clockwise from left: United Church pastor, Rev. Dr. Diane Walker, former editor of *Fellowship* magazine; Anglican rector and assistant director of the Institute of Evangelism at Wycliffe College, Rev. Nick Brotherwood and; Rev. Fred Stewart, new new executive director of the Renewal Fellowship in the Presbyterian Church in Canada.**

Brawn is general editor of the online magazine *Cruxifusion.ca*, launched recently after several older UCC evangelical organizations amalgamated their funding and resources.

Although his outlook may seem bleak, Brawn is anything but when it comes to the goals and missions of the renewal movement and the broader evangelical population of the United Church.

The goal “is the same as it’s always been – to make Jesus Christ central for the church. It’s not about a whole bunch of different issues. Back 30 years ago when these other groups were younger and just getting going, there were lots of other issues, but it’s sort of just come down to that one.”

Christians belonging to more corporately conservative and evangelical denominations may find the shift away from prominent political issues surprising, discouraging or even a sign of defeat or surrender – but for Walker, Bowen and others, a more conciliatory approach is exactly what they’re looking for.

As Bowen says, “I think there is openness among non-evangelicals to hearing an evangelical voice, if it is expressed [peacefully].”



## Presbyterian Renewal

In the Presbyterian Church in Canada, renewal remains more organized and official than in the other mainline denominations, primarily because it has been unified in one group since the founding of the Renewal Fellowship in 1982.

Just recently the Renewal Fellowship elected a new executive director, Rev. Fred Stewart of Pickering, Ont., to replace Calvin Brown, who has retired after more than 20 years in the position. Stewart was brought up in non-Presbyterian evangelical denominations, but decided later in life the mainline was where he was called to minister.

“In the public square – and in a way the Presbyterian denomination is like the public square – there’s actually more value given to the progressive voice than to the conservative voice, even though [progressives] are saying things that are contrary to the standards and the positions of the church. So our aim is just to continue to keep [the evangelical] voice vibrant and generous, and to serve the church in such a way that we earn the right to continue to be heard.”

The Renewal Fellowship aims “to con-

tinue to give hope to like-minded people, and to keep people who are not necessarily so like-minded informed of our approach, which is a very positive approach, and of the things that we are for. We don’t want to be single issued. We don’t want to be ‘them’ and ‘us,’” says Stewart.

## Questioning and Praying, Not Campaigning

In all three of these historic church families, the question of “Where do we go from here?” is particularly relevant and, at times, existentially challenging.

Brotherwood’s approach is typical. “True renewal in the church,” he says, is not something to be organized and campaigned for, but watched for and embraced when it arrives. “I think these questions may be preliminary to a renewal. Renewal might come through the kind of questioning that’s going on. I don’t think it’s a conscious movement. I hope it’s a movement of the Holy Spirit that we’ll recognize in retrospect – that the Holy Spirit is stirring things up in lots of ways. That’s the movement I’m interested in.” **FT**

**RYAN PAULSEN** is a freelance writer in Pembroke, Ont.



## When Times Are Tough

Advice for ministry and business leaders from the former CEO of Arrow Leadership.

**E**very leader will face times when it seems that everything is falling apart.

Whether set off by external events or internal mistakes, a crisis can be a distressing time. The emotions of everyone on the team are thrown into turmoil as past hard work and the future are at once placed in jeopardy.

Everyday work gets more difficult as people lose focus and worry about the dire consequences the crisis could bring.

It is precisely at times like these that leaders emerge. A business leader from Montreal reminded me today, "When times are great, there are lots of leaders – every vision works! But when times are tough – that's when you see true leadership."

The leader has to be the one who remains cool under pressure. The one who behind closed doors is on bended knees asking God for wisdom, guidance and support. The leader has to be the one who consolidates people and resources, identifies alternatives, selects the best course of action and confidently works toward fulfilling the mission. The leader is the one who also tries to help each teammate deal with the emotions of the moment. The leader needs to show his or her people the light at the end of the tunnel with a confident plan that moves successfully beyond current circumstances.

To be an exceptional leader, you need to prepare well before the tough times hit. You should have a solid awareness of what to do and how to act during a crisis so that you can move forward in confidence when the pressure is on. Here are some leadership tips for tough times:

**Focus on your vision.** Economic malaise is temporary, as is economic vigour. It's your vision that's permanent, with its associated mission, values and strategy. Ensure it is sound, and reiterate it to your team.

**Sharpen your core competencies.** Every ministry or organization has a unique and special calling that differentiates it from others. Sharpen yours.


**Bring good people alongside.** During any economic downturn you truly find out who your friends are. Get together with them, seeking counsel, wisdom and partnerships.

**Redeploy.** When times are tough, redeploy the best people to lead initiatives suited to their gifts. Are there volunteers who can assist? Is there a new way for you to deliver your services?

**Guard your cash.** Use money prudently to maintain current operations and invest it wisely for the future, including the future hiring of new employees.

**Manage your knowledge.** Capture, process, disseminate and leverage your unique knowledge. Strengthen your knowledge and relationship management systems or, if you don't have any, develop them.

**Eliminate the valueless.** Now is the time to cull the activities that don't enhance core values, to reengineer your processes, and to ruthlessly eliminate anything wasteful.

While it never feels good, negative downturns are learning experiences that will strengthen you for the future. The intense heat and pressure of a crisis both refines and purifies you as a leader. 

*"Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now I have kept thy word." (Psalm 119:67, KJV)*

*Lord,  
I have been at this long enough to acknowledge both the joys and the heartaches of leadership. Help me as a leader to manage well the emotions of both the extremes. During difficult seasons help me not to take my work too seriously or to become discouraged by the hard work required at this time.*

*I believe You can take all situations and use them for good.*

*Thank You for selecting me as a leader to guide during this time. It's tough, Lord, and I cannot do it alone. Perhaps that's one of the good things that comes out of difficult times – it forces me to my knees and creates a willingness to hear from You.*

*Lord, I want to hold onto my work loosely. I recognize You are my true source of significance and security – not my job or my role. But tough times often call for hard work, so help me to put the pieces together, to be realistic about my workload, generous with people and filled with creativity that brings productivity, positive changes, pride of accomplishment and enjoyable and fun relationships amidst the challenges. I know You are preparing us for the future. May You find me ready and willing.*

*Amen*

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Excerpt from *Mentoring Wisdom: Living and Leading Well* by Carson Pue (Castle Quay Books/Foundation Distributors, 2011). Pue recently stepped down as CEO of Arrow Leadership to become executive director at First Baptist Church in Vancouver. He is also author of the best-seller *Mentoring Leaders: Wisdom for Developing Character, Calling and Competency* (Baker Books, 2005).

# Canadian Women Are

Women from Canada are making a difference in the name of Christ in the top tier of international evangelical ministries.

By *Karen Stiller and Bill Fledderus*

**R**ev. Eileen Stewart-Rhude is looking forward to the last week of May. After decades of involvement in women's ministry in Canada, many connected with The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada and The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, she is now a key leader at the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), serving as executive director of its Commission on Women's Concerns. The WEA serves more than 600 million Evangelicals around the world.

The commission deals with some weighty issues: poverty, domestic violence, illiteracy and human trafficking, among others. Its regional directors from around the world will be meeting in Canada – for the very first time – for an annual business and strategizing meeting from May 24 to June 1, 2012.

A highlight of the week will be a special all-day forum for the members of the Human Trafficking Task Force, chaired by fellow Canadian Christine MacMillan (director of The Salvation Army's International Social Justice Commission in New York). The forum will be held at Evangel Pentecostal Church in Oakville, Ont., on May 31, and is open to the public.

"We meet annually to strategize, do needs analysis, for planning, encouragement and teaching," says Stewart-Rhude. "I am thrilled to be having the meetings here."

She can't say enough about her fellow commission members, citing their "brilliance, their abilities, so full of passion and compassion." The commission's regional directors are generally appointed by the local evangelical alliances in their homelands, and are therefore already recognized as strong leaders.

Stewart-Rhude qualifies for that distinction herself. Her own ministry began as a pastor's wife and mother, but she was called upon again and again over the years for increasing levels of leadership and influence by those who saw her potential. "I didn't see my potential, but they did," she recalls. "God prepares you little by little, as He's training you."

Stewart-Rhude and MacMillan are just two of the Canadian woman serving the global Church at the highest levels. Canada has been the developing ground for a remarkable number of such women. Many of them know each other well, tracing their growth back through institutions such as the EFC's Forum for Women in Ministry Leadership, especially active in the late 1990s and early 2000s. (Originally, this group was named the Task Force on Women in Ministry.)

Many were also involved in the Leading Women Conference,

a national leadership development initiative held in 2002, 2004, 2006 and 2008. It was supported by 15 Canadian partnering organizations including post-secondary colleges, church denominations and groups focused on a variety of women's ministries.

Today, many of these women remain connected through Next Level Leadership, an organization that began, says Bonnie Pioveson, with a vision for Christian women in Canada, but is growing beyond Canada's borders. Pioveson is Next Level's international representative for Germany, Ghana and Paraguay, countries that have welcomed Next Level's ministry of networking and equipping for Christian women.

"We offer a curriculum for learning modules that covers topics like the foundations for leadership, strategic planning, right down to issues of life balance," explains Pioveson. "It's very transformational, being with peers and having women feel valued and affirmed that they are called by God, and who they are in Christ."

When Next Level began its work in Canada, Pioveson says the team found "confidence, competence and character," were the areas of greatest need for emerging female leaders. "In every country we've travelled, Christian women lack the affirmation of the Body of Christ to be accepted as a leader," says Pioveson. "But it's an amazing thing that happens when women's gifts are affirmed in the Church."

Pioveson points to the growing Church in the developing world as fertile ground for women emerging as strong leaders. "Women are rising up in these countries, and they need the development. Competence gives confidence." Pioveson just recently returned from three weeks in Paraguay where she helped present Next Level training to groups of women leaders.

Margaret Gibb, who served as president of Women Alive for 10 years (finishing in October 2010), is another Canadian woman who honed her leadership skills on Canadian soil, but is now operating on the global stage. "Those years gave me opportunity to mingle with women and train them. I learned that a lot of potential with women is still untapped. And women want to do more – sometimes they just don't know how to get there," says Gibb.

"I also learned that we have tremendous resources in Canada that need to be shared. How can we gather women who are seasoned, skilled, passionate and caring, and do something together that could impact and equip women in developing countries?" Gibb answered her own question by creating Women Together (women-together.org), a new ministry of "women equipping



# International Leaders



**Two Canadians – Christine MacMillan and Eileen Stewart-Rhude at front right – serve on the WEA’s human trafficking task force, together with (Back L-R): Leela Manasseh (Asia); Jennifer Roemhildt (Europe); Sophie Nyokoby (Africa); and (Front L) Anne Read (UK).**

women to help themselves,” explains Gibb. “It’s coming alongside. I’m very excited about this.”

Gibb has led two trips to the Ukraine and Uganda – with another trip planned for August – bringing skilled Canadian women eager to share their gifts and experiences with their sisters from other countries. Gibb calls this next phase of her leadership “my second calling.”

Second callings are familiar to Linda Tripp. Retired as vice-president for public affairs at World Vision Canada, Tripp is

serving various boards, including The Fistula Foundation, a charity committed to restorative surgery for women hurt in childbirth in developing countries, and Missionary Kids Safety Net, an advocacy group for former missionary kids and their families who were hurt or damaged by their experience in missionary settings, often boarding schools. Tripp, who sees herself as an encourager to younger women, remembers the days when she was the first woman vice-president in the world for World Vision. “I look at the executive team now, and I think it’s half women,” says Tripp. “I think that there is certainly more openness and receptivity and opportunity, but I still think that women face unique challenges.”

The EFC’s own Aileen Van Ginkel, vice-president of ministry services, is one of the latest Canadian leaders to jump to the global stage. She’s been involved in training leaders at other evangelical alliances around the world through the WEA Leadership Institute. Her next global assignment with the WEA is huge. She will serve as associate director of its next general assembly in Seoul, Korea in 2014. The event, held every six years, draws more than 500 evangelical leaders, but in this case is expected to bring more than 5,000.

“It’s a great privilege to serve Evangelicals on a global scale by gathering them from around the world and providing opportunity for networking, equipping and inspiration – especially around themes of God’s mission of reconciliation and transformation,” says Van Ginkel.

International Women’s Day is on March 8. Canadian women who are

feeling God’s call to leadership positions will be encouraged by Stewart-Rhude’s hard-earned advice: “For young women who have a call of God strong in their hearts, they just have to do carefully what God is wanting them to do at this time, and let God open the door,” she says. “There are wonderful surprises in store. You might be shocked some day at what God has in store for you!” **FT**

**KAREN STILLER** of Port Perry, Ont., is associate editor of *Faith Today*. **BILL FLEDDERUS** of Hamilton, Ont., is senior editor.





**Rev. Dr. Barbara Mutch, Rev. Dr. Joyce Chan and Rev. Myrna Sears.**

Institute and the director of distributed learning. Rev. Dr. Joyce Chan directs the North American Chinese church ministry concentration in the master of divinity program and is the co-director of the Centre for Worship Studies.

The leadership of these women makes a visible statement that the Church is inclusive. Their voices give expression to the ideas, concerns, and prayers of people who are not always heard within the family of God.

Carey supports women in ministry through all of its programming and provides significant financial support from an endowment specifically designed to further the theological education and

leadership of women. Canadian Baptists of Western Canada have a long legacy of ordaining both women and men to gospel ministry.

Carey believes there is no more crucial place to know and show the reconciliation of the people of God than in the forming of leaders for the Church. Carey credits these three women with contributing actively to the

growth in enrolment, and creating structures and systems that bring organizational stability, while providing strong and vibrant instructional contributions. Their leadership is also recognized in the larger community.

The gift of these, and other women at Carey, is a blessing beyond measure and brings glory to God.

**cbm Canada  
Women creating change**

cbm Canada is a Christian international development organization with a focus on helping people who are struggling to survive the double disadvantage of

poverty and disability.

Women play an essential role in international development – on both sides of the development equation.

Disproportionately represented among the world's poorest people, women make up an estimated 70 percent of the 1.3 billion people who live on less than \$1/day. Poverty is made worse by the downward cycle of poverty and disability.

Disability in a household – whether the family member with a disability is a breadwinner, a caregiver or a child – makes the whole family poorer. And women – mothers and grandmothers – have proven to be the family members who stay when the going gets tough, when the family can't make ends meet, when there seems to be no hope for a child with a disability.

In Canada, women drive charitable giving. In three out of four households where income is \$200,000 or more, women



**Beth Jost-Reimer,  
Director Marketing  
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cbm Canada is the bridge joining these two sides. So it is absolutely appropriate that women make up 71 percent of our workforce and half of our leadership team. In every department, women influence how we spend donated dollars effectively and wisely, how we advocate to government, how we communicate with our supporters and how we ensure dollars are allocated as each donor wishes.

Women reaching out to women, working together with women, creating positive change.

### Emmanuel Bible College Equipping women and men

From its modest beginning in the basement of a church in Stouffville, Ont. in 1940 to the present urban campus in Kitchener, Ont., Emmanuel Bible College has sought to prepare women and men to think, live, serve and lead in the

Church and in the world. From the beginning, women have been integral to the development of Emmanuel Bible College, from faculty and staff to students and faithful donors.

Emmanuel has been blessed with a rich history filled with the stories of its alumni, including Edna Pridham, the first graduate to serve overseas as a missionary in 1946 in Nigeria, and Eileen Lageer, the first woman to graduate from the Bachelor of Theology program in 1970. Their stories, and the countless untold stories, inspire us by their sacrifice and passion and encourage the next generation of women to step out in faith and pursue a post-secondary biblical education and answer the call of ministry that God has placed on their lives.

During 2010–2011 Emmanuel spent the school year honouring the women of Emmanuel – women of faith – and recognized alumni Marilyn McIlroy, Dr. Lois Fuller Dow and Eileen Lageer. Their lives are just a few examples



of the impact made when one serves God wherever He leads.

By equipping women and men with the skills and resources needed to serve God in a way that's relevant to today's culture, Emmanuel remains committed to strengthening the next generation of leadership in the Church.

### Emergency Relief and Development Inciting others to be better Christians

Meet Gillian Rumney, Emergency Relief and Development's (ERDO) program officer.



Gillian Rumney

ERDO was established in 1983 as the humanitarian agency of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. Rumney oversees ERDO's program work in 35 countries: programs that advocate for the rights of women and children in the developing world, responding to urgent crises and assisting families who have been affected by disaster. Rumney has been with ERDO since 1990 and has been instrumental in the growth of its program. She was influential in starting ERDO's child sponsorship program, ChildCARE Plus, in 1992.

Rumney's heart for those in need shows in her attention to the needs of individuals in program planning, development and implementation. One area of ERDO's work that she is especially excited about is microfinance. In Congo, ERDO's program is called the Wezesha Project, which in Swahili means "empower." Women are given small loans to start and expand businesses to help support their families. This is a great an example of what Rumney does: she empowers others.

Rumney loves her work. Christ's compassion compels her to respond to the urgent needs around our world. She leads by example and is a passionate voice for the hurting. "Gillian is an inspirational woman of God with great insight, wisdom and many exciting ideas," said Judy Lundrigan, one of ChildCARE Plus's administrators.

A.W. Tozer once said there are people "whose very presence incites others to also be better Christians." Gillian Rumney is one of those people.

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**Fellowship Towers Foundational support**

Ruth-Ann Da Silva is a favourite with our residents here at Fellowship Towers (FT). She is a Proverbs woman – and then some!

**Ruth-Ann Da Silva**

Da Silva began her career at FT in 1985 as a part-time waitress. As a responsible and dependable young woman with strong leadership abilities, she was soon promoted to dining room hostess. While attending university in 1986, she became the part-time dining room supervisor and was offered that position full time in 1988. With her loyalty and above-average people skills, she was offered the position of dietary manager in 1995.

When there is a change in administration, Ruth-Ann's knowledge, expertise and longevity offer foundational support – an invaluable commodity. Da Silva knows the residents by name, how long they have lived here, the concerns or burdens they have and most of their family members.

In 1999 Da Silva became the accommodations and services manager, a position she currently holds. She reads people very well, and as new residents move in she expertly co-ordinates all aspects of the move, creating a smooth transition to their new home, most recently doing this for her own mother. Her subtle sense of humour and the calming quality of her personality serve her well when there are unexpected challenges and wrinkles to sort out.

It will come as no surprise that Da Silva met her husband, Cam, here at Fellowship Towers. They have an adorable seven-year-old son, Matthew, who brings them much joy. Cam is also one of the managers here at FT, and together they make a powerful team.

**International Christian Embassy Jerusalem Building bridges**

Since 1980, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ) has served the neediest in Israel. Known for hosting the annual Feast of Tabernacles Celebration, ICEJ through its 70 branches helps to raise critical funds for ICEJ AID (the social

services arm of the ministry) and reminds the Church and Israel of God's promises to and through this tiny nation. As a worldwide ministry, ICEJ is recognized for its service, leadership and integrity, resulting in unique and historic partnerships with the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial and the *Jerusalem Post*.

Donna Holbrook, ICEJ Canada national director, was raised in a Christian family in Northern Ontario. However, it was not until the death of her infant son, Jeremy, in 1994 that she experienced a personal relationship with God. Two years later, Holbrook visited Israel with



**Donna Holbrook**

the Canadian branch for the first time, and her life changed again.

In early 2001, after 20 years in Canada, the Canadian Friends of ICEJ decided to shut down the Canadian branch

of the ministry and surrender its charitable status.

Holbrook offered to assist ICEJ in Canada. She undertook all aspects of the ministry and now, 11 years later, with



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the help of volunteers and long hours, ICEJ Canada has grown fourfold in its membership, ICEJ AID funding and educational outreach. Building bridges between the Christian and Jewish communities through speakers and common projects, Holbrook also encourages many to visit Israel, especially young adults, whose lives she has seen transformed.

ICEJ Canada Aid & Development is a Canadian registered charity.

**Interserve**  
**Servants for hard places**

From its beginning in India in 1852, Interserve sent women as doctors, nurses and teachers to meet the needs of women and girls living in *zenanas* – the

isolated women’s quarters of the houses. For almost one hundred years, women served with the Zenana Bible and Medical Mission in hospitals, schools, orphanages and special needs homes.

After the end of the Second World War, Interserve’s mission changed, and men were sent as well as women to serve the needs of the whole community in many countries of Asia and the Arab world. But the early concern for the lives of women and girls was not forgotten. Some 160 years after Interserve’s founding, women partners continue to play significant roles as “servants for the hard places.”

Women are improving maternal health through prenatal classes for village women in Uganda, helping to rehabilitate women who have been rescued from the sex trade in Bangladesh, educating and mentoring nurses in Mongolia, working with disabled children in central Asia, operating an AIDS shelter and orphanage in Cambodia, and doing ground-breaking work in physical rehabilitation in India. Women are assisting students in learning a new culture and language, providing

training internationally for our partners and giving leadership on our national board.

For more about Interserve and to find opportunities to serve, go to <http://www.interservecanada.org/> or scan the QR code below.



**New Life Girls’ Home**  
**Women Serving Women**

For 23 years, New Life Girls’ Home (NLGH) has welcomed hurting and broken women through its doors. For people burdened with life-controlling issues such as eating disorders, destructive sexual behaviours, cutting, self-harm and addictions to drugs or alcohol, New Life Girls’ Home has sometimes been the last hope.

Based in a farm house in Consecon, Ont., this Christian residential discipleship program that provides Christ-centred leadership, mentoring and teaching has witnessed many a miracle. Program director Charmaine Kofler said, “This is the best job in the world. I get to see God’s hand at work every day. Working with the staff and young women at New



**Eleanor Irwin has served Interserve since 1955 in various roles, including board chair, following in the footsteps of her grandmother, Mary Malcolm, and her mother, Gladys Gray.**



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Focusing on loving, Christ-centred nurturing, students in the program are offered intensive Christian education, one-on-one Biblical discipleship, life-skills training, and ministry opportunities. New Life Girls’ Home is a Christian ministry and is registered as a non-profit charity. We do not receive any government funding and rely totally on individuals, groups and churches to support us.

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(L-R) Dawn Bailey-Elbourne, Charmaine Kofler, Linda Adams and Sarah Parlane.

Life is such a blessing!" Kofler, who joined NLGH in 2005, is now serving as interim executive director under the guidance of the board of directors.

What makes this ministry extra special are the passion, dedication and sacrifice exhibited every day by the women who work here – a program for women, by women. Kofler, along with Linda Adams, discipleship coordinator; Sarah Parlane, hospitality coordinator; and Dawn Bailey-Elbourne, ministry coordinator, make up the full-time staff. Several women also work part time as overnight and weekend staff.

With no government funding, New Life depends solely on the donations of churches and individuals for everything from the wood for the furnace to the

groceries on the table. The women who work at New Life regularly serve well beyond their paycheques. Their love for Christ and their great calling to the broken-

hearted is to be celebrated.

**NextLEVEL Leadership**  
**Building leadership confidence**

Since 2001, NextLEVEL Leadership has been building leadership confidence in women in Canada and around the world in Germany, Ghana and Paraguay. Over 2,000 women have been empowered to lead in their spheres of influence through our integrative leadership program. Founded, developed and led by a team of dedicated and professional women, our mission of nurturing godly character and leadership competencies and inspiring confidence in a new generation of Christian women leaders is realized.

At the end of our first decade, a new vision for NextLEVEL's organizational struc-

ture was created after a nine-month period of communal discernment. Three women will now form NextLEVEL Leadership's "anchor team," directing the three key areas of our mission: education and training, opportunity development, and operations. While giving leadership in their own spheres, together they will give shared leadership to NextLEVEL as a whole in relation to the vision of building leadership confidence in women.

We are pleased to announce the first appointment to our anchor team: Catherine MacKeil is the new director of education and training. MacKeil is a NextLEVEL Leadership kind of woman. She embodies the Christian leader who grounds her leadership role first of all in her walk with Jesus. The skills that MacKeil honed through NextLEVEL's programs and as leadership development director with Stonecroft Ministries Canada will enable her to competently take on all the tasks related to supporting and developing our



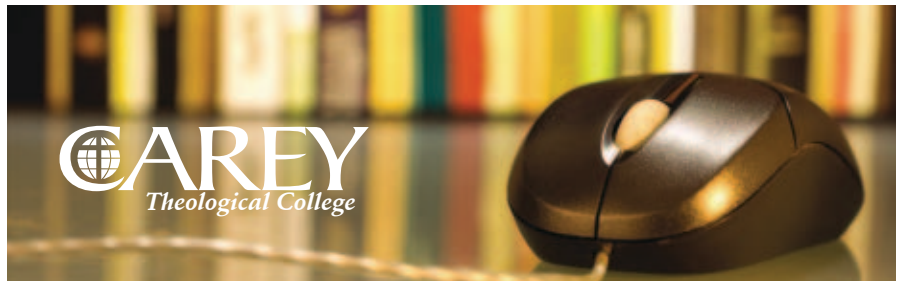
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## He wants us all in

God, what do you require of me? This was the not-so-hypothetical question facing Karen Schenk last September. An incredible invitation was on the table: to accept the role of Director of National Media Strategies with Power to Change, an evangelical ministry based in Langley, BC. It would mean uprooting her husband and daughter and moving a province away from their community, church family, and friends. It would mean leaving a son behind to continue his college studies – an eighteen-year-old who was struggling with puzzling health problems in the wake of two sports-related concussions. To say 'yes' would mean enormous sacrifice.

If it were simply a question of advancing her own career, Karen's 'No, thank you,' would have been immediate. Her career was already going extraordinarily well. She was the director of Power to Change's vast online ministry division, overseeing close to nine hundred staff and volunteers as they helped people discover Jesus via the internet. In any given month, over half a million people were visiting her team's websites for down-to-earth content and the chance to interact with online mentors on subjects that ranged from prayer to business to pornography. And she was able to do all that from her home in Alberta.

But the offer to become the Director of National Media Strategies involved far more than career advancement; it involved the opportunity to spearhead The Life, an ambitious initiative to see one million Canadians committed to making their lives count for Christ – a viral movement of believers being inspired and equipped to serve and obey Jesus anytime, anywhere, at any cost, to do anything.

Karen had made that choice to surrender her own life to Christ in her twenties. After God helped her to overcome a severe eating disorder, she felt the need to respond: "I wanted my life to matter for Jesus. I wanted to make a difference." Like many Christians, she wasn't sure how to do that. Her husband had recently joined Power to Change, then Campus Crusade for Christ Canada, and Karen was excited to get involved. But she

### neXus Church Celebrating women

Like many parents whose last child has left home, my wife and I looked at each other and said, "Now, where do we want



didn't feel cut out for the bold evangelism practiced by the Campus Crusade staff.

Enter the internet. It was 1998 and Power to Change had just launched its Women Today website. It was in the chat room that Karen, nervous and excited, first introduced someone to Christ. "I realized that God could use me," says Karen, looking back. "I might not be the person that will nab the grocery store clerk and tell them all about Jesus, but every day, I'm able to be instrumental in helping people come to know Jesus." An enthusiastic Karen threw herself into online ministry. Two years later, she took on the first of many leadership roles.

It was the excitement of discovering her potential as a follower of Christ that made The Life so appealing to Karen. "Every believer who has a significant relationship with Jesus wants to make their life count," she says, "and they don't know how. They're looking for stepping-stones – 'How do I actually make an impact, so God can fully use my gifts and abilities?' I'm absolutely passionate about that!"

That passion led Karen and her family to say 'yes' to God, and make the move to BC. "It's not to the point of fun yet," Karen admits. At first, the sale of their house fell through. Their son's condition did not improve for months, and their daughter is still adjusting to her new world. They miss their close friends.

But when Karen sees the impact The Life is already beginning to have, she is convinced she is exactly where God wants her to be. Has it been hard in the moment? Yes. But to see one million Christians making their lives count? That's something Karen and her family will celebrate forever.

to go to church?" Having chosen a place of worship that met the kids' needs, were our own needs being addressed or was a change in order?

It was.

My criteria for assessing what was on offer were few:

- a church that is culturally relevant and believes that God is continually speaking and guiding our understanding of the scriptures rather than being locked into a doctrine or party line established decades or centuries ago
- a church where women aren't suppressed but rather are celebrated as equally capable of leadership in the Church

As simple a list as that is, it was astonishingly hard to find that church. But our current home – neXus Church, where I function as church director – fits the bill rather well. As an emerging church we understand the verse "In Christ there is neither male nor female" as foundational, with certain other passages suggesting a hierarchy as reflecting local or temporary



Jana Ratzlaff and Wendy Enns.

situations.

Consequently, the church board is 50 percent female. Two women – Danielle MacKenzie and Wendy Enns – direct the children's program. Kirsti Dueck is in charge of the youth group. Katie Faulkes is the worship director, and Karen Brandt runs the service planning committee. Women routinely participate in the teaching program.

At neXus, women can be all that God meant them to be.

### Prairie Bible Institute Proud to equip young women

Thinking of women in leadership, we are reminded of Ruth Claire Dearing, one of Prairie Bible Institute's longest-serving teachers and administrators. The length

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**Ruth Claire Dearing**

of her service was less remarkable than that she did it during an era when Canadian evangelical leadership was dominated by men.

Prairie's founder and then president, L.E. Maxwell, recognized the potential in Ruth, a young college graduate, and invited her to join the staff in 1940. During her 60-year career, Dearing was high school principal, Bible college instructor (Bible, theology and Greek), dean of women, registrar, and member of the board of administrators and the board of directors.

Dearing took on another male-dominated role at Maxwell's request – preaching frequently at Prairie Tabernacle, which drew upwards of 2,000 people on Sundays. To Dearing's response that she was not a preacher, Maxwell replied, "Oh, I know you're not, but I think you should do it."

Maxwell's position on women in leadership was remarkably consistent, and a good deal more liberal minded than was the norm for the evangelical Christian community of his day. His last published work was on that issue. *Women in Ministry*, with contributions from Dearing, was published in 1987, three years after Maxwell's death.

Today, Prairie is proud to equip young women for a range of ministries and careers. Mark Maxwell, grandson of L.E. and current president, believes that the concept of "women in leadership" reflects the teaching of Scripture. "Our responsibility," he said, "is to recognize the gifts of those around us and allow God to choose willing individuals to do His work in this world."

**Stonecroft Ministries**  
**Women reaching women**

Simply put, Stonecroft Ministries is about women reaching women for Jesus Christ.

This nondenominational and non-profit Christian organization is the ideal tool for the woman who has a heart for evangelism.

Helen Duff Baugh, a young housewife in the dirty '30s, had that sort of heart. She was inspired to pray, and soon 24 prayer groups were established. With over 100 women praying for their communities, something was bound to happen!

At a time when women weren't encour-

aged to take leadership roles, she sensed God leading her to organize dinner meetings designed primarily to bring business women to Christ. Within a short time, similar events and Bible studies spanned the Unites States – all under the Stonecroft Ministries umbrella.

This vital ministry came to Canada in 1966. Gladys Harding, the nation's first leader said, "I got involved because it seemed a good way to share Christ with non-Christian friends."

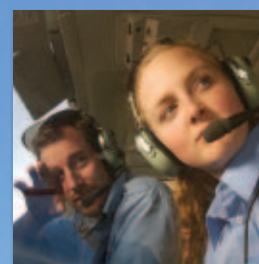
It was a good way! Thousands have come to Christ through the years. Today, the Canadian national office in Edmonton, Alberta, with staff members across the country, works with 5,000 volunteers in evangelism and leadership training.

"Stonecroft women continue to pray



**Lorraine Myrholm**

Bible College - College of Applied Arts & Technology - School of Mission Aviation



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for their communities and share their faith personally. They continue to invite their neighbours to hear about Jesus at outreach meetings and gather in homes to learn from the Bible – and so the story goes on,” said Lorraine Myrholm, executive director.

Learn how you can be involved in influencing your community. Visit [www.stonecroftcanada.org](http://www.stonecroftcanada.org).

### UrbanPromise Toronto Encouraging mothers

If you ask Stephanie McBride and Christine Lee about a typical day of ministry to single mothers in Warden Woods (a



Christine Lee

low-income Toronto neighbourhood), their response will sound anything but typical. They might comfort a mother separated from her children because of immigration delays, pray with

a mother at the hospital bedside of her son who has been stabbed or support a mother who has just learned that her young daughter is pregnant.

McBride and Lee are mothers themselves, with all the challenges of making a home, but they quietly serve the moms in Warden Woods through UPHOLD, a ministry of UrbanPromise Toronto. This ministry is designed to encourage mothers to see themselves as God’s beautiful creations by providing opportunities where they can grow spiritually, personally and in community

Through home visits, Bible studies and special events, these moms, often isolated by pain and shame, learn to connect and share. Stephanie and Christine focus on building supportive relationships, teaching life skills and encouraging self-awareness as they demonstrate Christ’s love to women whose life experiences make it almost impossible to imagine what the faithful love of God might be like.

McBride explains their work this way, “Male or female, we are all created in Christ to do good works. Caring for these moms in government housing is simply responding to the needs of the community with the love of Jesus. These moms whisper to us stories of childhood horrors, current fears and parenting struggles. As women, we are

able to identify with them intimately and point them to the safety of God’s love.”



Margaret Gibb

### Women Together Networking and empowering women

The board of trustees and founder Margaret Gibb are pleased to announce the launch of a new ministry in

Canada: Women Together

Women Together plans to engage professional Canadian Christian women to provide education, leadership training, skills development, spiritual instruction and encouragement to women in developing countries. Teams of skilled professionals will donate their services to Christian missions, NGOs, missionaries and churches in their work with women in the developing world.

The needs of women in developing countries as they relate to poverty, illiteracy, childbirth, sex education, nutrition, gender equality and disease prevention are staggering.

Skilled and professional women in Canada have the expertise and experience to share and provide practical tools, empowering women to be more effective leaders in their communities and equipping them to fulfill their dreams.

“There are enough valuable resources found among Canadian women in their gifts, abilities and experience to make a significant and life-transforming difference in the lives of women in developing countries,” said Gibb.

Women Together will network and create a global community of Christian women who live to glorify God and serve others, through mutual learning, friendship, support, prayer and a commonality of faith.

Gibb added, “Women, no matter where they live, speak a language they understand. When you bring together humanitarian aid, education, training, tools and spiritual encouragement, you create a heart bond of support and friendship that results in growth and change. It’s inevitable”

In 2012, Women Together will assemble teams to work in Uganda and Ukraine.

For more information visit [www.women-together.org](http://www.women-together.org) or email Margaret Gibb at [info@women-together.org](mailto:info@women-together.org). ■



## God's Dream for Your Life

God plans “to give you hope and a future” (Jeremiah 29:11).

**A**s I talk with women across the country, they seem to share a desire to follow God and fulfill their God-given potential. We want to get from Point A to Point B, enjoying the journey and avoiding roadblocks along the way. But there aren't any one-size-fits-all formulas for following God. It's a faith each of us must live out in the day to day, the exciting and the mundane.

It was on a day like today, one that seemed to start like any other, that the world was changed forever. Yet Jesus, our Redeemer, knew what the coming hours would hold. He knew the pain He would suffer, the anguish His death would cause His family and friends. Only He knew sin and death would be conquered once and for all.

To many His death seemed like the end, but Jesus knew it was only the beginning of a new covenant to redeem Him, and Jesus knew it, even as a young man.

As a young girl what were your dreams for your life? What was Plan A? For many Canadian women Plan A looks something like this: go to school, get married, have children, start career, pursue your dreams, buy a house, live a quiet life or become famous, serve overseas, and enjoy an early retirement to Florida.

We plot our steps from Point A to Point B, asking God to bless us. Then life – and, oh yes, *God's* plans – get in the way.

### Not the Life You Wanted

“Life wasn't supposed to turn out this way,” we lament. An engagement is broken off. Career aspirations are crushed. Children leave home and the faith they were raised to know. Barrenness makes you wish there was even the possibility of children leaving home. Singleness returns again in mid-life. Deterioration of the mind outpaces a loved one's physical strength.

Some dreams come true. Others lie in pieces as shards of glass that pierce your heart. Amid life's sorrows I have found Psalm 126:5 to be a comforting truth: “Those who sow in tears will reap with shouts of joy!”

We all have broken lives in need of spiritual repair, thanks to our sin and the sins of others. Yet there is a profound loveliness in the heart of a woman who trusts in God through the brokenness, believing He will bring

beauty from these ashes and wholeness to her shattered pieces.

God isn't as concerned about getting us from Point A to Point B as He is in bringing glory to Himself. He guides us along the scenic route, making us more like Christ and causing us to trust Him more.

In my early twenties I experienced true brokenness for the first time. A believer since the age of four, I had followed Christ eagerly throughout my life. Desiring to make a difference, I dreamed big. God fulfilled many of those dreams at a young age. But when uncertainty about the future reared its head, I wondered if I had heard Him correctly. If these dreams were actually mine and not His for my life, I wanted nothing of them.

Brokenness brought me to my knees, knowing I had nothing to offer Him. I surrendered all and asked for *His* dreams for my life, to remove those that were not part of His plan, and to restore the dreams that truly were from Him all along.

Some were laid to rest and, amazingly, several dreams were restored in the months and years that followed. God revived them in ways that left no doubt. It had everything to do with Him and nothing to do with me.

### God's Plan

Still, the Christian life isn't ultimately about living our dreams. God's plan is much more significant than that. Easter reminds us of the truth we live out each day – our God is a God of redemption and hope. We need salvation through Jesus Christ infinitely more than any other dream we long to see come true in our lifetime. One day, every tear will be wiped away.

In the meantime we take our pain to the cross – trusting Jesus understands our suffering – and placing our hope in Him alone. He gave his life to pay the ransom for our sin. His forgiveness provides a fresh start when we come to Him in repentance. Through Christ reconciliation with God is possible.

His plan is perfect, always working for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. He is with us through the valleys, along the scenic route, and into a future filled with hope for *His* glory. **FT**

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**MICHELLE (NAGLE) ARTHUR** is executive director of Women Alive, a Canadian ministry to women and teen girls. Visit [womenalive.org](http://womenalive.org) or call 1-800-387-4753 to register for March and April conferences, including Grande Prairie, Alta., Waterloo, Ont. and MissionFest Toronto.



## Cultic Corrections

God can bring healing even in the darkest places, as changes in The Family International show

A couple of months ago I heard a miracle report that proves God has no limit to His power. Claire Borowik was telling my theology class about how God was bringing radical change to The Family International, a religious community of about 4,000 people worldwide. The group was founded by David Berg in 1968 as a sort of California hippie commune, and originally named the Children of God.

Borowik knows the group well. She has been a member all her adult life (she was born in Ontario in 1960). Over the last two decades she and her husband Lonnie Davis have been the public spokespersons for the group, appearing on CNN and in other media. The couple now live in the Toronto area but work directly with the two current leaders, known by their “pen names” as Peter Amsterdam and Maria Fontaine. (Maria, born Karen Zerby, was the second wife of the group’s founder, who died in 1994. Peter’s birth name was Steve Kelly.)

To my astonishment Borowik told us God was leading The Family International, which most observers still consider a cult, to abandon its emphasis on strict communal living, give more priority to the Bible, focus on principles rather than rules and regulations, resist the elitist and judgemental ethos of the past, reject an overemphasis on prophecies about the end of the world, and adopt more conservative expressions of sexuality. Later she sent me the formal documents from the leaders that give substance to these amazing, wonderful changes.

The revolution in this group can only be grasped by getting a sense of just how far the founder and movement departed from the high ideals of the gospel. For example, For example, Berg taught for years that Family women should use sexual favours to win outsiders to Jesus. Over time this involved money transaction in a significant number of cases..This was known as Flirty Fishing, a practice that lasted from 1974 through 1987. Berg even provided graphic comic book instructions on the topic. More notoriously he also sanctioned sexual contact between adult members and minors. Fortunately, Family leaders banned such contact in 1986 and Maria Fontaine admitted Berg’s failures on the topic in a major British court case in 1993. Of course that could not undo the scars of those who had already been abused, including one of Berg’s own grandchildren.

The movement also excelled at times in legalism and authoritarianism, seen, for example, in the use of detention

camps. The treatment of children in one camp in Macau came to the attention of Sir Alan Ward, the judge in the British court case. He wrote, “The truth is that these children were there to have their spirits broken by whatever means it took, and loving kindness was not the primary means deployed. Freedom of thought was a crime for which DR [a witness] was banished to Macau. Freedom of thought was beaten out of her in Macau. Though DR lives on, the spirit of a young girl died in Macau.” Peter Amsterdam and Maria Fontaine have issued formal apologies for these and other abuses.

The reboot of The Family International represents promise and peril. In one document called *The Change Journey* (2010) Peter Amsterdam writes, “We are standing at the edge of the cliff, poised to dive into the future, into the new. Maria and I feel a range of emotions. We’re excited, concerned, hopeful, and, frankly, a bit scared.” He says God made it clear the changes were needed since the movement was failing to reach the world for Jesus and members felt crushed by the lack of care for them as individuals.

In *Blueprint for the Future* (2010) he writes, “We envision the Family providing an empowering environment – one that infuses members with inspiration and confidence to enact their dreams and plans for God; to act on God’s will for their life, whatever path or career it leads them to; to grow in Christian faith, belief, discipleship or missionary service; to reach for the stars in finding effective means of bringing the Gospel to those who need it.”

Believe it or not, The Family International has always been orthodox on most doctrines and preoccupied with evangelism and mission. This is not actually very surprising since Berg’s background was Christian and Missionary Alliance, and the Children of God was originally part of the Jesus People movement. So, its members believe in the Trinity, salvation by grace, the bodily resurrection of Jesus, His Second Coming, and the realities of heaven and hell. All of this is proof that doctrinal correctness is not necessarily a safeguard against damaging moral failings in a group’s leadership or ongoing life.

The bottom line is that the changes in the current reboot look like a miracle in the making. Many ex-members will greet them as whitewash or lies, and continue to pour contempt on the current leadership. While those Family leaders need to be clearer about the depth of Berg’s moral and spiritual failings, things are looking brighter in a group that has had much darkness. The changes are proof that God is at work, even when and where we do not expect it. **FT**

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**JAMES A. BEVERLEY** is professor of Christian thought and ethics at Tyndale Seminary in Toronto. He is on medical leave this term due to replacement hip surgery.



**No Crib for a Bed – Canyon Creek donates crib and baby supplies to a new (single) mom in the neighbourhood.**

PHOTO COURTESY: NEIGHBOUR LINK

# Canyon Creek Christian Fellowship, Calgary, Alta.

Taking acts of kindness outside the church can evoke more response from neighbours than inviting them to church.

**C**hange at Canyon Creek Christian Fellowship, a member of the Baptist General Conference on the southeastern fringes of Calgary, Alta., was triggered by a shift in local culture. Fifteen years ago the church's focus was attractational ministry, expecting neighbours to come to Sunday school, church services or other special programs. Outreach to neighbours (or "local missions") wasn't something most members thought about, even as recently as five years ago.

But today that mindset is inadequate. "Church just isn't on [our neighbours'] radar these days," says Pastor Rick Bayer. "We can't focus on the number that regularly attends church. We must challenge ourselves to go out and bless the community."

## Reaching Out

Bayer discovered practical suggestions can help church members rise to that challenge. His congregation of 150 is now becoming a "church that scatters," where 80 per cent of the congregation is involved in sharing the love of Christ through acts

of kindness. He models acts of kindness himself as the Popsicle Guy, giving away Popsicles in a local park on a hot summer day. When passersby ask why, his invariable response is, "I just want to share a little of God's love for you."

The church also holds Kindness to Go Sundays each spring when it provides members with plants to give away. "Take a plant after the service, stop and strike up a conversation with your neighbour."

Sometimes attendees deliver gifts to those working late shifts, unable to spend time with their families – on Christmas Eve, for instance. Members phone to confirm how many employees are working at a convenience store, local hotel, fire hall or retirement home before they stop by to deliver gifts.

Regularly, teams head downtown to serve a meal at the drop-in centre. Youth distribute socks, gloves and jackets when the weather turns cold. They reach out with kindness, compassion, mercy and God's gracious words. Sometimes they reach out to a friend, sometimes to a stranger. The church-sponsored South

Fish Creek Network connects all sorts of agencies. One-third of gift baskets delivered by Canyon Creek are referrals from social services.

Churches should not hesitate about such partnerships, says Bayer. Although many Canadians “are becoming anti-religious,” finding common ground to serve in the community is not difficult. So Canyon Creek partners annually with the City of Calgary to clean up the Bow River, also inspired by the biblical imperative to care for creation.

The church also saw a community opportunity in the movie *To Save a Life*, which addresses the challenges that can drive teens to despair. It collaborated with the Distress Centre to sponsor showings in a local theatre and to advertise in schools. Parents and teens viewed the movie together, listened to a speaker from the Distress Centre and raised funds for the suicide hotline.

No Crib for a Bed is a partnership between Canyon Creek and NeighbourLink to

help local single mothers. For several weeks, a crib is placed at the front of the church for congregants to fill with baby things.

A few years ago the library invited the church to set up a booth. Now they send Canyon Creek their English-as-a-Second-Language overflow. Immigrants are eager to learn about Canadian culture, especially Canadian holidays. After explaining the meaning of Christmas or Easter, ESL leaders offer them Bibles.

Christians are more afraid to offer Bibles than immigrants are to receive them, Bayer observes – another sign of mindsets that need changing. “Why do we separate our spiritual life in Christ from our daily conversations?”

At Calgary’s annual Body-Soul-Spirit Expo Canyon Creek rents a booth and offers free coffee, Bibles and prayer. Many who stop by have tried Christianity but found it wanting, and are now trying psychics and other New Age attractions – but almost no one refuses a free prayer.

This opportunity to represent Jesus in the world pushes many Canyon Creek attendees outside their comfort zone, motivating them to dig deeper into God’s Word.

## Reaching In and Reaching Up

“Any time you bless people there will be a spillover response,” testifies Bayer. Members working downtown now view the marginalized differently. Bayer recognized this recently when a member of the youth group, his heart growing in compassion for street people, suddenly announced, “We gotta pray!”

When the junior high group held a Rake and Run event, one neighbour watched the group rake leaves off his property and came to the door to offer payment. When he was told the service was a free act of kindness, he asked, “Can I come to your church?”

Canyon Creek’s goal is to create a place to *belong* and to *become* as God reaches deeply into the lives of its members. The challenge of godly living, especially the “incarnational” aspect of trying to be the hands and feet of Christ, lies not in devoting an occasional Sunday to carry out acts of kindness. The challenge lies in getting every member to adopt a Christ-in-the-community lifestyle.

Among the results Bayer points to a chilli event that drew 500. Some neighbours have also contacted the church in times of crisis.

“Be a community of kindness,” Bayer encourages his congregation. It starts with a theological compulsion. “God sent His Son – God sends us.”

The process of learning to love our neighbours can be frustratingly slow. “When will we stop simply speaking words of evangelism and [instead] default to a lifestyle of incarnational living?” Bayer asks. But he also knows that God is working in His people, and that “we’re living out our part in the story God is writing here on planet Earth.” **FT**

**CHARLENE DE HAAN** is a freelance writer in Toronto, the executive director of Camino Global (formerly CAM Canada) and founder of StepUPtransitions.ca. Read all the profiles in this ongoing series at [faithtoday.ca](http://faithtoday.ca)

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## Seeing Helps Believing

We can all improve our reach to men by using visual aids.

**T**he teachers in my childhood church knew a secret. If they could visually illustrate the message, kids would remember it. I remember something as simple as water changing colours in a cup from black to red to clear – representing the process of salvation. On the more extreme side I remember a guy who came and lay on a bed of nails to give us a glimpse of what it must have been like for Jesus as He was crucified.

As we get older we may think visual stories are childish. Women in particular are better at remembering things based on written or spoken cues, and they are also better at remembering things when they are connected with emotion (according to a study in *Current Directions in Psychological Science*). However, men recall things primarily through visual cues.

While this should not come as a surprise to anyone, we must ask whether we are communicating our messages in a way men will remember, or is the communication style primarily for a female audience?

### Teaching the Twelve

As we read the Scriptures we have the benefit of seeing and knowing the whole story. We may even feel superior to the disciples. Jesus told them again and again He would die and come back to life, yet they were still surprised when it happened. John 20 tells of the resurrection of Jesus. As Peter and John were told this wild story by Mary Magdalene, they *ran!* We don't know what was going through their minds, but it's not hard to picture these two grown men in a footrace to see who would get there first to find out what was going on.

As they got to the tomb they didn't just *walk* in – they cautiously *looked* in and saw the cloths Jesus wore lying where He had been lying, and the cloth that covered His face neatly folded in a separate place (apparently Jesus liked to keep things tidy). In verse 8 we read John cautiously walked into the tomb (no doubt), and then “saw *and* believed.” Later, after everyone else had already seen Jesus, Thomas still would not believe until he saw Jesus for himself.

As Jesus journeyed with 12 men for three years, it must have become obvious that no matter what He said, they still had to see to aid their belief. (Think of many of the miracles He performed.) Yes, Jesus did say, “Blessed are

those who have believed and have not seen” – but that doesn't mean He condemned those who did not believe without seeing.

### Teaching Men

There is no shortage of educational tools available for Canadian believers. We have Bible studies, sermons, books, podcasts, etc. If we want to see men growing in their belief, we must also make sure they can visually connect with the truth of God.

Here are some suggestions:

- When teaching men, use a visual aid as often as possible – and I don't mean PowerPoint with just a bunch of words on it. In the age of the Internet, people have developed great videos that can be used to aid with teaching.
- When decorating your church building, what are the visual cues of Bible truths? For example, is the cross in your building nicely sanded down and finished? Or is it rugged with some long spikes and maybe even drops of red paint?
- Give men a visual reminder they can bring home. There are reasons why men like to win trophies or earn degrees. In these accomplishments they also receive a visual reminder of their victory. What are the spiritual visual reminders men have at home? The most critical visual aid for men who are learning and growing in faith is you. Jesus brought the Twelve with Him – He didn't just teach them and send them home. If you want to see men in your group have stronger belief, those men need to see the stories of God at work in your life and through your life. They need to see your integrity in decision making and how God honours that integrity. They need to come with you to serve the needs of others, and watch God's power and presence show up to change people's lives.

In my travels I've heard many times how people wish the men in their church or community were a little more serious about spiritual issues. Just like any missionary does when they travel to a country and speak the language of the people, we must also do what we can to help men believe by providing visual cues that will aid in their belief. **FT**

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**KIRK GILES** is president of Promise Keepers Canada, a national ministry committed to ignite and equip men to make a godly impact in the world. Get more info on Promise Keepers and tools to assist you in reaching men at [PromiseKeepers.ca](http://PromiseKeepers.ca). *Faith Today* thanks him for his recent writing contributions. Watch this space in the next issue for a new men's column by Winnipeg writer Doug Koop.



# Somalia Struggles Against Drought



“**W**hat should I do and where should I go?” Those were questions I asked after being appointed global ambassador for the World Evangelical Alliance in 2011. Shortly after, I saw news about a devastating famine in Somalia and East Africa – impacting the lives of 11 million people. Deeply moved to encourage our colleagues there, I headed there in early August.

Aiah Foday-Khabenje, general secretary of the Association of Evangelicals in Africa, and Wellington Mutiso, general secretary of the Evangelical Alliance of Kenya, met me in Kenya and briefed me on the violence in the Mogadishu area of Somalia – and the growing number of people fleeing drought and famine. I trusted my inner prompting to visit Mogadishu, despite repeated warnings of an escalating situation.

I wanted to tell the Somalis we care, the international Christian community cares.

Two of us needed visas to enter Somalia, but the Somali embassy was closed.

Somalia’s deputy head of mission still wanted to help. When he asked why we wanted to visit, I told him how important it was for us to be faithful to the One we serve. For over an hour he spoke of his land, and the crisis of a country lawless and out of control.

When we arrived at the Mogadishu airport, visas in hand, a photojournalist from France was blunt: “You are an idiot. I do my work in dangerous places, but this is the most dangerous city in the world.” Providentially – and ironically – it would be a warlord and his army who guarded

our every step during our time in Somalia.

Somalia, a country bordering the Indian Ocean, has gone through tragic periods of devastating wars and terror before. In 1991 the fall of the Siad Barre regime created a lawlessness that has gripped the country since. Al-Shabaab, a militant Islamist organization that co-operates with al-Qaeda, took power in central and south Somalia in 2006.

It has been said that drought is an ecological disaster, but famine is a political disaster. When the famine began, people got fed up with al-Shabaab. Meanwhile Christian aid groups were forced out of the country because the Humanitarian Co-ordination office dramatically increased their registration fees. There were stiff financial penalties for helping in this troubled land. When an aid group dug a well, the office required an additional 20 per cent payment. A terrible famine was being exploited for financial gain.

During my trip we travelled to refugee camps and witnessed the enormous plague engulfing this region. Most striking to me was the scarcity of males and abundance of women and children. Most men died in conflict, some stayed home to work the fields, and many have more than one wife.

I met one woman mourning outside a shack. Another woman speaking some English spoke softly to me. “Sir, she just lost two children, and an hour ago she lost her third.”

“From what?” I asked.

“Hunger,” she said.

There were positive images too: children’s smiles and laughter at my silly lion growls. A bit apprehensive about taking photos, I was surprised the children were disappointed when I didn’t photograph

them. They would quickly gather in groups, asking me to take photos, calling out with wide smiles, “Canada!” Another beautiful memory.

Later that day I met a government minister who said, “Canadians are cowards.” I asked him why. “They all go to Nairobi,” he responded. “No one comes here. But why have you come?”

“I’m a Christian,” I answered. “And though Somalia has a terrible reputation, I want you to know God loves Somalia and Somalis.” I’ve spoken to many groups about God’s love, but never have I felt the atmosphere change as I did that late afternoon. I had become their brother.

Back at the Mogadishu airport preparing for our flight back to Nairobi, I noticed a young Somali working the metal detector, wearing a T-shirt with a message in English: “This is True.” I assumed he had no idea what that phrase meant, and asked him if he knew what was written right beneath it on his shirt.

“Yes,” he replied. “John 3:16.”

I asked if he knew what that meant. He smiled and explained John 3:16 to me. Here, in the face of unrelenting opposition to the Christian faith, this young man was up to a public witness. In the most barren and hostile of places, a simple, powerful witness refused to be denied its opportunity. **FT**

**BRIAN C. STILLER** of Newmarket, Ont., is the global ambassador for The World Evangelical Alliance.

## On Our Knees

- For basic facts about Somalia and suggestions to incorporate into your prayers, visit [operationworld.org/soma](http://operationworld.org/soma) and [persecution.net/somalia.htm](http://persecution.net/somalia.htm)

## Canadian Connections

- In December the Canadian Foodgrains Bank ([foodgrains.ca](http://foodgrains.ca)) raised its commitment to \$13 million worth of aid in 22 drought-relief projects in East Africa. In one major Somalia project, the

Christian Reformed World Relief Committee ([crwrc.org](http://crwrc.org)) is supporting World Concern with food distribution for 16,800 people in Southern Somalia, many of them away from home due to drought. (Many others have fled to Kenya.) Mennonite Central Committee and others are doing similar work.

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





## A Holy Preoccupation

Willy Reimer became head of Canada's Mennonite Brethren Churches last year. He challenges Christians to reflect Christ more clearly.

**Y**ou never get a second chance to make a first impression." This advice is often given before job interviews, meeting that "special someone" or attending the first day at a new school or workplace.

First impressions are also important to preachers, who seek to craft exceptional sermon openings that will attract and hold listeners' attention. Prime ministers know the importance of inaugural speeches that inspire confidence and set the tone for their public service. New executive directors are told their first hundred days will set the direction for their ministry. First impressions matter.

As I was reflecting on these ideas, I wondered what Jesus thought of making a proper first impression. Jesus chose His words and actions carefully. A quick look at His first recorded conversations reveals the things He wanted to emphasize as He made His first public appearances.

### First words

Jesus' first words recorded in the Gospel of Matthew are presented in the context of His commissioning as messianic king who holds all authority. Matthew 3:13-15 (NLT) reads: "Then Jesus went from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. But John tried to talk him out of it. 'I am the one who needs to be baptized by you,' he said, 'so why are you coming to me?' But Jesus said, 'It should be done, for we must carry out all that God requires.' So John agreed to baptize him."

Jesus redirected John's thinking from human ideas of authority, hierarchy and power, and focused it on obedience and submission to God the Father. Jesus was baptized because that is what His Father wanted. Jesus' first action – His "first impression" – was to place himself under His Father's authority.

In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus' first recorded words present us with Public Relations Disaster 101. "The Kingdom of God is near! Repent of your sins and believe

the Good News!" (Mark 1:15, NLT).

We're so politically correct that the words of Jesus spoken by contemporary voices make us cringe. But Jesus was more concerned with a truthful first impression than a palatable one. We're embarrassed by the truth of the gospel – we are sinners in need of a saviour. Jesus' life declared and demonstrated the in-breaking of the Kingdom – the reign of God – which offended the religious but won the hearts of the lost, marginalized and broken because they recognized good news when they heard it.

### Intimacy with the Father

I was struck here by Jesus' preoccupation with the Father, both relationally and missionally. Jesus's first concern was to submit His life and will to His Father through teaching and baptism. What does this have to do with us today? While I'm concerned we teach and lead people to lives of mission, I'm even more concerned we submit our lives to

Christ – just as Jesus submitted His life to the Father. We can't give a good first impression if we're not first "impressed" with the presence and reality of Christ in our lives.

To embody the words and works of Jesus, we must first know Him intimately. To give people a foretaste of the fulfillment of God's Kingdom, we must intentionally develop a holy preoccupation with Jesus. Our identity is not in position, nationality or degrees earned – it's in Jesus.

When we're focused on Jesus, we will become passionate about the things He is passionate about – preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God. We'll become gripped by the Good News, applying it to every area of our lives and sharing it with others. We'll be so filled and led by the Spirit that Jesus oozes out of us into the lives of others.

We may not get a second chance to make a first impression, so I pray our lives and churches will be so shaped by the person and work of Jesus that He is the first and lasting impression we make. **FT**

We're so politically correct that the words of Jesus spoken by contemporary voices make us cringe. But Jesus was more concerned with a truthful first impression than a palatable one.

**WILLY REIMER** of Calgary is executive director of the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, which has 250 congregations across Canada. A previous version of this article was published in *Mennonite Brethren Herald* (November 2011). This column features affiliates of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. For a list, see the [EFC.ca/affiliates](http://EFC.ca/affiliates).

## This Hidden Thing

**Author: Dora Dueck**  
**CMU Press, 2010.**  
**350 pages. \$19.50**

“You’re not wanted,” begins Winnipeg writer Dora Dueck’s novel

*This Hidden Thing.*

The words of rejection are spoken to 19-year-old Maria Klassen on the frigid Winnipeg doorstep of a prospective employer. Maria’s uncle translates them into German for her because she

is a new immigrant who can’t understand English. But Maria is not easily discouraged. She tells her uncle to tell Mrs. Edith Lowry that she will work hard, she’s a fast learner. We like her pluck. So does Mrs. Lowry, who takes her on.

The story follows Maria as she works as a domestic in the Winnipeg home, slowly getting comfortable in two worlds – the world of the *Englischer* and the world of her newly settled Mennonite family. Her loyalty to them is evident by the large portion of each paycheque she sends home, and by how she shields them from her traumatic secret.

Set on the Canadian Prairies, this narrative spans Maria’s life from 1927 to 1983. It is the compelling tale of an era of Mennonite history which explores the immigrant experience while conveying emotional and psychological insights. Dueck’s writing is lyrical, rich and intelligent. She reveals truths about what happens when church and family standards conflict with passion, and reality no longer fits appearances: “She hid what

she had been deeper inside who she had to become.”

Of course, the hidden comes out eventually – as such things do – in foibles and habits. Sister-in-law Erna observes, “She’d put a scarf on her head and pulled it very

tight. That was the telling gesture. A gesture of her relentless self-control.” And her grandniece says, “But she liked to look presentable. *Am I presentable?* She was always asking me that.” The “hidden thing” also emerges in other surprising ways.

This novel was the 2010 Manitoba Book of the Year and the 2011 McNally Robinson Book of the Year.

–Violet Nesdoly

## Changing Human Nature: Ecology, Ethics, Genes and God

**Author: James C. Peterson**  
**Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2010. 272 pages. \$19.99**

This book presents an in-depth survey of the biblical and theological tradition and joins it to contemporary medical thought. The result is a useful resource for ethical dialogue among scientists and religious thinkers. It’s also a worthwhile and challenging read for all of us. The book’s main

point is to present an informed Christian defence of genetic intervention. The key question is not whether our genes will

undergo change, the author argues, but whether we will be conscious of and conscientious about the direction of that change.

Author James Peterson teaches at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ont., at both the faculty of health sciences and the (evangelical) divinity college. His book avoids the extremes of progressive Christians who tend to ignore the rich resources of their faith tradition, and of conservatives who tend to function with a biased understanding of science.

The Scriptures state clearly that the one true God created all that is, Peterson summarizes. But when we think about creation, we need to remember it is constantly changing around us. Much of what will not be again, and what is yet to come has not always been before. God’s creation in that sense is not yet finished.

Within that constantly changing creation, humans make choices that shape us and the material world for good or bad. We can’t avoid doing so. But as Christians we need to choose consciously and conscientiously. In genetics, then, the question is not whether we will shape nature and ourselves, but whether we will be aware we are doing so – and choose well.

Peterson presents the following principle: If, from the full perspective of Christian tradition, an instance of genetic intervention is safe, a genuine improvement that increases the choices of recipients, and is the best use of our finite resources, then it may be an expression of love for God,

for one another and the rest of creation entrusted to us.

He adds it is not our job to “protect” God and God’s people from new developments in scientific research. After all, medical interventions have saved many lives. But it is very important to have believers who keep abreast of research on areas such as the human genome and stem cells.

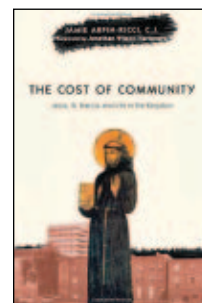
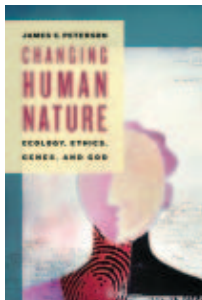
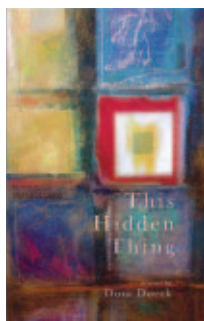
–Wayne A. Holst

## The Cost of Community: Jesus, St. Francis and Life in the Kingdom

**Author: Jamie Arpin-Ricci**  
**InterVarsity Press, 2011.**  
**236 pages. \$16.99**

Jamie Arpin-Ricci’s purpose is to encourage us to let the Sermon on the Mount *really* shape our lives. Taking St. Francis as a model (though to a limited extent), Arpin-Ricci advocates a way of life that holds this world’s goods in small regard. “The pursuit of wealth,” he writes, “is incompatible with the life Christ calls us to.” He draws our attention to the moral and psychological devastation North American consumerism has wrought, and offers his Little Flowers Community, a lay Anglican order in a rough part of Winnipeg, as an example of an imperfect but serious Christian counterculture.

Arpin-Ricci’s frequent use of the word radical – “radical generosity,” “radical grace,” “radical trust,” “the radical nature of...obedience” – points



us to his earnestness, though after a while the word seems to slip into cliché. The author does not romanticize poverty, and he sees that, especially in wealthy countries, poverty is sometimes the result of bad personal decisions. But he reminds us people who make bad decisions are not excluded from God's love.

As a Christian Arpin-Ricci has little interest in "mere activism and social posturing." He wants his actions to always conform to the rigours of a Christian life built according to Jesus' model. This is a vital point, but the book sometimes takes on a preachy tone – we are frequently told what we "must" do.

Certainly the author is correct that "giving up wealth and privilege" is a good way to reach the needy (including the spiritually needy rich). But it is also true the kind of work Arpin-Ricci does is often made financially possible by people who labour each day in the world of profit.

The Christian body is varied and people have different ministries, personalities and strengths. Arpin-Ricci's outlook reminds us of a vital component of the complicated and varied Christian family.

–Preston Jones

## **Killing Enmity: Violence and the New Testament**

**Author: Thomas R. Yoder Neufeld**  
**Baker Academic, 2011.**  
**192 pages. \$22.99**

**C**onnecting the book title and the last two names of the author will result in a question: Is the au-

thor delivering an apologetic for his Anabaptist peace background? In fact, the author admits that bias from the outset. However, this book actually questions both those who lean towards a

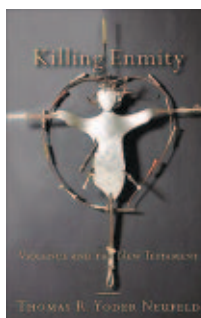
proactive "violent" reading of the New Testament, as well as those who hold to a traditional passive non-resistance.

Yoder Neufeld proposes not a mindless passivity in retaliation against violence, but an alternative "turn-the-other-cheek" response that stops the chain of violence. The overriding pre-emptive presence of the God of love and forgiveness is what motivates the sons and daughters of God to go the extra mile and forgive their enemies.

He does not see Jesus' actions in the temple as a model of Christian assertiveness. Instead, he agrees with those who say they are an "acted parable of judgment" that forecasts the Roman destruction of A.D. 70.

Jesus' death on the cross might have been a violent one, but the biblical narratives also indicate divine sovereignty and grace. Subordination to hostile authorities (Romans 13:1-7) should be read in context of the practical love exhortations of Romans 12-13, he suggests.

In the midst of the violence in Revelation, Yoder Neufeld highlights there is a Lamb who was slain but is also a Lion who will triumph in the ultimate analysis. So, is "killing enmity" (the phrase draws on Ephesians 2:16) a legitimate option for the Christian?



Yoder Neufeld offers no clear-cut general principle in this book as he wrestles with the violent texts of the New Testament. However, like Jacob at Peniel, he realizes he has met God face to face in this encounter.

It's a mystery how good like the cross sometimes seems violent but results in an all-encompassing grace. But clearly it is true of God that He overcomes evil with good.

–Pye Chew

## **Missional Spirituality: Embodying God's Love from the Inside Out**

**Authors: Roger Helland and Leonard Hjalmarsen**  
**IVP Books, 2011. 252 pages. \$16.99**

**A**n abundance of new books has been hitting the Christian bookshelves in recent years on the newly created subject – *missional*. Most deal with the role and mission of the Church, both internally and externally, as they relate to a changing cultural and Christian mental framework. *Missional Spirituality* has a somewhat different proposition in mind – that of personal Christian spirituality and mission.

The authors contend a missional spirituality "is an attentive and active engagement of embodied love for God and neighbor expressed from the

inside out. In missional spirituality, we love God and others as we invite them to come home to the Father's house of love."

They root their idea of missional spirituality in a single passage, the greatest commandment passage in Mark 12:28-34 that commands us to love God and love neighbour, and then they develop their proposition in ten clearly expounded, significant chapters.

First, they focus on challenges derived from Enlightenment disenchantment; theological foundations (grounded in a fourfold framework of the Trinity, the incarnation, the priesthood of all believers, and the Jesus Creed/Shema); and Pietism in action in Moravian, Methodist and Christian & Missionary Alliance examples.

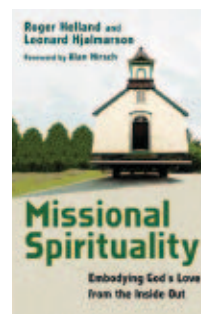
Next they offer four chapters on the development of spiritual practices that lead to the cultivation of a personal missional spirituality, based upon the Great Commandment imperatives of loving God with heart, mind, soul and strength.

They conclude with a missionary emphasis/outline for missional spirituality in which both individuals and the Church take the active gospel of Jesus to the

community, the workplace and the culture of our world. Two excellent appendices provide examples of missional spirituality in action.

This is a superb book which offers a very helpful framework for the 21st-century Church.

–R. Wayne Hagerman



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## For Such a Time as This?

Faithfulness prepares us for the unpredictable defining moments in our lives.

Oscars and Golden Globes, Harts and Conn Smythes, Grammys and Junos, Nobels and Orders of Canada – some of these honours acknowledge long careers while others recognize single extraordinary accomplishments.

Our hope as Christians is that we will receive from our Master a “lifetime achievement” award in the commendation, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant.” But life sometimes produces a key episode in which an individual is called to make a contribution worth a whole lifetime of preparation.

John Keats died young with a relatively small amount of poetry to his credit. But even the small “Ode on a Grecian Urn” outweighs most poets’ entire *oeuvres*.

Winston Churchill made many important contributions to British political and social life, but they pale in comparison to his leading role in the few years of Britain’s survival during the Second World War.

The Bible also shines a spotlight on particular crucial moments that define a person’s life and mark their signal contribution to the kingdom of God.

Esther is one of those, of course. Previously just a lovely, anonymous young woman, doubtless a delight to her family and friends, she is called to confront the most powerful person in her world in a matter of life and death – the life and death of her people, yes, with her own life and death in the balance. The biblical phrase “for such a time as this” echoes down the centuries as Jews celebrate Purim and Christian Sunday school teachers repeat the story to wide-eyed children.

Church history gives us Julian of Norwich, a saintly medieval woman who suffered serious illness during which she saw the visions described in her classic set of meditations, *Revelations of Divine Love*. The account of this single terrible, wonderful experience has both thrilled and comforted countless people.

Twentieth-century American evangelist Mordecai Ham was well known in his own small circles in the southeastern United States, but one convert under his preaching

made his whole career worthwhile: Billy Graham.

More troubling, however, is the story in John’s Gospel in which Jesus and His disciples encounter a man born blind. In the *quid pro quo* thinking of their heritage, the disciples ask Jesus who is to blame for the man’s blindness: he or his parents? Jesus replies, in one of the hardest of His many hard sayings, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him” (9:3).

Really, Jesus? This man suffered decades of blindness – and his family and friends suffered along with him – so God could make an object lesson of him?

Yet think of it. An entire chapter of the most beloved and widely reproduced book in the New Testament is devoted to this single event in this individual’s life – Jesus’ encounter with him, his argument with the Jewish leaders, and then his reacquaintance with Jesus.

And only he, along with Jesus, emerges looking good among all the characters in the story! In fact, he comes across as something of a righteous smart aleck (always worth bonus points in my book) who provokes the

Pharisees even as he humbly bows before the true Lord.

Think of the thousands, even millions, of people who have been blessed by this man’s testimony. For his testimony has been held up as a shining, simple example to countless nervous Christians concerned to bear witness properly to Jesus: “One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.”

Christian discipleship is about the long haul, yes – the whole haul. But it’s also about being positioned by God at the right place, at the right time, and in the right condition to accomplish His marvellous purposes.

Maybe you are a beauty whose good looks will get you into rooms the rest of us can’t enter – to your great peril and your great opportunity. Maybe you are a gifted artist faithful in your craft, but will die young. Maybe you will suffer in obscurity, ignored by the world, but remembered by God and brought out at a crucial moment for His great purposes, exalted “at the proper time” (1 Peter 5:6).

May God help us to trust that, whoever and wherever and whatever we are, He has not forgotten us, we are not useless to His purposes, and there are yet occasions in which His works will be revealed in us. **FT**

Christian discipleship is about being positioned by God at the right place, at the right time, and in the right condition.

**JOHN STACKHOUSE** is the Sangwoo Youtong Chee professor of theology and culture at Regent College, Vancouver.

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# The Life of Peter Penner (1929-2011)



PHOTO: KLARA THIELMANN

**Alberta pastor, teacher, farmer and counsellor escaped Stalin in Ukraine and Hitler in Germany**

By Richard Erlendson

**The injustice Peter Penner felt under both Stalin and Hitler shaped his character. Consequently, he tried to hear everyone and be gentle with everyone – especially children.**

Imagine being a pacifist Mennonite forced into the Hitler Youth in Germany, immigrating to years of poverty hoeing sugar beets in Alberta – would you have been able to persist in God’s strength to become a pastor and teacher? Peter Penner did, and that’s only part of his story.

Peter Penner was born Aug. 11, 1929, in Konteniusfeld, Ukraine. He was the third child, and first son, for Ukrainian Mennonite farmers Peter and Susanna Penner. He died at the age of 82 on Sept. 30, 2011, of cancer in Grande Prairie, Alta.

Peter had fond memories of being with his own father who supervised the cattle operation on a collective farm in Europe. He learned from an early age hard work was essential to the family livelihood.

However when Peter was nine, the excruciating hardship of Stalin’s Russia broke into his world. Peter’s family had heard of the dreaded “black raven,” the car driven by the Soviet Secret Police. It had taken men from the village

over the two previous years – never to be heard from again.

One night it stopped at the Penner house just before midnight. The elder Peter Penner was arrested and taken away, charged with being an enemy of the state. The alleged crime: having listened to a religious radio broadcast from a foreign country.

Peter Penner, Sr., was never seen again. And life for Peter Penner, Jr., was forever changed. He was thrust into employment and leadership roles well beyond his years. By the age of 12, he was working full days on the farm as a teamster – harrowing, haying or harvesting with a team of horses. He often spoke of being consulted on family and farm decisions while he was a young teenager.

## To Germany in 1943

As the Second World War progressed, Germany gained control of Peter’s village in Ukraine, and the German-speaking villagers were given much freedom. However, the tides changed in 1943. As part of a German military

retreat, Peter and his family were part of 7,000 German-speaking people – mostly Mennonites from a variety of villages including Konteniusfeld – who escaped religious persecution in Ukraine by fleeing to Poland and then Germany where they established refugee status.

At the age of 14, Peter was conscripted to the paramilitary organization of the Nazi party known as Hitler-Jugend – or Hitler Youth. There, the injustice of losing his father was compounded by the greater and ongoing cruelty he both witnessed and suffered in the Youth Camp. At night Peter and his friend from the same village “would hold hands in the dark and pray the prayers his mother had taught him to pray,” according to Peter’s son James Penner.

The injustice Peter felt under both Stalin and Hitler shaped his character. “It was from this place of deep pain that he tried to hear everyone and be gentle with everyone – especially children,” explains Vic Penner, another son of Peter’s. “Dad believed everyone’s voice needed to be heard because he knew what it was like to not be heard.”

As a pacifist Mennonite, Peter was adamant to avoid military combat. He never forgot how God granted him a miraculous intervention to help him live this out. Peter had approached a top official to request a discharge to farm labour for both himself and a friend because they each had developed a hernia. At precisely that moment, Peter recalled, an older man came into the room and said to the same official: “You just sent my daughter’s husband, a general, to the front lines. Do you not have two boys who can help her run the farm?”

Peter was released to work on the farm. And, in 1948, he was re-united with his mother, brother and all his sisters. The entire family then emigrated to Canada through the assistance of the Mennonite Central Committee and extended family members already in Canada.

Peter often referred to both his discharge from Hitler Youth and his being re-united with his family members as miracles that clearly showed God’s provision. Having experienced “goodness and mercy,” he vowed to serve God wholeheartedly for the rest of his life.

### To Alberta in 1948

From Pier 21 in Halifax, the Penners moved to Coaldale, Alta., where a Mennonite community took them in. Peter and his family found employment hoeing sugar beets for a local farmer.

But after three years of hoeing by his mom, an aunt, five sisters and himself, their debt from coming to Canada was not paid off. Peter recalls praying, and actually complaining to God about the fact (in a recorded interview by grandson Ian Penner from a few months ago).

“God the Spirit brought an idea to my mind. Mrs. Voth’s ten-acre plot of land was for sale across the street from the church. It would make a perfect location for a

home for Mom – plus I could subdivide it to build another home to pay off the family’s debt,” he said.

He approached Mrs. Voth as a 22-year-old negotiator. Her reply: “But you are just a minor, a boy. Why should I sell to you?”

Peter asked her, “Do you pray?”

Her reply: “Of course.”

So Peter said, “When you pray tonight could you add another clause? Could you ask God about that Peter Penner – about whether he is good for his word and whether he pays his debts or not?”

Mrs. Voth agreed to sell the land for \$3,600, but collectively the Penner family had only \$600. Peter suggested he and his mother visit their sugar beet farm employer, Mr. Toews, and ask him for a loan.

“Why would he give us the money?” his mother asked.

Peter replied, “Because in the book of James it says ‘God cares for the widows and orphans.’ You are a widow and I am half an orphan.”

Mr. Toews loaned Peter the \$3,000. The land was purchased, and Peter built two houses. One was sold, and the other was for his mother. Their debts were more than paid.

“For Dad,” says Peter’s son James Penner, “being a Christian was practical and experiential. God the Holy Spirit helped him choose the best option. He simply listened and obeyed.”

Once established in Canada, Peter pursued an education – jumping from Grade 4 in Ukraine to Grade 11 in Alberta. He learned English, finished high school and eventually completed both a Bachelor of Education degree and theological studies.

Peter counted Canada “the porch of heaven.” Peter’s son James Penner said his dad used the phrase often throughout his life – “that was how much the freedom, peace and prosperity in Canada meant to him. He was forever grateful.”

Peter’s first teaching position was at the Rock Lake Hutterite Colony in southern Alberta. Shortly after, he met Margaret Warkentin at the Lindbrook Mennonite Brethren Church, and they were married on Nov. 11, 1956. His proposal speech: “Did you know that if two rivulets flow together, they could make a larger stream?” Margaret’s reply, “Yes, I’m willing to flow together.”

### Three full-time jobs

In 1960 Peter accepted a call to pastor the Mennonite Brethren Church in Crooked Creek, Alta., in the Peace River region 400 kilometres northwest of Edmonton. (It later moved to DeBolt and became known as the Gospel Light Church.) As the church had few funds, Peter simultaneously accepted a teaching position at the nearby Ridgevalley School.

Soon, he purchased a farm in the Goodwin area (west

of DeBolt), and for the next three decades he worked at what would now be considered three full-time jobs: a teacher and school administrator, a pastor of a mid-sized evangelical church, and a farmer.

His son Phil Penner said: "It was only after I visited Ukraine last year that I came to realize Dad's work ethic was born of necessity. I came to an understanding of why he had worked so hard and looked out for so many people."

Peter and Margaret (also a career school teacher) became an integral part of the greater-DeBolt community, and raised five children: Vic, James, Dave, Klara, and Phil – four of whom remain in the Grande Prairie area.

For most of his teaching career Peter taught Grade 3 – though he also served as the principal of the Edson Trail School in DeBolt for a few years. When former students saw Peter or family members at community events after Peter's retirement, they would mention how safe they felt at school when Mr. Penner was there, recalls son James Penner.

"Dad simply would not tolerate bullying. Aside from that, he knew how to create a caring community in a classroom or even an entire school – one that included bullies and those who might be picked on."

Toward the end of his teaching career, Peter enacted an entrepreneurial and visionary educational project. He was teaching remedial mathematics and life skills to a group of high school boys, and it occurred to him that his students needed a practical project.

After convincing the school board to secure land in the hamlet of Crooked Creek, he blended curriculum and construction details in the building of an entire house. Every detail, from the digging of the basement to the creation of the cabinets, was handled by his students.

One of the high school students who participated in the project was Steve Sommerville – who had learning disabilities and grew up in a single parent home. Steve excelled for the first time in his school career as he worked on the house project. Moreover, he felt cared for and loved. The odd meal at the Penner home eventually became every meal, and Steve became a full-fledged member of the family.

Shortly after Peter retired from his roles of pastor, teacher and farmer, he suffered from a mental illness – eventually diagnosed as a chemical-induced, bi-polar disorder which created a manic-depressive personality.

### A wounded healer

After a brief hospitalization and subsequent treatment over several years, Peter managed to rise above the illness. While it remained a struggle for the rest of his life – what he called a "deep ache" – it was also his connection to hurting people.

Peter's son Vic Penner said, "He became a wounded healer for people he counselled, mentored or befriended.

It was his cross to bear – a thorn in his flesh. In the movie *Fugitive Pieces*, the closing remarks are, 'Now I see that I must give what I most need.' This was my dad's story.

"Dad was known for his encouraging words. He delighted in visiting with people. People report being supported, encouraged and blessed by him. It was from his own deep pain that he offered the words people needed.

"He would say, 'Without God's grace, I am nothing. Every good thing you have received from me is a gift from God through me.' He would tell us, 'Look to the One who gave me every good thing I have – the One who is the author of any good you see in me.'

"His life simply cannot be understood apart from his faith in and trust in God," concludes Vic Penner.

Peter made it well known that among his favourite Scripture passages was from Psalm 25: "To you, oh Lord, I lift up my soul. In you I trust, oh my God."


A note found pinned by Peter's bed – written in his own handwriting – reads: "My heart melts at the love of Jesus. He is mine and I am His. I am never so much mine as when I am His or so much lost to myself until lost in Him."

Peter never really retired. After he stepped down as a pastor and teacher, he worked with a national counselling organization in Grande Prairie, Alta., known as Burden Bearers of Canada – a position he held from 1987 to 1997. During a few of those years he simultaneously served as the pastor of the Wembley Baptist Church located 20 kilometres west of Grande Prairie.

He was a long-time board member of the Peace River Bible Institute located in nearby Sexsmith, Alta., a lifetime member of the Grande Prairie chapter of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship, and an ardent supporter of Sturgeon Lake Bible Camp.

For the past three years, Peter and Margaret again enjoyed the support of the greater Mennonite community – this time in Crooked Creek where they lived and were cared for in the Ridgevalley Home which is operated by the community's Church of God in Christ Mennonite.

A memorial service was held to celebrate the life of Peter Penner at the Alliance Church in Grande Prairie on Oct. 7, 2011, where nearly 700 former students, church members and rural neighbours gathered with his large extended family. He was buried at the Cornwall Cemetery – the site of the original Crooked Creek Mennonite Brethren Church at which Peter had first pastored.

Peter leaves Margaret, his wife of 55 years, five children, 16 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. He also leaves a brother, three sisters, an extended family of nieces and nephews, and a massive informal church family found in many Mennonite and other evangelical churches. 

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