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Gospel Music Making a Difference

p. 24



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November/December 2012

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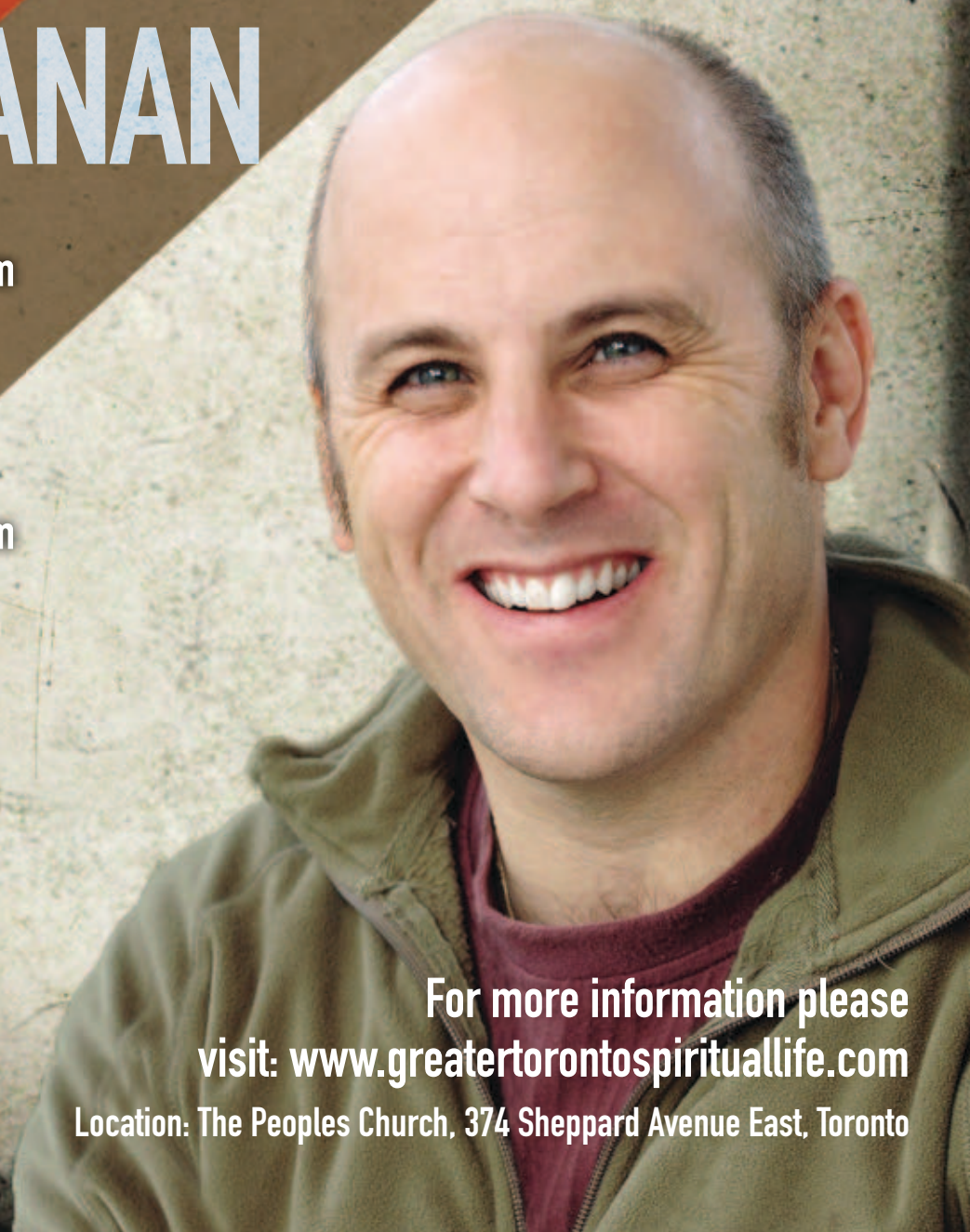
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From four walls to *freedom*

How did Jayanti—the **lowest of the low in her society**—become the first female ward in her village government?

It takes more than just handouts to change a person.

It takes true transformation.

Read on to find out how Jayanti is helping bring roads and water to her village.

By Amber Van Schooneveld



Jayanti could not leave the four walls of her home.

In Jayanti's village culture in India, the mother-in-law reigns supreme. All other women fall dead last in the food chain. School? That's dropped as soon as you can get them married off. Food? At meals they eat last and alone. Rights? Jayanti couldn't even go out for a bath without her mother-in-law's permission.

How can moms like Jayanti—uneducated and caged—possibly change the fate of their own children?

When Jayanti became pregnant, she sought out Compassion's Child Survival Program to register her child. It wasn't easy. Members of the church—**all of Compassion's programs are run through the local church**—had to plead time and again to get the permission of Jayanti's mother-in-law to let her attend the program.

But now, Jayanti and her daughter have:

- Medical care
- Supplemental food
- Access to education

But the real transformation has happened on the inside.

Through Compassion, Jayanti learned about God—His love and compassion for her. Jayanti learned, despite everything her culture has taught her, that she has value. Jayanti learned that God wants to use the likes of poor women like her to change her community.

That change on the inside makes all the difference on the outside.

Jayanti started teaching other women in her village what she learned at Compassion's program. They call themselves SHG—Self Help Group. With her leadership, Jayanti got them accredited by the government and even got them a grant to start small businesses. Jayanti's husband only makes \$28 a month as a watchman, but

now she can help buy food for her family because she's started selling eggs and fish.

Jayanti might be poor, but God has given her big dreams.

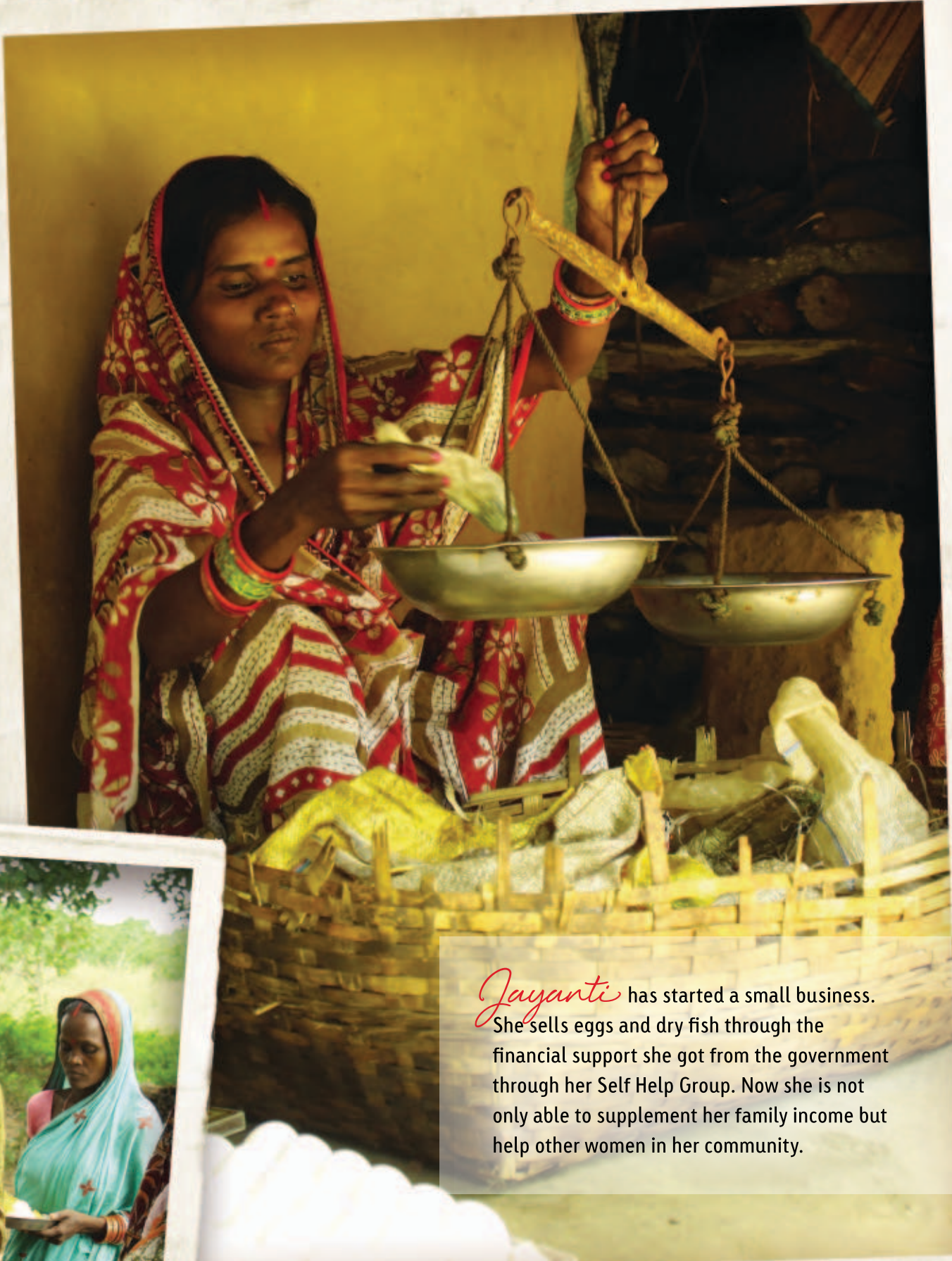
She knew she wanted to do more to help other women and children who were struggling to survive. Jayanti dared to run for the position of ward in her village government.

And she won.

Now Jayanti is using her influence to tap into government grants to improve roads, bring water facilities to the village and start a tailoring group to provide jobs for women in the village.

This woman who once had no voice, whose family struggled to eat enough each day, is now the one changing her community.





Jayanti has started a small business. She sells eggs and dry fish through the financial support she got from the government through her Self Help Group. Now she is not only able to supplement her family income but help other women in her community.





What did it take for this once oppressed woman to become a force to cut poverty in her village?

The Gospel.

Only Jesus can bring true transformation to a person and a community. That's why Compassion partners with local churches in 26 countries to help children get an education, stay healthy, learn how to build strong relationships, and discover God's love for them in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Join us in bringing life-saving help and the life-giving message of the gospel to a child in desperate need.



The Gospel Expressed Through the Arts

God's promises come alive through musical performance.

For the first time in Canada, this year's Covenant Awards for Canadian gospel music will be televised. Viewers across the country will experience the best of a wide variety of sound, expression and deep Christian faith on Crossroads Television.

This year's nominations include an eclectic variety of rap, rhythm and blues, alternate rock, soul and other worship expressions – all of them acknowledging and most often worshipping God through their music.

Our cover story, "Gospel Music Making a Difference" by Jeff Dewsbury, will take you closer to the artists and the industry within this sector of ministry. Some will be surprised at the variety of musical talent and artistic expression. These performers have had to overcome many challenges – including the vast geography we inhabit. Yet it seems God has used even that to bring these talented people closer to Himself.

Musicians will tell you the inspiration for songwriting can be a mysterious process. In "The Shape of Things to Come," singer-songwriter Steve Bell draws us into the book of Isaiah and the journey which led him to the music and lyrics for "Miracles."

Church musicians in particular deal with many unseen

challenges that can influence the quality of a worship service. Dennis Hassell, scriptwriter, performer and consultant, offers some practical lessons in "The Art of Worship." Whether you are planning a Christmas pageant or a simple play for toddlers, this article can help you focus on the details that make a difference. And it will make you smile.

Performers and actors face other unseen challenges.

Many of us assume "if you build it, they will come" applies to the performing arts, but it doesn't always work that way, explains Mike Bowen of 145 Live Solutions, an organization that brings together Canadian artists and ministries. In "The Hard Work Starts Before Musicians Take the Stage" by Robert White, Bowen helps us think how other ministries can benefit by co-operating with musicians.

Finally, please also take a moment to think about what your church can do to observe National Adoption Awareness Month in November. The free Adoption Sunday Kit (ASKit) on page 55 can help. **FT**

Musicians will tell you the inspiration for songwriting can be a mysterious process.

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

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Leaving Church

Re: *Why They're Leaving* (Sep/Oct 2012)

It is unfortunate that leaving

church is synonymous with leaving one's faith, or at least a commitment to an important aspect of one's faith. That

is certainly up for debate.

And it's not just young people. I'm 53 and I was done with church ten years ago. I am absolutely committed to Christ and His body, and I gather with my believing friends for all the fellowship necessary to live a godly and fruitful life.

If churches feel threatened, they need to examine their



priorities and the importance of their budget items. Do we really believe that the young people are dropping off the faith wagon? Or are we simply

feeling the need to cling to current church infrastructures? We must ask the right questions before we can get the right answers.

Audrey Martin
Abbotsford, B.C.

Letters to the editor

must be signed and have the writer's address if intended for publication. Please include a daytime phone number. Letters may be edited for length or clarity. Opinions are the writer's own.

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Milestones

APPOINTED

Gordon T. Smith as president of Ambrose University College, based in Calgary and affiliated with the Church of the Nazarene and the Christian and Missionary Alliance. He succeeds Riley Coulter and George Durance. Smith recently served as president and CEO of ReSource Leadership International, and before that as professor and vice-president at Regent College. Ambrose has 700 students from 40 denominations and offers a wide range of degree programs including Master's degrees from its seminary.

Bryan Born as president of Columbia Bible College, based in Abbotsford, B.C., and affiliated with the Mennonite Brethren Conference and Mennonite Church Canada. He succeeds Ron Penner. Born has worked there since 2004, currently as professor and director of intercultural studies. Previously he served more than a decade in Botswana and Lesotho. CBC has 450 students from 20 denominations and offers a variety of diploma and Bachelor of Arts degrees.

Rick Reed as president of Heritage College and Seminary in Cambridge, Ont., effective Jan. 1, 2013. He succeeds Marvin Brubacher, president at Heritage for 21 years. Reed has pastored for

the last 14 years at the Metropolitan Bible Church in Ottawa and before that in California. Heritage has 290 students from 10 denominations, and offers undergraduate and graduate degrees as well as one- and two-year certificates.

Thomas and Dawn Wolthuis as co-presidents of the Institute for Christian



Thomas and Dawn Wolthuis

Studies, a Toronto graduate school of philosophy and theology in the Reformed tradition, effective Jan. 1, 2013. They succeed Chris Gort. Thomas has taught theology at Dordt College, Iowa, for ten years and previously at Calvin College, Michigan. Dawn is an IT and higher education consultant who has taught math and computer science at Calvin College.

Joe MacDonald as president and CEO of Christian Business Ministries Canada, a network of business and professional leaders who meet in small groups for

prayer, discipleship and relational evangelism. CBMC has offices in Oshawa, Ont.

Donna Lamothe of Calgary as executive director of Stonecroft Ministries Canada, succeeding Lorraine Myrrholm. Previously Lamothe founded and directed a ministry to pastors' wives and planted an Ottawa church with her husband. An ordained minister, she also holds the Certified Management Accounting (CMA) designation and has served as a financial officer in the Canadian Forces. Stonecroft is a non-denominational Christian ministry that helps women develop and deepen their relationship with God. It has offices in Edmonton.



Donna Lamothe

ELECTED

Jim Champ as president of the Canadian Council of Churches. Maj. Champ is the first Salvation Army president since the council was founded in 1944. He succeeds Bruce Adema. This non-profit organization of "Christian unity in diversity" includes 24 denominations from the Anglican, Evangelical, Catholic, Historic Reform, Free Church, and Eastern and Oriental Orthodox traditions. Karen Hamilton remains general secretary.

RENAMED

Redemption Prison Ministry is the new name for Cornerstone Bible Institute, a



Rick Reed

faithbook

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16-year-old ministry to prisoners in the Canadian prison system, including Bible correspondence courses. Executive director is Hans Van Doodeward. Offices are in Cambridge, Ont.

The Canadian Association for Baptist Freedoms is the new name for the Atlantic Baptist Fellowship. This group was formed in 1971 by members of the Atlantic United Baptist Convention who wanted to witness to Baptist principles of freedom and participate in inter-denominational worship, social action and ecumenical discussion of the nature of the Church. The group was also recently accepted as the 24th member denomination of the Canadian Council of Churches.

RESIGNED

Briercrest College and Seminary in Saskatchewan is looking to fill the role of Dwayne Uglem, Briercrest's fifth president, who announced his resignation late 2011, effective June 2013. He's been in Caronport, Sask., for 20 years and president since 2004.

The King's University College, a Christian undergraduate university established in 1979 in Edmonton, has initiated a search for its fourth president. Current president Harry Fernhout has announced his intent to retire in July 2013 after serving seven years.

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Fatherhood and the Fatherless

Let's pray and act for Canada's adoption-ready children.

Another November arrives, and the estimates haven't changed. There are still more than 30,000 adoption-ready children and youth in Canada.

November is National Adoption Awareness Month in Canada, so many of us will hear news stories and commentary on adoption and fostering. Wendy's restaurants will have their annual campaign to raise awareness.

We may also hear about youth currently in government care who are about to age out of the system and no longer receive any support. Imagine being 18 and completely on your own – no family, no place to stay and no community there for you. A study of youth living on the streets of Toronto found 40 per cent came out of government care.

Though they're not often thought of, it's also a time to consider the well-being of birth parents whose children are in government care. Rarely does a child in Canada lose both parents to death, and in such cases relatives or family friends are usually quick to find a nurturing adoptive home. All the other children and youth in government care have birth parents – they are not dead but are (or were) in crisis. These parents had to make one of the most difficult decisions imaginable, or had the decision made for them.

Some knew they lacked the ability to parent, and made the tough choice to allow someone else to become their child's parent. Others lacked a supportive family or community, or access to the resources to adequately care for their child. Others still were not parented well, or were deeply wounded and couldn't cope. In these tragic circumstances our social agencies may have made a life-changing decision for them and their children. Whatever the circumstance our first response should be one of compassion. They are grieving a real loss, and we must ensure our words and

deeds create and affirm an environment of healing.

Compassion extends to using the right language for our context. For example, to label any child in government care an "orphan" and "unwanted" is not only hurtful to birth families, but to women in crisis pregnancies and children as well. The word is usually misapplied, and its use grieves birth parents and harms children who know too well the stigma that comes with being labelled an orphan in Canada.

The Hebrew word translated "orphan" in the Greek is "fatherless." The fatherless and the widow represented those in ancient times who had no protector, no advocate, no mentor, no one to stand for them. The conjunction of "fatherless" and "widow" speaks to the importance of caring for all those who lack protection and provision.

Fatherless applies to many more children in Canada than just those in government care. How often have we heard stories of teens making bad choices – and after listening a little longer heard their fathers had been absent from their lives? Caring for the fatherless and the widow is the expression of true religion, according to James Chapter 1.

Fatherlessness is much more significant in our society since orphaned children are so rare. It also focuses the attention of men on our social priorities. Within our culture things like the economy, finance, trade, business, industry, technology and sports often seem more attractive.

These activities do benefit shareholders, clients and employees, and of course these may include families. Yet rarely is the well-being of children included in the list. At best it is seen to be a personal and private matter, not a corporate and public one. Rarely do I pick up a book on leadership to see within its pages an appeal for men to father well and bring their fathering skills to the public square.

In the biblical text the rise and fall of nations isn't singularly a narrative of military might. How a society treats and cares for its most vulnerable is repeatedly identified as a barometer of societal well-being and the strength of a nation. It is a key factor of how faithfulness to God is assessed.

It's time we raise the bar on today's Christian leadership model by making children and youth a top priority at home *and* in the public square. We need to think afresh how we can mobilize fathers to ensure they are fathering well, and for men to consider the fatherless in our midst and work collectively – and commit personally – to make a positive difference in the lives of children and youth. **FT**



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

“Born Alive” Law Debated

Canada’s current law recognizes a “human being” only after a child is born alive – but that law has become publicly controversial again.

National debate arose in September in response to Motion 312, a parliamentary motion by MP Stephen Woodworth (Kitchener-Centre, Cons.), which the EFC supported. The motion would have created a committee to re-examine the law. Current medical knowledge as well as the majority of popular opinion no longer support the 400-year-old “born alive” definition used in the law.

Although two-thirds of current MPs voted against the motion Sept. 26, the strength of the positive support has encouraged ongoing debate. Those in favour included 87 Conservatives (eight cabinet ministers and two ministers of state) and four Liberals. Some MPs confirmed a letter from the EFC’s vice-president Don Hutchinson helped them decide in favour of the motion.

EFC legal counsel were quoted in national media stories on the motion and also appeared on *100 Huntley Street*.

EFC president Bruce J. Clemenger sent a letter of thanks to EFC affiliate leaders, who joined him in endorsing a *Declaration of Support for Parliamentary Study of Canada’s Legal Definition of “Human Being.”*

For more details, visit www.theEFC.ca/human.

Where’s the Data on Abortion?

This fall the EFC spoke out about a government trend to suppress data about abortion procedures, including an unnecessary and undemocratic law on abortion data the Ontario Government quietly passed in January.

The issues are addressed in a new EFC report called *Black Holes: Canada’s Missing Abortion Data – A Brief Examination of Canada’s Abortion Data Collection Policies and an Analysis of Ontario’s New Legislation*. EFC legal counsel were quoted about the report in national media.

The EFC has also updated a related resource, *Abortion Polls in Canada: A Compilation by Topic of Opinion Polling in Canada from 2007-2012*, to include the most recent opinion polling data. This resource assists activists writing articles and blogs and preparing for interviews and debates.

Both resources are free at www.theEFC.ca/abortion.

Guide to Engaging Youth

The EFC is producing a resource called *Turning the Tide: A Youth Worker’s Response to “Hemorrhaging Faith.”* It will offer practical suggestions for churches and ministry leaders concerned about the relationship between youth and the Church in Canada.

The new resource is being written by youth specialist Dave Overholt, based on discussions among the EFC’s Youth and Young Adult Roundtable. For more on the *Hemorrhaging Faith* study and to inquire about *Turning the Tide*, visit www.hemorrhagingfaith.com.

The EFC Intervenes in Top Court

The EFC filed written arguments this summer with the Supreme Court of Canada in the case of *Cuthbertson v. Rasouli*, scheduled to be heard Dec. 10. The case is about an Ontario man lying in a coma due to complications after minor brain surgery. The doctors determined it was time to remove him from life support, but his family disagreed based on their religious beliefs. The EFC’s arguments address issues such as what it means to be human and respect for religious beliefs in medical care. Read more at www.theEFC.ca/RasouliFile.

Campaign on Prostitution Laws

The EFC’s policy analyst Julia Beazley is participating with Defend Dignity in a series of thought-provoking conferences from November to March in Vancouver; Calgary; Surrey, B.C.; and beyond. Defend Dignity is an initiative of the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church. Find out more at www.defenddignity.ca and www.theEFC.ca/prostitutionlawreform.

Pray for the Persecuted


The EFC’s Religious Liberty Commission recently issued a call for prayer after a video and cartoons defaming the prophet Mohammed produced deadly results for Christians in the Middle East, as well as threats to Christians in Canada.

It issued another call related to the conflict in Syria where Christians are caught in a conflict between the Syrian Army and rebel forces. Many are being forced from their homes, towns and country.

You can view these alerts at www.theEFC.ca/alerts and sign up there to receive them by email. It’s a great way to stay informed of critical developments internationally and know better how to pray.

The EFC Religious Liberty Commission also encourages churches to observe the annual International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church. This year it is scheduled for Nov. 4, but you can also use the free kit at www.idop.ca in a worship service or small group meeting anytime.

EFC Affiliates Gathered

The EFC convened the heads of its affiliate denominations, institutions and ministries for a day of study and conversation in October. This year the focus was on youth and young adults, prostitution and care for creation. EFC leaders served as presenters and moderators. The following day, the heads of 20 EFC affiliated denominations met for a semi-annual gathering. The EFC’s Rick Hiemstra spoke about trends within Canadian culture that impact ministry, and two recently retired denominational leaders, Franklin Pyles and Gary Best, talked about leading change, missional effectiveness and spiritual vitality. 

When Church Gets Messy



SUPPLIED PHOTOS



Messy Church is “a multigenerational, multisensory form of learning focused on a story from the Bible or key Christian teaching,” says pastor Judy Paulsen.

Sissors, construction paper and glue, parents and children, community and celebration. They are all key parts of the Messy Church experience.

“It’s a multigenerational, multisensory form of learning focused on a story from the Bible or key Christian teaching,” says Judy Paulsen, pastor of the Christ Church Anglican parish in Oshawa, Ont. Paulsen

started using Messy Church in 2009 as a new way to reach those who were spiritually hungry, but not interested in church.

Messy Church began in Portsmouth, England in 2004 as one congregation’s attempt to “be church for families who might want to meet Jesus...but can’t cope with traditional Sunday morning services,” says the website (www.messychurch.org.uk).

A typical Messy Church takes place on a weeknight between 5 and 7 p.m. It includes a meal, celebration (or worship) and activities such as crafts which reinforce that day’s Bible lesson.

Sam Rose started Canada’s first Messy Church in St. John’s, Nfld. His workshop at a 2007 church planting conference caught the attention of Paulsen and others. By 2009 there were three Messy Churches running in Canada, and soon a Messy Church co-ordinator, who works under the auspices of Fresh Expressions Canada, an initiative in church renewal from the Institute of Evangelism at Wycliffe College in Toronto.

Co-ordinator Sue Kalbfleisch keeps track of the approximately 150 Messy Churches in Canada. While most using Messy Church come from the Anglican, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and United Church traditions, there are a few Baptist and Salvation Army congregations also running the program. “We’re not sure why we’re not seeing more evangelical churches engaging in Messy Church,” Kalbfleisch says. “They may already be doing things to reach those families.”

For Paulsen Messy Church has grown

Canadian Author Sheds Light on Canada’s North

Write what you know. That’s the advice aspiring writers are often given. And it’s an approach proven very successful for award-winning Canadian Christian author Dorene Meyer, who writes about the lives of First Nations people in the fictional community of Rabbit Lake in Northern Manitoba. Meyer is the author of eight novels, two children’s books and a reference guide to Manitoba’s authors.

Meyer grew up in northwestern Ontario, first in Lac Seul First Nation, where her father was an Anglican priest, and then in Sioux Lookout, where she moved with her mother and siblings after her parents separated. Photos on her website show a young Meyer child surrounded by many First Nations children. Her mother was a foster parent to over 500 kids over the years, so the house was

always full. “I still can’t give a clear answer to the simple question: How many brothers and sisters do you have?” she says. “I always felt as if the foster children were my brothers and sisters.”

For the last five years Meyer has lived in Norway House, a First Nation community over 800 kilometres north of Winnipeg. Living in isolated places has been part of Meyer’s motivation to write about the things she cares deeply about as a way of creating change. Her first series, *The Little Ones*, began with a book written out of a deep concern about abortion called *Rachel’s Children*.

Meyer continued to tackle tough issues in her subsequent books. Her subjects have included First Nations residential school syndrome, recovery from alcohol abuse, suicide and depression, AIDS, racism and the sex trade. “My stories include

Hakka and Inuktitut Added to List of Bible Translations

Readers of Inuktitut and Hakka can now read the Bible in their own language thanks to the efforts of the Canadian Bible Society (CBS).

The translation office in Kitchener worked with Anglican Church leaders from the Diocese of the Arctic for the past 30 years to produce the Inuktitut Bible. The New Testament translation, started in 1978 and finished in 1991, is now in its fifth printing. The full Bible, including the recently finished Old Testament, was dedicated in Nunavut earlier this year.

"It's taken so long because the translators are busy parish priests," says Hart Wiens, CBS director of Scripture translations. "Only a month or two out of the year were devoted to the translation work itself."

Wiens and his team help make sure translations meet CBS standards by providing tools and resources. "We check the final result to see if the translation was communicating what was intended," says Wiens. With the Inuktitut Bible, translators used a "functional equivalence" model which, instead of a literal translation, passed on the meaning of the scripture passage by incorporating native culture and idiom.

Wiens says the tribal nature of the Old Testament narrative fit the Inuit culture. But sometimes that fit was a challenge. He recalls trying to translate 2 Samuel 10:10, which talked about King David's two sons Joab and Abishai.

"In Inuktitut there's no generic word for brother. It's either 'older brother' or 'younger brother.' We needed to know which term to use."

A call to Kitchener and a check through commentaries and other resources revealed Abishai was older. "This particular challenge had to do with the nature of their language," says Wiens. "We couldn't produce an exact form from the original."

Wiens says there was "lots of relief and celebration" at

the dedication ceremony. "I didn't feel it as intensely as the translators themselves. Retired Anglican bishop Benjamin Arreak said it felt like a weight was lifted from his shoulders," says Wiens.

With the Hakka translation – a language spoken by four million people in Taiwan – the CBS played a smaller role, but the project demonstrates how work the CBS has done on Bible translation benefits other organizations. After nearly 30 years of work by a Bible society, two denominations and an evangelical association, the Hakka Bible was dedicated and distributed during the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan's general assembly this past spring.

"We had minimal involvement in the translation," says Wiens, noting translation tools created in Kitchener played a key part in the translation. "The role we played is a great example of the kind of contribution we're able to make for many Bible projects around the world."

Wiens' predecessor, Harold Fehderau, was one of the first translation officers to begin researching how to use computers to translate the Bible. In 1981 he bought a \$20,000 computer and was appointed to head a group of early adopters of computers in Bible translation.

Wiens says Fehderau's efforts formed the basis of the translation and typesetting software used for the Hakka translation. He also said Paul McLean, the Presbyterian Church in Canada lead in the project, was connected to the CBS, and asked it for help distributing the new translation. **FT**

–Robert White



PHOTO: SUE CARELESS

B Benjamin Arreak

from an average of 32 in the first year to just over 50 today. For a church with an average attendance of 170, reaching 50 new people has been "awesome," says Paulsen.

She also used

her experience with Messy Church as the basis for her doctor of ministry thesis, uncovering three key benefits: parents learn as much about the Bible as the children, families are praying together more, and parents have begun talking

to their children about God more.

"And it hasn't bled away people from Sunday," says Paulsen. "Two of the families who started at Messy Church are now regular attendees on Sunday." **FT**

–Robert White



people with opinions," she says. "The characters are very human and fallible, like we are."

Although Meyer writes from a Christian worldview, she believes her first job as an author "is to write a good book, one that people will enjoy reading." She has earned numerous awards for her work, including Romance Book of the Year at the 2011 Ca-

nadian Christian Writing Awards for the novel *Jasmine*, part of a new book series called *The Group*. These stories are centred on a group of seven young people who meet each week in a support group setting. Each book explores one character's story, a particular challenge or topic, and a step in the healing journey. The series is aimed at older teen (13+) and adult readers.

Aside from her writing, Dorene Meyer is also a part-time instructor at University College of the North and runs her own publishing company, Goldrock Press. She created the company not only to facilitate distributing her own books, but also to publish and promote northern writers. Goldrock's publications include books by individual writers as well as ten anthologies, a book form she encourages people to read as a way of discovering the diversity of talented northern and First Nations writers. **FT**

–Mary Lou Harrison

Canadian Doctor Sends Medical Equipment to Cuba

A Canadian doctor is supplying Cuban hospitals with recycled medical equipment from Canadian hospitals. Dr. Jerome Harvey served 43 years in medical practice, four in Africa developing a village health program. Retired in Thunder Bay, Ont., Dr. Harvey found himself on a short-term mission team in 2003 with his church, digging ditches for a water system at a children's camp in Cuba. He met Dr. Aurora, a Cuban physician who introduced him to Cuban hospitals in critical need of modernization, and arranged for him to meet officials from the Cuban Ministry of Health.

Dr. Harvey returned to Canada and formed the volunteer-run MEMO Cuba (Medical Equipment. Modernization. Opportunity.). Their mission, according to their website, is "to show the love of God to the Cuban people by provid-



Dr. Jerome Harvey (right) demonstrates asthma inhalers donated by Canadian doctors to Cuban doctors.

SUPPLIED PHOTO

ing redundant Canadian hospital equipment and supplies to needy health care facilities in the province of Villa Clara."

Dr. Harvey says since 2004 MEMO Cuba has shipped 44 containers of medical equipment to update seven hospitals in Cen-

How 59 Cents Can Change Canada

A whirlwind experience" is how Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) student Matthew Dueck describes his involvement in the 59 Cents Campaign for Refugee Healthcare. This student-led movement challenged the Federal Government's decision to begin denying supplemental health care coverage to refugees as of June 30, 2012. It invited Canadians to mail 59 cents to the prime minister as an indication of their support for refugee health care. That amount represents the estimated cost, per Canadian, of the \$20 million Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP).

The campaign grew out of a small

group student assignment in a one-week course at CMU's Canadian School of Peacebuilding (CSOP) called "Speaking Out...and Being Heard – Citizen Advocacy."

"Our assignment," says Dueck, "was to create an advocacy campaign that could, in theory, be implemented in real life. But by the time we were making our class presentation, we realized that there was nothing stopping this from moving beyond the theoretical. And after everything we'd learned about the situation, we were passionate about helping to create change."

The move from theory to reality hap-

pened quickly. Dueck and his classmates Maureen Gathogo and Deanna Zantingh made their presentation on June 22 (just eight days ahead of the proposed changes in refugee health care funding). "The window of opportunity was that weekend," says Dueck.

A short and catchy 59 Cents Campaign video was published on YouTube two days later. The team set up a website (www.59cents.org) and a Facebook page. Dueck says reaction to all three was incredible as people from diverse backgrounds used their social, professional and personal capital to spread the word.

While it is unclear just how many Canadians have sent 59 cents, the Federal Government has made some

tral Cuba, including items such as beds from retirement homes, X-ray machines, wound dressings and even a four-wheel-drive diesel ambulance. Each container travels to Cuba via Thunder Bay, Toronto and Halifax.

As word of MEMO spread, medical equipment kept arriving from across Canada. Dr. Harvey approached the Evangelical Free denomination for help, and teams arrived from B.C., Alberta and Manitoba to dismantle the equipment for shipping.

MEMO has established Cuba's only breast screening program. "In the province of Villa Clara each year, 80 women 50 to 65 years of age escape death by breast cancer," says Dr. Harvey.

Harvey has visited Cuba 24 times taking medical, surgical and technical teams from Canada to correctly install equipment and provide training for Cuban doctors. MEMO is also committed to follow-up, support, technical training and parts to keep equipment in good working order.

"The supply of medical equipment to be recycled from Canada seems to be endless," says Dr. Harvey. Shipping costs are the ongoing challenge. "It is hard to believe that my vision has become a reality," he wrote in an article for *Medical Post* magazine. "An e-mail from Dr. Aurora in Cuba says it all. 'I will send you a picture of the department of X-ray in Placetas. All is very beautiful. Everybody is very happy. It is amazing!'" **FT** —Charlene de Haan

changes to its funding policies. The Government of Manitoba announced in September it will pay for the health care services no longer covered by the IFHP and then send the bill to Ottawa. "I was just ecstatic when I saw that. Absolutely delighted," says Dueck.

Now that the campaign has achieved its awareness-raising objectives, the CMU students are moving ahead with their personal goals. For Dueck this includes completing a social science degree with a focus on international development, peace and conflict, and transformation studies. "And," he says, "I foresee happening, throughout my life, in various forms, initiatives like the 59 Cents Campaign." **FT**

—Mary Lou Harrison

Bible Study Friends Have Adoption Reunion



PHOTO: © ISTOCK PHOTO

November is adoption month, and there are free resources to help churches at www.adoptionsunday.com. Why not cut out the ad on page 55 of this issue of *Faith Today* to show your pastor or hang on your church bulletin board?

Recently, Dee Smith,* a foster mother in eastern Canada, received a wonderful surprise. Smith had been fostering Baby K, and the baby's chosen mom and dad were scheduled to come meet Baby K for the first time. When they arrived, Dee was startled to see her old friend Ann Young and her husband standing there.

Years earlier Dee and Ann had attended Bible study together, and after the last meeting had gone their separate ways. "We hadn't talked at the meetings about fostering or adoption," remembers Ann. "Just the deep desire to not pass through this life without having done something meaningful for others, especially vulnerable children." She remembers Dee saying to the group at that time, "There's just got to be more than being a hockey mom. I've got to get out into my community and do something for others."

For Dee that something became fostering for her local Children's Aid Society. "I became a fostering mother in response to my pastor making an announcement during a Sunday service," she explains. "I had always thought about fostering, but had never taken that next step to connect and engage with our local agency. We prayed, asked God to guide us, and we made the call."

Dee and her family stepped into the process to become foster parents and were approved just over a year later. Next came a call from the agency asking them if they were ready to welcome a newborn girl into their home from the hospital. Dee's enthusiastic "Yes!" was the first step on the road that led her to the doorstep reunion with her Bible study friend from years ago.

"We regularly prayed over Baby K and for everyone in the decision-making process to bring her to God's chosen parents," says Dee. "When the agency called to say they had found what they felt was the right fit, we were not told who. Fostering parents don't always get that information. When they described the family, there was an overwhelming sense of divine peace." That sense of peace turned to joy when Dee watched Ann and her family meet their new daughter.

"That day our hearts were bursting with joyful excitement for what God had done. Still to this day it's a meeting between hearts – transformed ones at that!" says Ann. "Can you imagine what God longs to do among us all, especially among women and children?" **FT** —Faith Today staff

*For child protection purposes, all the names in this article have been changed.

Q & A With Joel van Loon

Joel van Loon is senior pastor of Evangelical Free Church in Meadow Lake, Sask., where he has served for two years. He and his wife **Kristin** have a two-year-old daughter and newborn son.



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What is your greatest joy in ministry?

Proclaiming the truth of the Bible and applying it to lives. I can't get over the profound privilege God has given us to read His words, comprehend His plans and purposes, and declare them to others.

What has been your greatest struggle?

Knowing where my energy and attention should be focused. There are always many good things and ideas that could be pursued, but only enough hours and volunteers for some. What's most important at this moment?

What Bible passage do you most connect with right now?

2 Corinthians 2:16b. Speaking of the work of ministry, Paul asks, "Who is sufficient for these things?" I am regularly awed by the honour of proclaiming God's words, and humbled by my own weakness and insufficiency. And thus also 2 Corinthians 12:9: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

What are the best theological books you've read in the last year?

The Deep Things of God: How the Trinity Changes Everything by Fred Sanders (Crossway, 2010), *The Intolerance*

of Tolerance by D. A. Carson (Eerdmans, 2012), and *The Religious Affections* by Jonathan Edwards (Yale University Press, 1959, original 1746).

What book is on your nightstand right now?

Canon Revisited: Establishing the Origins and Authority of the New Testament Books by Michael J. Kruger (Crossway, 2012), and *God's Glory in Salvation Through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* by James M. Hamilton, Jr. (Crossway, 2010).

What is your best advice for those entering ministry today?

Delight in the glorious gospel of grace. Neither deviate from it, nor water it down, nor assume it, but proclaim it with precision and passion.

What are the specific challenges – and joys – you face doing ministry in Saskatchewan?

Meadow Lake has a strong evangelical fellowship of churches, built upon many years of relationships and ministry together in a small community. It is my great joy to see people and churches regularly encourage and support each other. **FT**

Soon It Will Be Christmastime

By Don Hutchinson

Seeking to end injustice is a response to the call to love one another.

The season of Advent is soon upon us. In a matter of weeks Christians worldwide will celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ.

Being from the true north strong and free, I was raised with snow, a tree and gifts as key to my celebration. My first warm weather Christmas featured an inadequate attempt to turn some southern flora into a Christmas tree – fail. My first married Christmas away from “home” featured climbing a small mountain, chopping down an evergreen and carrying it home over my shoulder, dragging it on the ground behind me with one hand while walking forward, holding it with both hands, dragging it while walking backward and, ultimately, putting the bare side of the once-upon-a-time perfect tree against the wall in our front room.

Reflecting on it now, with maturity and broader experience, I understand how much more is included in Christmas. There are those who will not be born and will not celebrate Christmas on planet Earth. Those struggling through a final Christmas season with family before “heading home.” Those enjoying Christmas dinners at various missions because they are without a home. Those forced into plying an unwelcome trade on the street corners of our nation because others want to buy themselves the “gift” of using another’s body.

Those of us in the Western world will again face the seasonal battle of “Season’s Greetings” vs. “Merry Christmas,” while in more than 50 other countries the dilemma is more “Can I speak the name of

Jesus without being beaten or imprisoned?” – and yet Christ followers there still celebrate His birth.

The EFC’s Centre for Faith and Public Life promotes biblical principles relevant to the public policy issues mentioned above along with a variety of others. We group these under four broad categories: sanctity of human life, care for the vulnerable, family integrity and freedom of religion.

Working in these four areas has refocused my celebration of Advent not on the trappings of a Canadian Christmas celebration, but on the reality of the birth, death and resurrection of a saviour – *the Saviour*.

There are days when it is challenging to advance the principles of the gospel in a Canadian public square that can be increasingly hostile to religion, particularly Christianity. Giving up, however, would lead to increased privatization of a faith birthed centuries ago to be a public faith. Such privatization would mean fewer opportunities to share Christian faith or

influence a Canadian society that, without Christian influence, would be further adrift without an anchor – *the Anchor*.

A friend suggested Christians have suffered too many defeats with government and the courts. Perhaps, he suggested, we should pause until we find a winner. But I see we have victories. They are seen with the vision of Him who was victorious even



■ Don Hutchinson

in the apparent defeat of death. In 2005 human trafficking became a crime under Canada’s *Criminal Code*, and earlier this year a comprehensive national strategy was initiated to combat this modern day slavery. In 2008 the age of consent to sexual activity with an adult was raised from 14 to 16, protecting more children from predators.

The Supreme Court of

Canada has repeatedly declared the secular understanding of “sanctity of human life” is a value shared by Canadians. The Court has also repeatedly ruled that religiously informed opinions are not to be excluded from public policy debate. (It is worth noting that the language used in all these rulings can be traced to EFC court interventions.)

In recent months nearly 200,000 people flooded Parliament with letters, postcards, and petitions seeking review of Canada’s “born alive” rule regarding legal recognition as a human being. It’s heartwarming to see evidence people care enough about the injustice to our pre-born neighbours to engage with government.

Responding to His call to love one another – our brothers and sisters in Christ as well as our enemies and neighbours – we will find ways to do that personally: through direct individual contact, organizations that minister on His and our behalf, and contact with government. In these actions we celebrate not just His birth, but His life – *the Life*. ■

DON HUTCHINSON is vice-president and general legal counsel with The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada and director of the EFC’s Centre for Faith and Public Life.

There are days when it is challenging to advance the principles of the gospel in a Canadian public square that can be increasingly hostile to religion, particularly Christianity.

A woman with dark, wavy hair, wearing a black lace top and a necklace, is smiling and holding a light-colored acoustic guitar. The guitar has a dark pickguard and a Taylor logo on the headstock. The background is a textured, light green wall.

Gospel Music

Making

Christians who write and record popular music are a small but vital community in Canada. Will things change after their awards finally hit television this fall?

By Jeff Dewsbury

■ **Ali Matthews**

Ali Matthews remembers an 11-year-old Justin Bieber busking in front of a theatre in their shared hometown of Stratford, Ont. He was in Matthews' daughter's class in school, so she knew his family, and it wasn't uncommon for her to throw a loonie into his guitar case.

"He used to play songs he learned on the worship team in his church, songs by Mercy Me and other Christian bands," she says. "I stopped once and told him he should try recording some time, and he said his mom was looking into it for him." She laughs, thinking of Bieber's current international fame, and jokes, "Where's my interest on that investment?"

a Difference

Matthews, winner of 14 Covenant Awards, including the 2011 Album of the Year for *Carry Me Home*, has built relatively modest, loyal followings in parts of Eastern and Central Canada and Alberta. She plays diminutive venues including many churches – not the kind of circuit Bieber frequents anymore.

When Matthews talked to *Faith Today* recently, this story was just a brief aside. But, in its own strange way, the trajectory of the two artists illustrates the lifestyle of many Canadian Christian musicians. Whether by necessity or choice, their careers favour community over industry.

And that community is best exemplified by the annual Covenant Awards (formerly the Gospel Music Association Awards), part of a week-long event hosted by GMA Canada, now in its 34th year.

Though the Covenant Awards have flown under the radar in comparison to the Junos, the Canadian Country Music Awards and the like, there's no arguing that winning translates into more radio play, more interest from fans and promoters, and all around greater public exposure.

Martin Smith has been involved with the awards for 11 years, and has been president of GMA Canada for the past eight. When he talks about the Covenants, it's in a down-to-earth way, emphasizing the ultimate reason why Canadian recording artists do what they do. In his view, the awards themselves take a back seat to the environment that produces them.

"While the awards are nice, it's more important to meet, to mentor – and that's why artists over the years have continually told me they are involved," says Smith. "The conversations in the hallway are more important than the walk across the stage."

New TV Partnership

However, that stage is also about to be raised a bit. For the first time in their history, the Covenants will be televised nationally on Nov. 10, thanks to a new partnership with Crossroads Television (CTS-TV). The actual ceremony will be taped Nov. 7 at studios in Burlington, Ont., after many years in Alberta venues.

Producer (and former Starfield drummer) Gordie Cochran says the potential audience is an unknown quantity, but 50,000 viewers is a realistic expectation in that time slot. "It really depends on the appetites of the

different markets in the country," he says.

GMA Canada board member Kevin Pauls is a musician and songwriter who has been making music for 25 years. He points out that, though they are entering uncharted territory, they already know CTS mainstay *100 Huntley Street* pulls in more than a million viewers each week. Many Covenant nominees have performed on *Huntley*, and there is good reason to believe a healthy percentage of those viewers will take in the awards too.

"There will also be some artists who have never performed on television before, so CTS is excited to offer that as well," says Pauls.

While they have a small fraction of the budget their richer cousins can tap into, Cochran and his team are fuelled by their belief that getting creative with an awards show for artists is a natural fit.

He says they've stretched their resources – securing high-end, behind-the-camera talent, including a Grammy-nominated engineer and a team assembled via Cochran's connections in the U.S. music industry – to produce "an appropriate platform for these talented people to showcase their art and stand beside the other award shows in this country."

"We're doing everything with intention, celebrating the expression and the artists themselves and the content they're singing about. There are a lot of different colours to this – some artists sing straight-up praise like you would see on Sunday morning, some artists deal with darkness, pain and doubt. All of them are very legitimate. They're on the same trajectory, all toward the same goal," says Cochran. "That's the fabric and the makeup of what a community is. That's the beauty of it."

Though she admits she doesn't even own a TV, Matthews thinks a televised Covenant Awards is long overdue. "They don't get enough attention in this country. In 2006 I remember sitting there thinking 'Everyone should



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Gordie Cochran: We're doing everything with intention, celebrating the expression and the artists themselves and the content they're singing about.



I The week surrounding the Covenant Awards serves as an annual reunion: Martin Smith.

see this.' The talent pool is so deep, you feel like you should be at the Grammys."

This year's nominees include high profile names – wildly popular worship band Starfield, headlining hip-hop artists Manafest (who draws stadium-sized crowds in Japan) and Fresh IE (the first Canadian rapper to ever be nominated for a Grammy), to name a few – but also includes new names about to introduce their music to fresh ears (see sidebar by Robert White).

Diversity

The nomination process for the awards is designed to foster this type of diversity and begins with an open call for submissions. This year GMA Canada received more than 300 entries. The submissions are sent to panels of seven to ten people who are experts in their respective categories. That process narrows it down to nominees, who are then voted on by

the industry professionals and artists who make up GMA Canada. Smith says 80 per cent of the membership vote during a typical year.

"That first group of judges is asked to vote strictly on quality," says the president. "They don't pay attention to the name. Last year we had a gentleman named Dan Bremnes who was not a known entity, and he received six nominations."

Yet, when it comes to awards for faith-based artists, the proverbial argument about praising people who are in the business of praising God always seems to pop up. Pauls says something bigger than self-promotion is the driving force behind the gala.

"There has been this rub every once in a while between accolades and servanthood, but this is not necessarily a self-serving endeavour," he believes. "The focus is really on credibility and celebration for artists who are doing a good job. We want to take on the role of the promoter and the encourager so these people can continue to humbly do what they are called to do – minister to people."

Smith agrees. "Artists certainly appreciate winning an award, but the whole process really serves as a confirmation that they're on the right path, that they should be doing what they are doing. Awards are not the be all and end all, but are great affirmation from their industry and the people they work with."

Alberta songwriter and worship musician Jon Bauer has been nominated in ten categories this year, including Artist of the Year and Song of the Year, yet awards are the last thing he wants to talk about. When he spoke with *Faith Today*, he had just finished playing an assembly at a local Catholic school, and was energized by the opportunity to lead the kids in worship. "The best reward I can have is to hear God's people singing out His praises from something I've written," he says.

Bauer plays more than 175 live dates a year (often with his wife and young children in tow), including tours in Germany and the Philippines where, remarkably, he pulls together bands from local churches to perform with. "It's always a step of faith for me. I just say 'Lord, I know you want to do something through this specific group of musicians,' and I find it more unifying to have members of that community up on the stage with me. I'm working with their own people."

Improvising comes with the territory here. Not having the support and promotion of big labels behind them, Canadian gospel artists balance both the levity of artistic freedom and the weight of self-promotion.

"Our industry in Canada is very much driven by independent artists. People who support GMA are doing it on their own. Our focus has always been community lifted together. They don't have that 'Meet me in the green room' mentality [where performers wait before going on-stage]. Because we don't have that record label machine behind it all, we don't have the pluses and minuses that come with that," says Smith.

He cites Matthews as an example of an artist who has

Nominations Cap Stellar Career for Downhere



SUPPLIED PHOTO

With this year's nominations, the band Downhere will end its career with close to 40 Covenant Award nominations. With eight, including Album, Song, Artist and Group of the Year, the foursome could add to the 21 awards already earned since 2002.

The alternative rock band was started in 1999 by Marc Martel and Jason Germain, who were roommates at Briercrest Bible College in Caronport, Sask. The original lineup included Jeremy Thiessen, Tyson Manning and Corey Doak. When the group moved to Nashville in 2001, Manning and Doak departed and Glenn Lavender joined.

"We've had an awesome career," says Lavender. "We've got to see a lot of things, play a lot of different places and meet so many great people. The awards and stuff have been just unbelievable."

The band announced earlier this year that January 1, 2013 would "mark the end of our travelling ministry for the foreseeable future." The release to fans and supporters emphasized, "This is not a band breakup. In fact we're open to playing a select few shows or events in the future."

Lavender says there had been a few times Downhere thought about calling it quits, but the always sensed God wanted them to continue. Now, with Marc Martel busy with the Queen Extravaganza and other band members' families on the grow, it was time to "hang up the skates."

"The fathering hand of God that put us together and allowed us to do what we do seems to be causing us to end," says Lavender.

—Robert White

Kevin Pauls is a musician and songwriter who has been making music for 25 years.



PHOTO: LAUREN PAULS

benefited from the support of her peers. “I see how she has gone from being the person asking the questions to the one mentoring other artists. And that’s what we’re all about.”

Geography

Talk to any Christian artist touring in Canada and it doesn’t take long for them to spell out the way geography plays into the equation. Frankly, says Cochran, “you’re disconnected from each other the rest of the year.”

Smith points out that a band in say, Texas, could easily book 15 dates on a tour within the state. That number of dates here in Canada could take the same band across the entire country. As a result, the week surrounding the Covenant Awards, which includes a wide range of industry-related events from songwriting workshops to artist showcases and talent searches, serves as an annual reunion, where musicians can reassure themselves they are not alone.

“The geographical distance between the artists is great, but because of the community I know most of them by name,” says Bauer, who, for the past six years has been artist-in-residence at St. Albert Alliance Church, which he says grounds him and provides accountability and focus when he’s on the road.

The road is where you really see God at work, says rapper Fresh IE, who is up for seven Covenant Awards this year. Though the veteran performer has even been nominated for a Grammy, he performs wherever he believes

people need to hear a message from God, regardless of the size of the audience. He speaks with great passion about the First Nations communities in Canada – Loon Lake, Onion Lake, Rankin Inlet – that he has been developing relationships with, using hip-hop to speak to pain and brokenness.

“Music is a tool to help us get into the presence of God, so He can meet the needs of his people,” he says in a surprisingly soft spoke way. “If God will use a donkey, He’s going to use hip-hop, you know what I mean.”

When he spoke with *Faith Today*, Fresh IE, who tours with young musicians he has mentored over the years, was preparing to perform in Red Deer, Alta., to a mixed audience of homeless and street people, and groups coming from local churches. He talks about the privilege it is to be “blessed with a burden,” making it easy for him to keep his eyes on why he makes music in the first place.

“I’ve had offers from Nashville and California before, but God has always said He wants me to stick with the vision He has for the young people of this country,” particularly those on reserves and in the inner city, he notes. “I’m not waiting in the shallow end my whole life for Jesus to come back.”

The Winnipeg native says he’s most excited to be nominated for a collaborator award with contemporary worship artist Jon Buller, noting that he was also privileged to record a song and video with Steve Bell. “It’s incredibly im-

Fighter Tells Story of Personal Battles

Garnering seven Covenant Award nominations, *Fighter* looks at many of the battles Chris Greenwood, known by his stage name Manafest, has fought and survived.

The 33-year-old from Pickering, Ont., lost his father to suicide when he was five. A promising skateboarding career was cut short by injury. And an early foray into the music industry left him \$30,000 in debt.

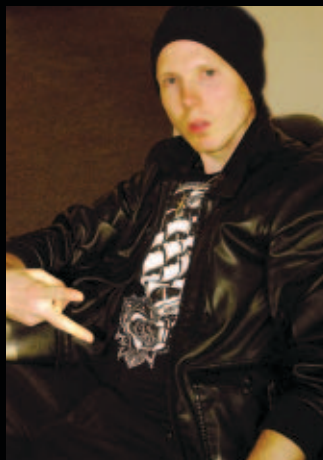
Fighter's first single, a ballad titled "Never Let You Go," tells how Manafest overcame. "When you're scared and you can't see past a day / Remember who holds tomorrow / Reach out in the darkness / Hold on, it's all worth fighting for / I will never let you go."

"God gave me wisdom and I kept on pursuing," says Manafest, who remembers his mother taking him to church after his father's death and how faith in God helped him through.

After a disastrous start, Manafest's music career took off after he was noticed by Trevor McNeven, front man for Thousand Foot Krutch. Since then, Manafest's albums have been nominated for numerous Covenant (winning five), Dove and Juno Awards. *Fighter*, his fifth album, is gaining traction. It's "opened up some new doors, which is just crazy. It's doing really well in India and Canada."

And Manafest's taking the lessons he's learned from the stage to the page. *Fighter* is also the title of a motivational book he's been working on during the album's tour. "It's about how God got a hold of a punk skate kid from a small town and did something with him," says Manafest. "If God did something with me, I can only imagine what He can do with someone else if they keep fighting and don't quit."

—Robert White



SUPPLIED PHOTO

the two-edged sword that the industry down there – with its huge array of A-list songwriters, producers and musicians – can wield in the life of talented Canadians looking to further their careers.

He believes it's good to go to Nashville as an established artist with specific goals, not simply pack a bag and head there looking to make it. "Nashville is not the answer. It has some answers, but not all of them. There are a lot of great songwriters and producers in Canada too."

Yet there's a prevailing sense that home is not simply a training ground for the big stage. Though the geography is formidable and the audiences dwarfed by the kilometres logged on the van, Canada offers a unique place for Christian artists to sing and play for the reasons they always have – to worship God, to weave their faith with their art and to bring others into those worlds.

There's a loyalty that comes with the territory. "You owe it to your community to grow where you are planted," says Matthews.

For his part, Kevin Pauls has seen most Canadian bands stay true to their roots, no matter where they've been. "The Starfields and the Downheres of this world have come back and been encouragers. They haven't lost their Canadian humility," he says. **FT**

JEFF DEWSBURY of Langley, B.C., is a senior writer at *Faith Today*.

portant what GMA Canada is doing for music here. The collaborator award is just one example of the way they help us cross bridges and encourage unity across genres."

Travelling South

It's not a revelation that many in the industry are inclined to fly international rather than drive domestic. And the first stop is south of the border.

There's a distinct energy in the States that most Canadian gospel artists recognize. Those, like Bauer, who periodically travel to Nashville to write and record, see



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Long Shot Leads to a Number One Hit

Colin Bernard, Covenant Award nominee for New Artist of the Year, began his career playing bluegrass music alongside

his French-Acadian family members – that is until his siblings' musical tastes, which ran beyond bluegrass to Elton John and David Bowie, began influencing him.

By his early teens, Bernard had both become a Christian and a fan of U2. "They became my major influence," Bernard says. "Some would say to my detriment, because you don't want to sound too much like U2. When I started writing and composing, that influence started to manifest itself. I modelled myself after their style."

Bernard teamed up with his lyricist brother Joel to create enough material to self-produce two records in the late 1990s.

"They were a major flop. We didn't know what we were doing and were still in the Maritimes where there was no infrastructure," says Bernard who now lives in Ottawa. After a decade of an up-and-down career, he slowed down on the singing and writing.

"One day my wife Monica suggested I take two or three of my best songs and send them down to some big shot producer in Nashville."

That long shot resulted in producers Ed and Scott Cash (known for their work with Starfield and Chris Tomlin) producing Bernard's *Hold On* EP, boosting his career. The title track, released as the first single, hit number one on his hometown Christian radio station, staying there for three weeks.

"That's never happened before for a local guy," says Bernard. "It's been exciting to be part of what God's doing. We're just along for the ride."

—Robert White

The Hard Work Starts Before Musicians Take the Stage

By Robert White

By the time the musicians play their first chord, a team of people have already worked hard to get the concert in place. For people like Paul Kelly of Unite Productions and Mike Bowman of 145 Live Solutions, their joy comes from connecting musicians with audiences or causes.

"I love pulling the pieces together to make a live event," says Kelly, who got his start in high school as the "guy who brought bands into the school."

He honed his skills while working at Crossroads Communications and David C. Cook Distribution, travelling the country building relationships that would prove beneficial when he started Unite Productions.

While on loan from Cook to CMC Distribution, where he oversaw the worship music division, Kelly realized, "If we're to engage and connect with the next generation, music had to be a component." By 2001 Kelly took all he'd learned about the music business and the connections he'd made, and started promoting concerts and artists.

Unite – both the name and the purpose – came from a sermon preached by A. W. Tozer Kelly came across at Toronto's Bayview Glen Alliance Church. The sermon tape he bought was based on Psalm 133, which talks about the blessings that come from God's people living in unity.

"Tozer says if we do verse one, then God will do verses two, three and four," recalls Kelly. "If we come together, we can count on God to bring the things we cannot manufacture or add to the gathering."

Kelly personally prefers "vertical worship – songs congregations can sing," which led him to start booking concerts with worship leaders like Brian Doerksen, Paul Baloche, Joel Houston and Matt Redman, among others.

"I was one of the first to bring Robin Mark over" from Belfast, Northern Ireland, he says. During Unite's first four years he didn't book any artist with a Nashville-style management. As the company grew, Unite was noticed and contacted by Nashville-managed bands.

Kelly's main challenge came in teaching them about the economics of Canada. A band who could charge a promoter \$50,000 in the U.S. could only charge \$20,000 in Canada.

"It took me years to get Nashville to recognize the price I was willing to risk was the right price for Canada," says Kelly. "We're not as Christian a nation as the U.S., and Canada's Christian media is handicapped compared to the American media."

Kelly sees two trends developing in the next few years. He was recently approached by Live Nation, Canada's largest concert promotion, management and ticketing company, to develop annual Christian music festivals in Toronto, the Maritimes, Winnipeg, Calgary and Vancouver. The other trend is to get musicians and promoters more involved with charities and foundations.



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Working with Canadian artists and ministries is important to Mike Bowman.

Ottawa's Funkiest Christian Rocker



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Dubbed "Ottawa's funkiest Christian rocker" by a local newspaper, Scott Towaj finds his musical influence in the R&B of Stevie Wonder and jazz of Steely Dan. "I really connect with a lot of the Motown artists," says Towaj whose second CD, *Freedom Train*, is up for two Covenant Awards this year: Collaboration of the Year and Urban/R&B/Soul Album of the Year.

"There was such a groove, such a musical intelligence

there that doesn't exist with so many other artists," he says of musicians like Wonder, Aretha Franklin and Smokey Robinson.

Towaj's musical career started as a teen in an acoustic duo before forming a band. He spent nearly 30 years on the road playing every type of music possible from bluegrass to rock to funk. Living the sex, drugs and rock-and-roll life took its toll, and after surviving a severe trauma 23 years ago, made the break to live a clean and sober life.

He became a Christian six years ago. His past experiences with addictions and his current experiences as a worship leader, teacher, and a certified trauma and addictions counselor often find their way into his songs like "Visiting Day" and the title track "Freedom Train."

"The key is to have lyrics that are theologically sound, but to literally sing a new song to the Lord," says Towaj of his own funk, rock, blues and soul brand of music. "I'm very much into music that has some sort of rhythmic quality to it. It makes it interesting to play, interesting to sing and interesting to listen to."

–Robert White

Newworldson Finds Balance



From a club in St. Catharines, Ont., to stages in Australia, the roots of the band Newworldson remain in the soul and R&B genres.

The group began with drummer Mark Rogers' idea for a weekly gospel music night in a

St. Catharines club. A call to Joel Parisien and a few other musicians led to a gig that lasted two years.

"We all met for the first time at that gig," says Parisien, who along with Josh Toal and Rich Moore form Newworldson. Then, in a turn usually only found in the movies, a video the band posted was seen by a record company president who flew up to see the band play.

"I really chuckle when I think about it," says Parisien. "It's a career scenario that so rarely manifests itself. To go from local heroes to being tiny fish in a big pond is almost cliché – but it's our story."

That story also includes winning seven Covenant Awards, including Best New Artist and Group of the Year. The foursome has nine Covenant Award nominations for their newest CD, *Rebel Transmission*. Along the way they've learned to balance the needs of the record company and their desire to play outside the box.

"We learned we can remain Newworldson, dial the eccentricity back a couple of notches, be marketable and still make it palatable," he says of the formula that led to the band's first hit. "It's that balance between listening to the call God has placed on our heart and creating songs with commercial appeal."
—Robert White

Which is where Bowman and 145 Live Solutions come in. Bowman spent about 15 years working with non-profits, including about 12 at World Vision Canada, where his last decade was spent working directly with artists and speakers. "I was doing with the agency what I'm doing now," says Bowman. "Event-based fundraising, mostly with music artists."

145 Solutions is a "matchmaker," he says. "It's more a matter of connecting the dots between causes and artists."



Paul Kelly with Robin Mark.

Making the matches means bringing two different worlds together. Musicians bring their audience to the charity. And the charity brings its supporters to the musicians. "The musicians and charity are each extending their audience. It's that cross-pollination we're trying to facilitate," says Bowman.

Bowman used the 1-4-5 chord progression, the primary chords used when composing songs, as the company's name. "This 1-4-5 chord progression is the basis for thousands of moving songs, thousands of memorable messages from songwriters. 145 Live Solutions Inc. is based on three essential components for performing artists, businesses and not-for-profits: messenger, message and audience," reads its website.

Working with Canadian artists and ministries is important to Bowman. Over the years, including his time at World Vision, Bowman has worked with artists like High Valley, Starfield, Jay Calder and Jon Bauer. Some of the ministries he's worked with include Food for the Hungry, The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, Christian Children's Fund and St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church (Simcoe Street) in Toronto.

"People need to be aware of who the Canadian Christian artists are," he says. "There are some exciting and dynamic Christian artists out there." **FT**

ROBERT WHITE of Guelph, Ont., is a freelance writer with a particular interest in the arts (www.selawministries.ca).

Paying Tribute to Church Unity



A movement to bring unity to the churches in their hometown of Hamilton, Ont., helped birth The City Harmonic.

Lead singer/pianist Elias Dummer and guitarist Aaron Powell had been leading worship together for about a decade when they joined up with Eric Fusilier (bass) and Josh Vanderlaan (drums). Initially the group led worship for high school- and college-aged events focused on social justice.

"Then it felt like it was time for a new season," says Dummer.

"When you write worship songs, there's a lot of pressure to write a certain kind of song – otherwise it's not a worship song. We decided to throw away the rulebook and say we're going to write songs we collectively love – and if it moves us, we pray it will move somebody towards worship.

"The irony is that more people are singing City Harmonic songs than the songs we were trying to write for the church." The band has six Covenant Award nominations this year, including Song of the Year for the title track of its CD *I Have A Dream (It Feels Like Home)*.

The band's name pays tribute to music and Hamilton's True City movement. "True City is this grassroots church movement where churches from across different denominations and different traditions work together and share resources to be a blessing in Hamilton," says Dummer, adding band members come from four different churches and denominations.

The band name has a double meaning, he explains. It's "both a play on the word 'philharmonic' and also the idea of a harmonic city or harmonious city."
—Robert White

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Making me cry...



David Harrison,
President

"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you." Psalm 32: 8 NIV

Everyone has priorities and Bus Stop Bible Studies is no exception. There are so many ways and places for us to present God's Word. It's a huge responsibility to ensure we are putting the right message in front of the right people.

It is easy to get discouraged when one reads some of the profanity-laden, on-line comments from the 'anti-God faction'. It took the testimony of an 11-year old pro-life activist to again remind us of the reality of what this ministry is up against. Her name is Zoe Griffen.

"Hi, I'm Zoe. Something happened Friday night [Aug. 31] that a friend wanted me to blog about. I don't have Facebook, or Twitter, or anything like that so I'm borrowing my mom's page for now.

"What happened was a pro-life rally [outside the Democratic National Convention]. We had showed up when only 4 people were there. I guess we were supposed to get there early. As more and more people came, a car arrived. A woman came out and opened the trunk. There were 3,300 carnations in the back of that car. We started to unload and unwrap the flowers. Lily, Bella, and I started to write pro-life statements with chalk on the sidewalks, when some pro-abortionists came. They were holding signs and chanting: "A baby's not a baby till it comes out, that's what birthdays are all about!" They were blowing whistles

and jumping around acting like 5-year-old children. I was so sad that these people were so blinded I started crying. Then we started laying down the flowers all across the sidewalk. When we finished, the line of carnations was probably a mile long. A pro-life woman let me hold a crucifix that she had. I started clutching it close to my heart. My knees were shaking, so were my hands.



Zoe Griffen (Photo by Anthony Perlas, seroptics.com)

"The pro-abortionists turned to us and started pointing at different people, saying, "You're a person! You're a person! Fetuses are not!" Then the woman saw me crying and said, "You are making this girl cry with your bull ____." I couldn't stand any more of those lies. They pushed it too far. In the highest-pitched voice I have ever spoken in, I screamed, **"THEY ARE NOT THE ONES MAKING ME CRY! YOU ARE! WITH YOUR DARK HEARTS, YOUR DARK MINDS TURNED AGAINST GOD!"** My mom ran over to me, put her hand on my shoulder, and calmed me down. Then she went up to them and said, **"HOW DARE YOU ATTACK A CHILD LIKE THAT!"** While she was yelling, pro-lifers came over to me to calm me down. My whole body was shaking. Our friend, Mrs. McKinney, took me, Jack, and Bella

continued on page 2

This is a double-width 'study', measuring 70" x 11", and can be sponsored for 5-1/2 month from only \$99, resulting in as many as 2-million impressions.



 "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."
Jeremiah 29:11



 "For you created my almost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well."
Psalms 139:13-14



 "The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged."
Deuteronomy 31:8



 "All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be."
Psalms 138:8



Making Me Cry –Continued from Page 1.

to a CVS that was nearby. We got water and chips and went back. I sat down on a bench when a man from the *Charlotte Observer* came over to me and started interviewing me. Once he was done, a man came over and gave us ice cream. While I was eating, the pro-abortionists left. Then we started to clean up.

"On the way home I felt sorry that I yelled at those people. I told my mom, and she said, "Do you know why you feel that way? It's because you have a heart. You have a conscience, and you know what's right and what's wrong. Those people attacked you like that because they don't have a heart."

I will never, ever forget what happened last night. I had a dream that night that they all converted to pro-life activists. I hope that dream becomes a reality."

"THEY ARE NOT THE ONES MAKING ME CRY! YOU ARE! WITH YOUR DARK HEARTS, YOUR DARK MINDS TURNED AGAINST GOD!" The words of Zoe or the words of God? I suspect the latter. Apart from grace, and friends who weren't afraid to share the Gospel, those words could have well described me.

There are those who shout and scream their enmity towards God and there are those who simply ignore Him. Both are headed for the same eternal anguish. Those of us who *believe* have a tremendous responsibility to get their attention and pour out Jesus' balm to extinguish the darkness and hatred in their hearts.

I would like to share another short story with you; It speaks for itself. It's from Tony Campolo's book, *Stories That Feed Your Soul*, titled *Prayer for the City*:

Mike Yaconelli, one of the key leaders in developing youth ministries in America, once told me about finishing up an evening of meetings in Nashville, Tennessee, just before Billy Graham was to conduct an evangelistic crusade there.

It was a rainy, foggy night as Mike and a friend were driving back to their hotel. Driving past the steps of a building, constructed to look like the Parthenon, they noticed a man sitting on the steps, his head between his knees, and his coat pulled over his head to keep out the cold, the rain and the wind. The man looked so pathetic that Mike stopped his car, and he and his friend got out and climbed the steps to where the sorry figure was huddled. Thinking him to be a homeless man, Mike said, "Hey, mister, you don't have to sit in the rain like this. We've got enough money to put you up in a hotel. Come with us. We'll provide you with what you need for a good night's sleep."

The man looked up, and Mike was shocked to realize that it was none other than the great Billy Graham himself. "It's okay," replied the evangelist. "I just want to sit here a while and pray for this city."

Mike and his friend retreated back to the car, and just sat there for a long moment. Then Mike said, "So, that's it.

That's why Billy Graham is able to win so many to Christ. That's why he's so effective in the pulpit. Before he ever preaches, he prays over the city, just like Jesus once prayed over Jerusalem.

Please pray for this ministry.

David

Can God use you to save lives by the power of His Word?

At the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, in 1994, Mother Theresa was the keynote speaker. In her speech she said, "I feel that the greatest destroyer of peace today is abortion, because it is a war against the child, a direct killing of the innocent child, murder by the mother herself. And if we accept that a mother can kill even her own child, how can we tell other people not to kill one another? How do we persuade a woman not to have an abortion? As always, we must persuade her with love and we remind ourselves that love means to be willing to give until it hurts. Jesus gave even His life to love us. So, the mother who is thinking of abortion, should be helped to love, that is, to give until it hurts her plans, or her free time, to respect the life of her child. The father of that child, whoever he is, must also give until it hurts."

By abortion, the mother does not learn to love, but kills even her own child to solve her problems. And, by abortion, that father is told that he does not have to take any responsibility at all for the child he has brought into the world. The father is likely to put other women into the same trouble. So abortion just leads to more abortion. Any country that accepts abortion is not teaching its people to love, but to use any violence to get what they want. This is why the greatest destroyer of love and peace is abortion."

Bus Stop Bible Studies has the privileged opportunity to convey this truth. The most difficult part for us is to 'persuade with love'. The brutal killing of an unborn child can easily promote a visceral anger but "Judgement is mine", says the LORD; so, we need great wisdom to say just the right thing. As Lorna Dueck encouraged us, "What is the Spirit saying to you as you watch His rebellious children get ticked off?"

What kind of message will cause a mother to keep her child—or at least not to abort it? Ultimately it is the Word of God that will convict, but how do we present it for

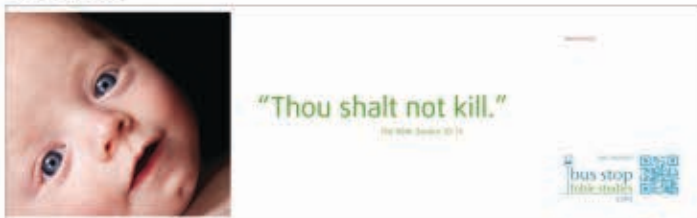
I'm me!

"All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be."

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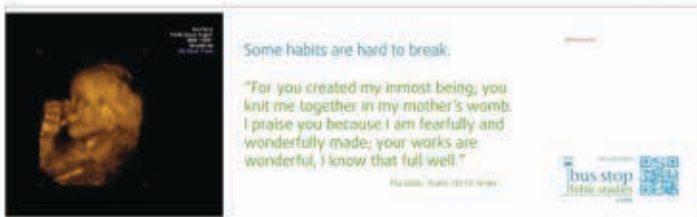
maximum impact? This is where we depend on God for creativity.



Above and below are two examples. Each will provoke a response from its reader. Is one any more appropriate than the other? Are either appropriate?



Above: is an attempt to convey that there is real feeling and emotion for the child in the womb. Below: this 'study' could be construed as too political. What do you think?



Above: we try to express the continuity of life from the womb into the world.

Jesus said that, "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." Physical life is [initially] essential for spiritual life, and all that God intended it to be.

This fall we wish to launch a major initiative on public transit to convey the sanctity of life from a Biblical perspective. We covet your prayers and financial support. We would also welcome your ideas for creating new studies that will, in the words of Mother Teresa, 'persuade with love'. Please write, phone or email us. Your participation encourages us greatly.

Terri's Corner

Driving to work today, I was watching all the children walking to school on this late summer day. The scene was hypnotizing, I couldn't draw my eyes away from it. Children walking with their mom's or dad's, arm-in-arm or hand-in-hand. Love was in the air.



I caught sight of a little girl, no more than 5 or 6 years old, walking up to the school. She looked so sad and alone. I watched, waited, looked around and there was no one there. Tears flowed down her cheeks. Where are her parents, I wondered, why is she all alone?

My heart broke for this young child. Immediately I began to pray, 'God hold her in your arms and comfort her, give her your peace and surround her with someone to love her.' Then off in the distance I saw him, running toward her. Her Daddy sweeps her into his arms, hugging her before she can enter the schoolyard. My heart leaped for joy as I watch it unfold, as if the very hand of God swept down to embrace this little child.

What a perfect picture of our Lord's love and grace!

Sometimes, when a child is conceived, the fear of how you will care for him or her can be overwhelming. The world will quickly tell us that choices and decisions *must* be made. The choice to grant a child life is the most precious choice we can make. God has already chosen and has planned out this little life before they were even thought of. How can we take it upon ourselves to make a choice, to change His plans and end a life?

My parents just couldn't afford to have more children; times were very hard and seemed overwhelming. They were frightened when they learned that another baby was on the way. Yet, they made the choice to bring me into this world. I am the seventh child in my family.

They could have ended my life and no one would have been the wiser, however, they remembered God's words in Jeremiah; that He had shaped me and knew me before I was conceived. I am thankful they chose LIFE or I never have had the opportunities my Lord has granted me.

My God makes no mistakes!

Jeremiah 1:5 "Before I shaped you in the womb, I knew all about you. Before you saw the light of day, I had holy plans for you."

In His Grip, Terri Owen - Administrator

Tel: (416) 234-0555 ext. 102

Sponsorships

Individual 'studies' can be sponsored for as little as \$69. Double-width displays [see front page] start at only \$99. Sponsorships are fully tax deductible. Each study may be viewed as many as 2-million times.

Making us cry some more... (tears of joy)

We just received our copy of the [North York] Pregnancy Care Centre's fall newsletter [reprint below]. To each of you who have supported us and prayed with us, we hope you will share our joy!

All Her Days Ordained by God

Monday afternoon in August: A woman calls the Pregnancy Care Centre to say she wants someone to talk to. She asks to come in on Friday.

Friday afternoon later that week she arrives right on time for her appointment, with her two adorable and well-mannered children in tow. The conversation begins and she declares that she is having an abortion. She cannot fathom caring for a third child when she is already struggling to provide food and clothing for these two. She has no support from her family or the father. She wants to go back to school so she can pursue a career and provide for her family with dignity. Getting pregnant did not fit into her plans, and there would be multiple people in her life who would judge her harshly for becoming pregnant again.

It would appear hopeless. And yet, there is always hope because Jesus is alive! But she could not see it yet.

She shared quite openly about her situation. We tried to share information with her, to help her make an informed decision, but she was not hearing it. The tiny heart began beating just a few days ago, but she didn't seem to care. She said she felt no connection to this child. It appeared her mind was set.

She said she was against church and religion, although she grew up in a culture where God is a big part of life. Quoting Bible verses about the judgment of God, she knew that her decision was wrong, but she was willing to do it anyway. Her abortion appointment was booked for the following week.

Many times we thought she was about to get up and leave. It seemed as though we were of little help to her. And yet she continued to sit there, kindly telling her children to wait outside.

Bus Dominations

In our last Newsletter we announced the first five 'domination campaigns' on TTC buses. We had the opportunity to photograph one of these buses [right] and take a few photos.

Domination campaigns start at \$2,495 which covers production costs and advertising space for 16-panels for a period of approximately 5-1/2 months (16-weeks paid + 8-weeks bonus, subject to space availability). Individual studies can be sponsored from as little as \$69.

Bus Stop Bible Studies is incorporated in the Province of Ontario as a Corporation Without Share Capital and is registered with the Canada Revenue Agency and qualifies for tax-exempt status as a registered charity under paragraph 149(1)(f) of the Income Tax Act. Official receipts will be issued under Regulation 3501 of the Income Tax Regulations. Bus Stop Bible Studies Charitable Business Number is 80383 3342 RR0001. Tax deductible receipts will be issued at year end for all donations of \$20 or more. In accordance with Board policy, spending of funds is confined to board approved programs and projects. Each contribution designated towards a Board approved program or project will be used as designated, with the understanding that when the need for such a program or projects has been met, or cannot be completed for any reason determined by the Board, the remaining contributions designated for such program or project will be used where needed most.

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She mentioned that she does pray to God regularly, but didn't care to elaborate. When we asked if she would like to read some Scripture together, she said no, because her conscience was already "beating her". She actually appeared to be in physical pain. However, she was excited when we offered her a "whole Bible!" We encouraged her to read God's promises for her and her children before her abortion appointment, to see what He has to say to her in His Word. She thought that would be a good idea, since she recognized that God had provided for them all so far. The young woman articulated that she knew God could provide for this third child as well, but she certainly didn't want to.

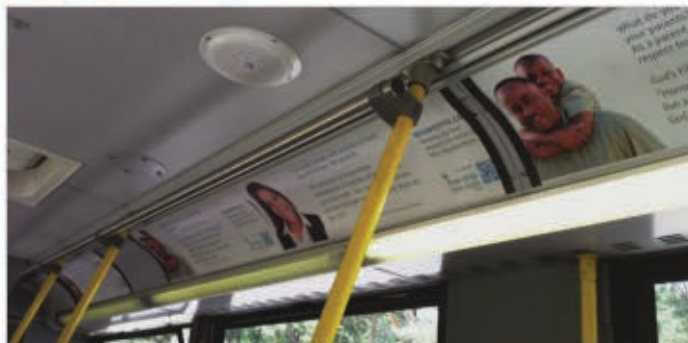
After nearly two hours together, we asked, "Do you think how you pray to God would change if you have an abortion?" She replied solemnly, "I wouldn't be able to talk to Him again." Pause. We could see her mind was racing. "Be silent," God seemed to say, "I'm speaking to her." Next we gently prodded, "Would you miss Him?" Then the tears. "Yes, I would *miss* Him." Silence. Staring at the floor for several minutes.

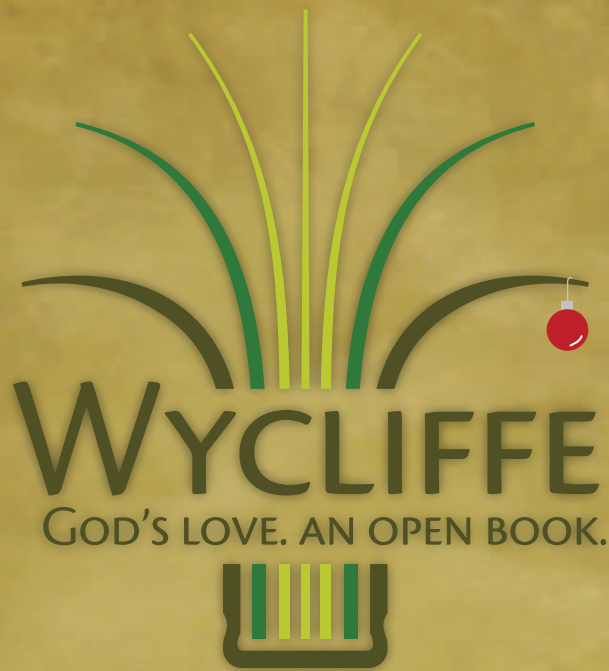
She suddenly raised her head. Then, by the grace of God, "I am going to *keep* my child." God gave me and my two children life, and He has given me this life too. He will provide for us. I cannot go against Him."

Praise be to the Giver and Sustainer of Life! It was as though we could see the Holy Spirit—as only He can do—convicting her heart and mind as we sat and watched.

Before leaving, she said she had seen our [Bus Stop Bible Studies] TTC ad on the subway a couple of months ago. She was not pregnant then, nor was she planning on becoming pregnant. And yet she put the number in her cellphone. That Monday when she took a positive pregnancy test, that phone number was brought to her mind; and there it was, waiting for a time such as this.

The Pregnancy Care Centre is a non-profit, non political Christian charity offering practical, emotional, and spiritual support so no women in Toronto need feel that abortion is her only alternative.





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How to Green Your Church

By Alex Newman

More and more Evangelicals are transforming their worship and ministry spaces into environmentally friendly places.

Although it would cost them \$60,000 more than a conventional heating and air conditioning system, the congregation at Meadowlands Fellowship Christian Reformed Church in Ancaster, Ont., voted unanimously in favour of installing a geothermal system for heating and cooling their new church.

After renting space for 15 years the congregation was building a permanent home, but wanted to minimize its carbon footprint. “We believe that the earth and its resources are the Lord’s,” explains Henry Brouwer, a member of Meadowlands, and retired professor of environmental science and chemistry at nearby Redeemer University College.

Going geothermal – which uses pumps to draw natural heat from below ground through water/ethanol-filled pipes – was just the ticket. The move also dramatically cut energy costs. In the seven years since they moved in, utilities for the 19,000 sq ft church have run between \$11,000 and \$13,000 annually – well under a dollar per square foot.

Meadowlands is just one of many evangelical churches responding to the call to take better care of creation. It’s a call that comes right from the top of many evangelical organizations evidenced by the number of recent reports: 2002 *Oxford Declaration on Global Warming*, the 2009 *Micah Declaration on Creation Stewardship and Climate Change*, Lausanne’s Conversation paper of 2010 *The Challenge of Environmental Stewardship*, and the



PHOTO: BETHANY BAPTIST CHURCH, OTTAWA

2012 Christian Reformed Church *Creation Stewardship Report*, to name a few.

And it only takes a nudge to get going at the grassroots level as Kathryn Guindon of Greening Sacred Spaces (www.greeningsacredspaces.net), an organization that helps churches go green, explains. “So many are conscientious recyclers at home, but just never thought about it at church. So it doesn’t take much to get the ball rolling, especially if clergy or church elders are supportive.”

One thing that can *stall* a congregation is the cost. That’s why Guindon encourages churches to take the long view – money saved through energy efficiency and water conservation can be turned directly into outreach. That’s a real incentive for churches with a strong mission mandate, she notes.



PHOTO: BETHANY BAPTIST CHURCH, OTTAWA



PHOTO: MICHAEL HUDSON

Bethany Baptist Church in Ottawa (far left) and its gardens (top right). The Anglican Church of the Resurrection in Toronto (above) makes its allotments available to both parishioners and members of the local community.

Churches that aren't planning on building new can adopt a policy to replace broken-down components – heating, toilets and light fixtures – with more sustainable alternatives. Grants are sometimes available. In Ontario, for example, churches can take advantage of \$1000 worth of free lighting and a free lighting audit.

Where a church has neither the budget nor the need to replace things, it can devote time to raising awareness. Guindon suggests hosting educational sessions on organic gardening, energy efficiency and environmental issues, discussing care for creation during worship, and getting the Sunday school to make signs – a

proven way to involve the youngest members and get people turning off lights. At Bethany Baptist Church in Ottawa, Ont., for example, summer Sunday school is replaced by the Green Thumb Club, where children are introduced to the “joys of growing and eating organic vegetables and caring for God’s world,” reports former pastor Isobel McGregor.

Resurrection Lutheran Church in Halifax, N.S., has taken a broad approach with several inexpensive green initiatives, says Pastor Kimberlynn McNabb. Since they rent their hall to local groups for events involving food, they’ve taken advantage of a com-

Small Steps to Big Changes

Small changes do make a difference, says Luke Wilson, marketing director of A Rocha, a Christian organization that both raises green awareness and physically creates conservation projects.

Organize your own Good Seed Sundays, which emphasize living and eating lighter. A Rocha has a whole host of materials to help (www.goodseedsunday.com). The emphasis is on eating lighter – seasonal, local with less meat – and living lighter by using transit, walking or carpooling to church. The unseen benefit is things like carpooling also foster closer community connections.

Arrange for an energy audit – your money could literally be going out the window in escaped heat. Greening Sacred Spaces does these at low cost. (www.greeningsacredspaces.net)

Plant a community garden – not only a good way to grow food (maybe for donating to a local food bank), but also an effective – and natural – means of outreach.

If a new boiler is not an option, consider Intellidyne, a microprocessor that guarantees 10 per cent energy savings, and an estimated payback time of six to 24 months. (www.intellidyne.com). ■

prehensive city-wide composting program that provides large bins for meat, dairy and vegetable scraps.

And on the last Sunday of each month members are encouraged to walk, bike or take transit, wear clothing made in Canada, not use oil-based makeup and eat meals made from local produce.

When leaky stained glass windows needed repair, Resurrection investigated green options and discovered Lexan (a plastic sheeting commonly used on motorcycles) effectively prevents wind from whistling through the holes. They've switched to energy efficient CFL lights. The congregation conducted a heat audit, and have committed to replacing doors and adding insulation over the next 10 years. Five years ago, when the roof needed replacing, they chose grey shingles,

which absorb less heat than black.

Grass is gradually being replaced by a prayer garden, with plants that come from parishioners, and the remainder, McNabb says, is cut with an old-fashioned push mower (not gas or electric).

The congregation of New Life Christian Reformed Church in B.C.'s Fraser Valley has taken a different but equally inexpensive tack. They're working hard to raise awareness, says stewardship committee chair Jack Van Dyke, who also teaches chemistry at Trinity Western University.

To get people moving on climate change, Van Dyke says, "Church leadership must continually place the issue in front of people, and continually challenge them with lifestyle choices."

And so for the past 15 years or more the group has combined mind and matter,

meeting for Bible studies, but also focusing on their physical environment. "We are right on the Fraser River, so we looked at that and its vital function within the province," Van Dyke says. The group held dessert evenings and invited environmental experts in as speakers. There was a three-part Sunday sermon series, along with changing pulpit décor to illustrate Creation, The Fall and Redemption, all with an environmental twist.

One of the more significant awareness efforts was the group's participation in the report approved at their synod in June, which mandates the whole Christian Reformed Church take an active role in working to fix climate change.

Changing people's minds, hearts and habits about the environment is something that has challenged A Rocha, the Christian organization started and supported by Evangelicals, including John Stott. Luke Wilson, who handles marketing for the organization, says people engage in one of two ways: act their way to listening (fake it till you make it), or listen your way to acting (understanding leads to desire to act).

What's most effective, he has found, is helping people get to a place of deep gratitude. "You understand things differently when you are grateful for the land, the food, your breath and the water you drink. It ultimately leads to a place of worship." **FT**

ALEX NEWMAN of Toronto is a senior writer at *Faith Today*.

Things You Can Do Right Now

Green Church offers many tips (www.greenchurch.ca) conveniently posted according to the time of year. The tips are simple:

- Use cloths for wiping up instead of paper towels.
- Add environmental charities to your missions list, or help pay for a well in Africa where dirty water is the biggest contributor to childhood disease and death.
- Make Earth Hour a time of prayer and reflection.
- Buy local bread and wine, purchase fair trade coffee, do away with Styrofoam coffee cups.
- Plant native species and do companion planting to eliminate

pesticide use and reduce water.

- Install a rain barrel for the garden.
- Plant trees in windy locations for wind breaks to reduce energy bills.
- Replace regular light bulbs with CFLs (compact fluorescent lights).
- Lower the temperature on the hot water heater.
- Add a timer on the furnace.
- Set your printer on double-sided – or better yet, don't print at all.

Nancy Sleeth, managing director of Blessed Earth, an American organization with ties to A Rocha, finds "The best way for churches to begin going green is to first dig deeply into what the Bible has to say about caring for the earth." The organization's film series might help start the discussion: www.blessedearthfilms.org. And the tip sheet is a good guideline: www.blessedearth.org **FT**

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The Art of Wors

A professional theatre artist offers practical tips on worship arts today.

By **Dennis J. Hassell**

We enter the church on Christmas Eve. The darkened auditorium gleams with artful lighting that illuminates rich decorations and glinting banners. From somewhere above, a lonely shepherd's pan pipes play an ancient tune.

The lights fade to a pool of moonlight, where a teenage Mary has a conflict with her anxious husband.

Bumptious shepherds herd wayward sheep right through the pews. Familiar Scripture passages feel like breaking news.

Suddenly, Three and a Half (Wise) Men invade the baptistery, and a quartet of stable animal puppets sing a doo-wop version of "O Little Town of Bethlehem."

It's a little madcap, but it's wonderful.

A procession of candles, streamers, dancers, musicians and singers of all ages create a shining ring around us. We came from a place of ordinary life – we are now in another place. We are moved. And we wonder, "Why can't we do more of this stuff the rest of the year?"

What Are Worship Arts?

"This stuff" is worship arts. It is how we bring the arts – drama, painting, literature, dance, hip-hop, sculpture even! – into the worship experience to draw people closer to God. As a touring artist, I have worshipped in hundreds of churches around North America in both traditional and contemporary contexts. This breadth of experience, combined with decades spent in professional theatre, has given me some perspective – and a few convictions – about worship arts today. And what we might learn from professional performing artists about how to do it even better.

Start With the Script

Before a theatre assembles the creative team, hires the performers or books the venue, they have a clear story to tell. Can everyone articulate what the story is, and what their role is in telling it? If you don't know, the congregation won't. There is room for change as the ideal collides with the real, and the Spirit leads. Life



Hassell's *The Other Side of the River*, a musical parable for churches. Dennis Hassell (inset).

Director's Notes:

Just as you seek the Holy Spirit's leading in the actual worship, seek it also in the planning.

is rewrites. But don't skim over determining exactly *what* you want the audience to receive. In church, Scripture shapes script.

Don't Skip Over Table Work

Actors want to get up and act, but first they sit at a table and get everyone *literally* on the same page. Worship and theatre are both action, but thinking before you act is required. Take time to think – and pray without ceasing. The quiet members will have room to contribute great ideas. One pastor told me, "I follow the Holy Spirit's prompting the most when I have done the most preparation."

Make Everyone Part of the Ensemble

Professional directors insist everyone must be in the loop. Even box office staff and head ushers come to dress rehearsals so they under-

hip



PHOTO: DENNIS HASSELL PRODUCTIONS

stand the big picture. The choreographer talks to the set designer, the musicians to the director about what action comes before, after – and during – each song. The sound and lighting crew don't show up on the first performance. They read and notate the script and set levels and rehearse cues. Every participant understands not only the who/what/where/when, but also the why.

Use Music Artfully

Martin Luther set Christian lyrics to beer hall songs because he desired to break out of what people had classified as “spiritual.” If songs pull you by the ears, the head and heart must follow. Musical theatre respects the nature of each song, its unique DNA. And if you treat a lion like a lemming, it languishes. Slow an up-tempo song

Director's Notes:

Ensure the sound crew sees themselves as part of the worship team. Give them a “script” (order of service). Rehearse the sound and A/V with the musicians. In rehearsal they also serve as the eyes and ears of the audience.

wilderness, and every temptation was a strategy of distraction. Contemporary worship is full of distractions. Here are a few common ones, easily fixed:

only when it's for a definite purpose. Otherwise, it's not the Holy Spirit, it's hypnotherapy. A song ends when the feelings, images and ideas are fully expended. Know when you will end a song before you begin. We may think we are inviting the Holy Spirit more by repeating a chorus three times for four consecutive songs, but all audiences have a battery. We want to charge it up, not run it down. Designate someone to sit in the pews during rehearsal and give you feedback on the song set. How you feel onstage is not how it feels in the seats, which is how theatre directors stay employed.

Make Worship as Seamless as Possible

Directors admonish actors, “I could drive a dump truck through the gap between those lines! Stop milking the moment!” Just as songs have an appropriate tempo, so does the whole event.

Performers don't explain the obvious – they perform it. Writer Garrison Keillor said we should pity pastors and other worship leaders “... because every Sunday morning they have to stand up in church and interrupt what people came there to do.” I'm confused by worship leaders who say “It's not about me, it's about the Lord,” and then talk far more than necessary. And I am the chief of sinners! One sentence, or none at all, is explanation enough to move from one element to another. A change of lighting or movement is often enough to redirect our focus. As we say in the theatre, less is more.

Eliminate Distractions

I saw a play where an orange fell out of a basket onto the stage floor. The actors ignored it, but the audience did not. We stared at that orange. It glared back, like the evil eye of Sauron. We didn't hear or see anything else for the rest of the scene, because in real life someone would have picked it up. The orange became a distraction.

Satan sought to tempt Christ in the wilderness, and every temptation was a strategy of distraction.



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Sound. Microphones not turned up in time, the screech or pinging of feedback, people chatting as if watching TV, doors left open to noisy lobbies and hallways.

Verbal. The director says to the scriptwriter, “Do three things: cut, cut and cut.” Writer Adrian Plass said of the British preacher David Watson, “Every sentence he uttered was like a carved diamond.” For example, *craft* your announcement about next Sunday’s luncheon. It’s easy to elaborate. It’s hard to simplify.

Visual. Poor lighting, latecomers, unappealing banners, delays, messiness, fussing and fixing. The newest challenge is animated projections that, like a sports screen in a restaurant, constantly yank our attention away from our guests. Most of us can’t ignore a screen, so use it selectively. A candle is simple. Bread

and wine are simple. A cross is simple. Jesus was complex. But He was not complicated.

Honour the Audience

We worship artists are the servants of God and His people. His people are not just pew-sitters but participants. Create regular healthy conduits for feedback that help us improve. And the “box office” will improve at the same time.

Once upon a time the Church dedicated itself to worship arts. They called it the Renaissance. Today we have more resources than ever to integrate the arts into worship – arts as worship – and hopefully a burning desire to do it well. **FT**

DENNIS HASSELL is a worship arts consultant and scriptwriter based in Toronto.

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The Shape of Things to Come

By Steve Bell

Beloved Canadian songwriter and musician Steve Bell reflects on the advent oracles of Isaiah (Isaiah 2:1–5, 7:10–16, 11:1–10, 35:1–10).



PHOTO: WWW.STEVEBELL.COM

I recently stumbled upon an online essay reflecting on the four advent oracles of Isaiah. I was immediately intrigued by the use of the word “oracle” – first, because it sounds somewhat pagan and new-agey, and second, because it evokes feelings darkly subterranean and mysterious.

Quick research found the word to be disappointingly harmless. An oracle, as it turns out, is simply a prophetic utterance. Nevertheless, the word still carries foreboding tones of danger, presumably arising from an unearthed knowledge from the forbidden depths. Oracles are (at least as Hollywood portrays them) “too hot to handle,” and are therefore sequestered and reserved for a very chosen few.

But I found the Isaiah oracles themselves to be familiar and safe enough. One of them speaks of a coming age when nations, in search of wisdom, will stream to the mountain of the Lord. Another is

confident of a day when warriors will beat their weapons into gardening tools. Yet another predicts the radical safety and relational ease symbolized by a wolf lying peacefully with a lamb. And finally, we are told of a virgin giving birth to a child who will lead us.

At first blush, none of this seems particularly foreboding:

- Nations will stream to the mountain of the Lord?
Yay! We win! (We, meaning Christians.)
- Weapons will be turned into gardening tools?
No brainer. Even beauty queens want world peace.
- The wolf will lie down with the lamb?
Oh good. Nobody likes a bully.
- A woman will give birth to a child who will lead us?
Women are generally nice and babies are generally cute – all good!

Nations Will Stream to the Mountain of the Lord

But take a closer look at the first oracle. There’s a trip switch hidden in the relationship between the words “stream” and “mountain.” The oracle claims that nations (in search of wisdom) will stream *to* the mountain. I presume the oracle initially assumed the mountain to be a metaphor for the city of Jerusalem with all her grand, nationalistic aspirations. Christians would understand Jerusalem to be a metaphor for the height of Christian truth and God’s sovereign rule.

I’ve been to Jerusalem, and it is, topographically, a high point in the land. Things don’t generally stream *to* the high points. They generally stream away.

This oracle speaks of a radical reversal of nature – not only nature *out there*, but our own inner logic or compass as well. Simply consider humanity’s reasonable fears and need for security. Then consider the



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counterintuitive gospel account of the long-awaited messianic king. He enters history as a vulnerable child under morally dubious circumstances. Shortly after His birth He is fleeing for His life as a political refugee, and after 33 years was only able to muster a handful of followers who quickly abandoned him when things got rough. Eventually, he suffered a brutal and humiliating death at the order of an illegitimate tyrant.

This is a hard sell.

They Will Beat Their Weapons Into Ploughshares

Consider the second oracle, the unlikely prediction of weapons turned into pruning shears. This is all well and good, but consider that the world's largest economy is based on the assumption of war and the opportunities for wealth creation it offers. It is hard to imagine the radical shift in worldview necessary for abandoning arms will get much traction – even among Christians who, supposedly, have been gifted with a vision of the last chapter of history *so that* we can bear witness to it in the present.

We're simply too invested in fallenness to take redemptive witness seriously.

Equally, we (especially in North America) are heavily invested in a theology that equates faithfulness with the right to security and safety, even though it is difficult to imagine such theology can be gleaned from the witness of Christ as portrayed in the Gospels.

Again, tough sell.

The Wolf Will Lie Down With the Lamb

Recently I met Amhad, an Arab man, and Dorit, a Jewish woman, who both live in an intentionally mixed community in Israel. The community sees itself as a living witness, counter to the dominant narrative of conflict that beleaguers that storied land. When I met them, I made reference to Isaiah's wolf/lamb oracle and the unlikelihood of their deep friendship. Amhad's eyes twinkled as he said, "I'll leave it to you to decide which one of us is the wolf and which one is the lamb."

Indeed, you can hardly consider this oracle without making the judgement that one of those two is more innocent than the other. And much of modern history could be summed up as an overall culture of in-

dividuals and groups clamouring for lamb status. Certainly, few clamour for wolf status.

I, for example, am a reasonably nice, Christian, heterosexual man committed to the improvement of my fellows through the exercise of the gifts God has bestowed on me for the sake of the gospel.

Surely, if there is a continuum, I lean toward the lamb side.

And yet, if I consider my investments, my buying habits, my eating habits, my lifestyle and leisure, my excesses and prejudices, it doesn't take a great sleuth to uncover where I am woefully complicit in systems of oppression and injustice.

I already knew this. I willfully participate and benefit from systemic injustice every day. I can justify it to others, I suppose, but I don't think my defences will stand long before the steely gaze of the "Lamb who is on the throne."

Part of me longs for Christ. Another dreads the encounter.

A Virgin Will Bear a Son. A Child Will Lead Them.

A woman will bear a son and name him Emmanuel, God with us. Coupled with "a child will lead them," this oracle is perhaps the loveliest and most harmless of all. Yet, if we consider the record of adult, male-dominated history, it is hard to believe the best and wisest of things will be ushered into history through a woman and child. It simply does not stand up to our experience. This oracle coming true (along with the others) would require a radical refashioning of every institution and social structure we've ever known.

It would also require a willingness to relinquish illegitimate wealth, power and prestige. Such relinquishments, and their attendant vulnerabilities, could only be sustained by an ardent love and longing for the community of God, the shape and culture of which these oracles suggest. And yet these oracles, taken together, suggest a reality we may not realize is already before us.

The Three-fold Coming of Christ

The ancients spoke of a three-fold coming of Christ, whom we ritually anticipate during the advent season.

We remember the Christ who came as a baby 2000 years ago. We anticipate this

Oracles

Music and Lyrics by Steve Bell

(a newly released Steve Bell song based on Isaiah 2:1-5, 7:10-16, 11:1-10, 35:1-10)

Oh ancient seer, your vision told
Of desert highways leading home
To the mountain of the Lord,
Where nations sound a righteous song forevermore.

And on that mountain men will forge
From cruel implements of war
The tools to till and garden soil.
The rose will bloom and faces shine
with gladdening oil.

And it will surely come to pass
Justice will reign on earth at last.
The wolf will lie down with the lamb.
No beast destroy, no serpent strike the child's hand.

And God himself will choose a sign.
A frightened woman in her time
Will bear a son and name him well.
God with us! O come, o come, Emmanuel!

Listen to the song "Oracles" from Steve Bell's Christmas CD *Keening for the Dawn* at www.faithtoday.ca/oracles.

The final coming is a matter of faith.

It is the present coming that seems shrouded in obscurity. Perhaps we simply don't know how to look.

Earlier this spring I attended a peace conference where several communities from around the world, all in the process of rising above conflict and/or injustice, came to share their stories. My job was to listen and at the end of the day reflect briefly what I heard.

The stories were incredible. Ari, a Sri Lankan man, understood profoundly the fragile nature of human dignity and the degrading dependency external powers (through aid) can inflict on those they profess to help. He

also knows how hard it is to resist that help, which can in the short run relieve present misery. When I listened to his story, I was struck by the incredible and

counterintuitive wisdom clearly revealed to him. And I thought of that first oracle.

Dennis from Bougainville (Papua New Guinea) led an armed revolutionary revolt against colonial Australia whose policies toward Bougainville have been terribly destructive both socially and environmentally. He recounted the horrors of a war in which he lost his wife and son and personally suffered crippling wounds. And he recounted his conversion and commitment to a way of peace, which he now leads and which includes – interestingly – gardening. I thought of the second oracle.

It was at this conference where I met Ahmad and Dorit, the Arab man and Jewish woman living in peaceful community in modern Israel.

And I thought of the third oracle.

A contemplative nun, Sister Pine, led us all on a walk of "mindfulness and attentiveness" where, while walking barefoot slowly through the grass, I was suddenly gifted with an overwhelming childlike delight in the very miracle of creation.

I immediately recalled a few weeks earlier

very lamb returning in our future "high and exalted" on clouds of glory. And we profess His coming to us now in the present.

The first coming is a matter of history.



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when my grandson Luca took me by the hand into an overgrown bramble next to a playground near his house. I couldn't interest him in the multicoloured structure designed to entertain and exercise youngsters. Instead, he wanted to show his Pop-pop the "deep, dark woods" where we spent some time with our faces close to the ground inspecting bugs, snails and curious plants.

At one point he yelled, "Look, Pop-pop! It's beeeaaauutiful!" And I leaned in to see

the speck of a miniature spider crawling across a leaf.

And indeed, it was beautiful.

I would have missed it if this boy-priest hadn't led me into his hallowed sanctuary of sacred mysteries and delights. And I thought of the fourth oracle.

See? He *is* here. **FT**

STEVE BELL is a multiple award-winning Canadian songwriter and musician based in Winnipeg, Man.



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Ministering Through Missions

Bus Stop Bible Studies Displaying Scripture

Abortion is a moral, not a political, issue. Some people might feel discouraged with the defeat of Motion 312, concerning the definition of when life begins, but David Harrison, president of Bus Stop Bible Studies, makes the point that a parliamentary motion doesn't ultimately get to the core of the matter.

"Without a heart change, Canadians' attitude towards the value of human life is unaffected. Dialogue is certainly helpful, but the necessary change is something only the Holy Spirit can accomplish," he said.

Bus Stop Bible Studies was created with

the express goal of bringing about heart change through the public reading of Scripture. "We publicly present the Word of God backed by all His power and promises," said Harrison

Harrison acknowledges the enormity of the task and the great wisdom needed in presenting just the right message.

"With 100 public transit companies in Canada, and more than 11,000 transit vehicles on which to display the Word of God, the opportunities are huge. We are striving to find more and more supporters who believe there is sufficient power in God's Word to change a nation."

Bus Stop Bible Studies is a registered Canadian charity that uses transit advertising to display Scripture.

Cal Bombay Ministries Startling success in South Sudan

There are times when you are blind-sided by an unexpected success.

In South Sudan I asked a simple question: "How many Out-Growers have we helped to enlarge their acreages?" I wasn't prepared for the answer: 214. I was astounded.

Simon-Peter, the division head over our Out-Growers Program, told me that these

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Out-Growers are farming twice the acreage the Savannah Farmers Cooperative (SFC) is farming and they will grow double what the SFC fields will grow. They were in poverty, and now they are prospering families. That was the good news.

About 1,600 other poverty-stricken families have seen the success. They want into the program and out of poverty too. This is the best guarantee for food security in the future for South Sudan. Simon-Peter says impatience is growing.

The Out-Growers clear bush to enlarge their fields. Then they wait for us to come and plough. We calculated that we need **44 more tractors and ploughs.**

I said, "Cal Bombay Ministries doesn't have enough money for that. That would cost \$34,500 per unit!" One thousand, six hundreds families waiting! "What can we do?"

Simon-Peter said, "We can pray!"

We prayed.

When I was in Sudan, I interviewed 12 of these Out-Growers. Their stories can be

read at www.calbombayministries.org or on Facebook.

Canadian Bible Society To every tongue and tribe

The Canadian Bible Society, along with 146 national Bible societies around the world, has been working diligently to provide the Bible to every man, woman and child since 1904. And yet it's hard to believe that there are thousands of people still waiting to receive their own copy of the Holy Scriptures. But with the help of supporters in every corner of the globe, along with the dedication of hard-working staff and the leading of the Holy Spirit, this past year we saw God's Word being translated and sent out to people who are hungry to hear about the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

This summer we rejoiced that 33 years of Bible translation work has finally resulted in the **first ever complete Inuktitut Bible in our homeland.** What an awesome privilege it was to fly north and deliver the Word of God to our Arctic brothers and sisters. It's only because of the Lord's faithfulness and your generosity that this important work can carry on.

Become a Bible a Month Donor, or visit our website to see how you can help us reach every tongue and every tribe with God's precious Word.

Website: www.biblesociety.ca. Phone: 800-465-2425.

Compassion Changing the lives of children


"It's God's mandate that the Church tell about the love of Jesus," said Eric Doku, a pastor from Ghana. "But it's very hard to tell someone about the love of God when they are hungry and don't even know where the next meal is coming from."

Children used to flock to Pastor Doku's house, and he used the little he had to feed and clothe as many as possible. It was never enough.


But now Compassion has come alongside Pastor Doku's church to support them in their mission. Compassion partners with local churches in 26 countries to help children stay healthy, get an education and discover God's love for them.

Children and families are coming to understand the gospel of Jesus Christ. They are finding where true hope comes from. And they are learning that they can change their circumstances – they don't

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Unlike so many of their peers, who get pregnant young or get hooked on alcohol, sponsored children have gone on to become pastors, teachers, merchants, lawyers and doctors who are changing their communities.

Find out more about how you can change the life of a child at www.compassion.ca.

International Fellowship of Missions Conferences Educating, motivating and mobilizing

Does the Great Commission apply to you? You may think, "I'm just a student (or retired, or a homemaker, or a professional). Did Jesus really mean that I should go 'into all the world and make disciples of all nations'?"

If you ponder that, we can help. The International Fellowship of Missions Conferences holds missions festivals across Canada as family-oriented events to educate, motivate and mobilize the local church community toward Christian missions.

Sponsored by local churches, the conferences feature mission organizations exhibits, outstanding speakers and seminar presenters who focus on specific areas of need. You will be challenged not only to pray, give and send *but also to go*. God uses the conference as a life-changing event for many people.

Missionfest Manitoba on February 1-3, 2013. Church of the Rock in Winnipeg. Theme: Hope for Europe—Missions in a Secular World. Keynote speakers: Jeff Fountain, Stuart McAllister, Vince Antonucci, Bruce Clemenger, and Greg and Oonaugh Wood. Visit: www.missionfest-manitoba.org.

Missions Fest Alberta: February 22-24, 2013. Shaw Conference Centre in Edmonton. Theme: Reaching a World in Crisis. Keynote speakers: Greg Musselman, Barry Slauenwhite and Donna Boone. Visit: www.mfest.ab.ca.

For further details on any of the conferences in our Fellowship, visit www.missions-fellowship.org.

In Touch Ministries Spreading the gospel

Today *In Touch with Dr. Charles Stanley* can be heard around the world via radio and television broadcasts, the handheld In Touch Messenger and the ministry's website: www.InTouch.org. *In Touch* programs are seen and heard

domestically and internationally on nearly 1,800 radio and television outlets in more than 50 languages. The ministry continues to produce CDs, DVDs, pamphlets, books and other Christian resource material, including its award-winning, monthly devotional magazine, *In Touch*.

A common theme found throughout In Touch Ministries' viewer and listener correspondence is how God has changed lives through Dr. Stanley's teaching. Any success achieved by In Touch or Dr. Stanley is directly attributed to the hand of God. Dr. Stanley said, "It is the Word of God and the work of God that changes people's lives."

The goal of In Touch is to lead people

worldwide into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ and to strengthen the local church. Dr. Stanley's heart's desire is to get the gospel to "as many people as possible, as quickly as possible, as clearly as possible, as irresistibly as possible, through the power of the Holy Spirit to the glory of God."

For more information, or to receive the free *In Touch* magazine, please call us at 800-323-3747.

Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada Financing capital projects

The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC) is a faith-based organization with 1,100 churches



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across the country and more than 100 global workers internationally. The pension plan is part of the benefits package available to all credential holders and church administrative staff.

Since 1938, The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada has been assisting churches with loans for approved capital projects through the PAOC Pension Plan. Approximately 150 congregations currently carry first mortgage loans through our plan.

- Some of the key features are
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- \$100 application fee
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- funds advanced based on the project schedule
- three-year terms on 21-year amortization
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We are open to providing mortgages to churches that may be having difficulty ob-

taining suitable financing for capital projects.

For information about lending rates, funds available and repayment procedures or for a loan application, contact Rev. Calvin Howson at 905-542-7400 or email pfloans@paoc.org.

Samaritan's Purse The power of a simple gift

Every day Costa Rican six-year-old Joshua Rodriguez asked for toys, but the family had no money for extras. One night Joshua told his mother, "Don't worry, God will give me a toy car." The next day Joshua received an Operation Christmas Child shoe-box gift at a local event. As he opened it, his mother began to cry. Inside was a case with five toy cars.

Each year more than eight million shoe boxes filled with school supplies, hygiene items, candy and toys are distributed to children around the world. Many of these children, living in war, poverty, disease and natural disaster, have never received a gift.

For Canadians, Operation Christmas Child (a project of Samaritan's Purse) allows parents to teach their children about generosity

Children receiving a shoe-box gift are of-

fered a booklet called *The Greatest Gift of All* that tells the story of Jesus. Children who don't want the booklet still receive a shoe-box gift regardless of race, religion or gender.

Through *The Greatest Gift of All*, and a voluntary discipleship program called *The Greatest Journey*, God has used Operation Christmas Child to bring hundreds of thousands of children to faith in His son.

Join us by packing shoe-box gifts. Visit samaritanspurse.ca/occ, or call 800-303-1269 for more information.

WorldServe Ministries Equipping local churches

For more than 35 years, WorldServe Ministries has equipped local churches around the world to be the hands and feet of Jesus in their communities. Our work is as diverse as our partners, but we are all united with one purpose – to glorify God. We do this by partnering, strengthening and equipping local churches in China, Vietnam, Ethiopia, Cuba, Vietnam, Myanmar and beyond. By supporting church-planting pastors and offering Christian leadership training and Bible distributions, coupled with practical helps such as famine relief,

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microbusiness, care for needy children, and community health initiatives, we are seeing communities change and the influence of the local church grow. The local church is making history in the countries where we work.

We are launching our second thrift store in Calgary, Alberta, opening in January 2013. The proceeds from the thrift store go directly to the administrative costs of WorldServe Ministries. Ultimately, our goal is to have all of our administrative costs covered so that 100 percent of donations can go directly to the projects. To find out more about WorldServe Ministries and how you can help, please contact us at 800-414-7788 or worldserve.org.

Wycliffe Canada
Giving hope for tangible change

The work that Wycliffe Canada does ultimately hinges on bringing hope to many individuals globally through Bible translation, community development, literacy classes, alphabet creation for oral language groups and empowerment of nationals to do translation work. These initiatives result in many individuals experiencing tangible and

hopeful change.

All these tasks are accomplished with less than ten percent of the donated funds staying in Canada to cover overhead costs. The remaining 90 percent of donated funds go directly toward international work. So, while this giving has substantial results, it also is facilitated in a responsible manner.

Wycliffe also offers hope for the future. By 2025, Wycliffe and its partners have an ambitious goal of starting translation work in all 2,040 remaining language groups that do not have access to the Word of God in their mother tongue.

By giving to Wycliffe this Christmas, you will responsibly give many individuals around the world hope for tangible change. Isn't hope what Christmas is all about? Please join with us today and help eradicate Bible poverty. By simply going to give.wycliffe.ca and making your donation, you will bring hope to minority language groups this Christmas season.

The Yonge Street Mission
What Christmas really is

"I get a delicious home-cooked meal with real vegetables, salad and pie. I sit

at a table that's all decorated, and I have nice people around me. I got none of that in the place where I live" said Bill who lives in a rooming house and cooks on a hotplate.

If you take away the trees, the Ho Ho Hos, and the nicely wrapped gifts, we can get back to what Christmas really is – simple acts of giving rather than receiving. We thank donors for every \$3.11 they donate, knowing that this Christmas somebody will receive a warm, cooked meal.

It can be hard to feel the *Christmas spirit* when food and presents are scarce. Thankfully, your generosity brings the community together as meals are served, carols are sung, and gifts are exchanged. Here, Christmas is about seeing Christ work on a grand stage!

For our community, kindness at Christmas time can leave a lasting impression.

"My son's birthday is at Christmas. At the banquet, the staff surprised him with a piece of cake and made him feel special. Thank you for the happy memories."

With your help, this can be what Christmas is every year!



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Church Planting or Disciple Making?

Life-on-life is key to our mission.

In the late 1990s our emphasis as the Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada aligned with the Discipling a Whole Nation (DAWN) church-planting paradigm. It was worthy, but somehow the message of church planting obscured the more fundamental message to make disciples who make disciples. Jesus never commanded us to plant churches, but He did command us to make disciples.

The church-planting paradigm has been strongly influenced by the church-growth movement of the '70s and '80s, and the thinking that innovative programming will attract people into our churches. The sociology of group formation and a heavy emphasis on marketing techniques have been strong factors in this approach.

Critics have said, debatably, that it's possible to plant this kind of church without making a single disciple, since the model depends so much on tapping the leftover elements of Christianity in our post-Christian society. The keys to growth here are adding staff, improved programs, more spectacular events and star headliners, whether preachers or musicians. Community penetration is not its strong point.

God's people in some ministries like this have been intimidated, afraid or uncertain how to interact with society and the larger culture. Outreach is delegated to individuals with special skills at creating attractional programs and events. As a result, engagement within many parts of society has been the exception rather than the rule.

The cost of making one Christian in North America has been estimated at \$2 million per conversion. Whether or not the actual dollar figure is correct, we must admit very few are coming to faith for all the money expended on the mission of the Church – that is, the mission given by Jesus to make disciples.

Of what does making disciples consist? Let's start with the principle that "like reproduces like."

The fruit of a disciple should be a disciple. But the North American Church has struggled with what I describe as the "step-down syndrome." In the step-down syndrome, the fruit of a disciple seems to be instead a deeper spiritual walk, variously defined. Likewise, the fruit of a congregation should be another congregation, but we have sought instead bigger buildings and budgets. The fruit of

a leader should be to raise up more leaders, but we have looked instead for more followers.

Sadly, most of our North American churches will go through their lifecycle and never birth one new congregation. Most of us will never be instrumental in seeing someone else become a follower of Jesus. Statistics suggest the Church here is shrinking.

Yet there is a great harvest in many other parts of the world. Why? The key principle one sees is life-on-life investment by a follower of Jesus in the life of another results in another Jesus follower.

Life-on-life investment takes us beyond the safe confines of a church program for church people. Let's break the death spiral in the North American Church. We can do it if we make some life-changing commitments and begin to put them into practice.

The first is to understand *our own apprenticeship with Him*. Our life-on-life yoking to Jesus can be summarized in seven points:

- I have begun following Jesus, and am depending on the Spirit of Jesus in my journey.
- I am being sent by Jesus to bless others and invite them to follow Him.
- I am learning to be like Jesus in my attitudes, behaviours and character.
- I am learning to love God and others.
- I am learning the teachings of Jesus.
- I am helping someone and someone is helping me to be a growing follower of Jesus.
- I am participating in a community of followers of Jesus on a mission to the world.

This is our journey with Jesus. And step two involves inviting someone to join you. Apprentice this person to embrace this same journey. Train them using "deploy, then debrief." Invite them to learn as you learn. Bless them. Invest in them as you learn. This is life-on-life investment.

Step three is to repeat step two, and do this to the "fourth generation."

Evangelicals understand Christian faith is not a religion, but a relationship with Jesus. And the Lord Jesus, who called us into this relationship with Him, also calls on us to invest ourselves in the lives of others.

Start with one person, especially one of those God misses most. But, do start. **FT**

PHIL DELSAUT of Elmira, Ont., is president of the Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada, which has 150 congregations across the country. This column features affiliates of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. For a list see www.theEFC.ca/affiliates.



Of Motorcycles and Men

Growing up means moving on.

Motorcycles are mostly a man thing. Obviously I'm not referring to the tangerine or mauve step-through wannabes now scooting around so many urban streets. Those are mostly about transportation no matter who's driving them.

I'm talking about real motorcycles – machines that go fast and far, make a man feel he belongs, and tell everyone he's king of the road.

When I was 19, motorcycles gave me an image I desired. Driving a motorcycle proclaimed to the world that I was independent and mobile. It said I wasn't afraid of risk, that I rejoiced in the satisfying sensations of speed and embraced the thrill of living life in the open. Straddling a motorcycle gave me a surge of power.

Oh yes. It was a man thing.

I loved the freedom of being able to hit the road on a whim, jump on the kick-starter and feel the rumble responding beneath me. I loved to simply cruise, to ride gently along a twisting road, and then snap the throttle and leap forward with a rocket burst to blast past a dawdling car.

I won dozens of races against drivers who never even knew they were in a contest.

Embarrassing Lesson

In those days I loved to capture admiring glances, to feel the eyes of bystanders and drivers turn to the man on the motorcycle. I always imagined they envied me. Who wouldn't? What could possibly be better than cruising in the breeze with open road ahead, plenty of power on tap and a trail of worries left far behind?

One Friday afternoon after work I was really feeling my oats when I spotted a fine-looking woman in a convertible a short distance ahead. I skillfully timed my approach to glide alongside as we slowed to a stop at a traffic light. With a light blip on the throttle, I cast a macho eye her way as I shifted my weight and lifted my left leg to reach for the road. She was gorgeous.

Alas, the cuff of my jean caught on the foot peg and my boot never got to the ground. Instead, the motorcycle and I both toppled to the pavement with all the elegance of a dizzy drunk.

Mortified as I was, my body leaped immediately into action. I jerked the bike upright and was back in the saddle

in three heartbeats, eyes straight ahead and face burning red. As soon as the light turned green I accelerated off the line like a drag racer, and never looked back. The lady in the convertible haunts me still.

“Adultolescent”

These days I ride motorcycles differently. My pace is more sedate and my purposes tend to be more practical. I've even managed to shed many of the adolescent impulses that made motorcycles so dangerous in youthful hands. My competitive juices are more restrained, the seduction of speed largely satiated, my urge to show off tempered by the hard knocks I've suffered in the process of discovering my frailties.

I like to think I've matured, if only because the sight of men in their 40s and 50s still behaving as if they're in their early 20s is tremendously off-putting. Sadly, a lot of men do seem to be stuck in some “adultolescent” stage where they're constantly expending their energies to win unimportant contests, wasting time and money on expensive toys, adopting unbecoming airs and oozing attitudes better suited to petulant children.

In other words, they don't grow up. Sad, for it robs the world of the settled male qualities that bring stability and contentment to families and communities.

Maturity Matters

Yet some things never change. Motorcycles remain appealing and the open road has not lost its alluring call. The wind in my face still slices away the furrow of my worries and clears the clutter of cobwebs from my mind.

Image also continues to matter. Motorcycles still speak to a spirit of independence. They provide a mechanical illustration of a man exercising control in a risky environment, of finding his joy in the thick of the traffic on the roadways of life.

They make the rider visible and vulnerable so that trust attaches as to a weathered sea captain and self-confidence sticks to him like a label.

These are manly virtues.

Blessed is the man who demonstrates vitality and vigour without feeling the need to be antagonistic and aggressive. Blessed is he who feels no compulsion to be arrogant or sensational, but can relax in the contentment of his established relationships. Blessed is he who rides for clarity in the moment and the ongoing satisfaction of the journey. **FT**

DOUG KOOP is a Winnipeg-based freelance writer and spiritual care provider. He's posted more words and pictures, including some with motorcycles, at www.dougkoop.ca.

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– Bruce J. Clemenger, President of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.

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After Sun Myung Moon

Can the Unification Church be rescued?
Not unless God intervenes in miraculous ways.

Sun Myung Moon, the controversial founder of the Unification Church, passed away on Sept. 3 at 1:54 a.m. (Korean time). His death led to worldwide media coverage as did his funeral service on Sept. 15, with 30,000 mourners in attendance at the huge Unification Palace northeast of Seoul. Moon's passing had been expected since his hospitalization in August. He died of complications from pneumonia.

September was a brutal month for Moon's family and followers. Shortly after his death Unification members found out Moon's daughter In Jin, who led the American church, gave birth in April to a child out of wedlock. On Sept. 6, ex-members posted images of the child's birth certificate on the Internet, confirming rumours that In Jin's marriage had fallen apart. Hak Ja Han, Moon's widow, ordered In Jin to resign from leadership. In Jin had been very popular with most church members and the scandal has left many in shock.

Unification Church members also face an ongoing feud between Hyun Jin Moon, onetime heir of the movement, and his mother and siblings over control of Unification assets. Three years ago Hyun Jin (b. 1969) was cast aside as Moon's successor in favour of younger brother Hyung Jin (b. 1979), now head of the international movement. Hyun Jin rebelled against his family and argued *he* was the true follower of Unification principles. So far he has retained control of many Moon-based enterprises, but there is litigation over ownership in both the United States and Korea.

Most Unificationists are aligned with Hyung Jin, the younger son. He has already brought some stability to the Unification Church, reeling from his sister's infidelity (and related cover-up) and his older brother's rebellion. Hyung Jin is clearly favoured by Mrs. Moon (True Mother), who is now in the top position in the Unification movement, at least this side of heaven. Unificationists believe Sun Myung Moon (True Father) will lead his church through revelations from the eternal realm.

What makes all this drama ironic is that Moon has predicted the arrival of heaven on earth by Jan. 13, 2013. His followers have been working furiously over the last few years to restore our fallen planet by that "Foundation Day." Moon himself had a special focus in his later years on restoring Las Vegas. The Unification Church promised

a new day for Sin City and the rest of the globe. This seems rather barren in light of Moon's own family troubles, not to mention realities connected to Syria, the European Union, Libya, the U.S. economy, the Iran-Israel nuclear standoff, etc.

Can the Unification Church itself be rescued? Not unless God intervenes in miraculous ways. Moon built a false religion by totally ignoring his Christian roots and turning his back on the plain teachings of the Bible. Among his more obvious errors, he taught that (a) Jesus was not supposed to die, (b) Jesus was the product of a relationship between Zacharias (father of John the Baptist) and Mary, (c) Moon himself is the Second Coming of Christ, (d) Jesus is a servant to Moon in heaven, and (e) Moon's life is the ultimate source of redemption. He even started a campaign to have Christian pastors take down crosses in their churches.

If this is not enough, Moon had no limit to his ego and wild theories. He said in one sermon that God did not know what sex was like until Moon made love to his wife. Moon announced he had found a bride for Jesus and performed the marriage in the early 1970s. Moon claimed a few years ago Satan had repented of his rebellious ways and recognized Moon as Saviour and Lord. Moon claimed to be sinless in spite of fathering a child out of wedlock in the 1960s, a fact now emerging in troubled Unification circles.

Moon was a powerful leader, inspiring vast business holdings, media enterprises in Japan, South Korea and the United States (including *The Washington Times*), educational institutions and charitable foundations. Based on three decades of studying Moon and hearing him twice in person, I also think he really believed his own message.

Post Sun Myung Moon, we can pray that his son Hyung Jin will discover the Biblical gospel and turn Unificationists to Jesus Christ. In the world of false religion, miracles can happen. Hye Sung Gehring was a second generation follower of Moon. Five years ago he started serious study of the Bible and realized that Moon had misled him and all of his followers. Hye Sung accepted Jesus as Saviour and Lord. He also founded a blog (howwelldoyouknowyourmoon.tumblr.com) that offers a voice to ex-members as well as expose the corruption in the Unification Church. He is now in first year at Calvin College in Michigan, preparing for Christian ministry. **FT**

JAMES A. BEVERLEY is professor of Christian thought and ethics at Tyndale Seminary in Toronto. His PhD thesis examined the sermons of Sun Myung Moon.

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Magnificent Surrender: Releasing the Riches of Living in the Lord

Author: Roger Helland
Wipf and Stock, 2012.
113 pages. \$15.99

In our me-first society a life of magnificent surrender sounds about as exciting as an abscessed tooth. Nevertheless, Roger Helland believes magnificent surrender is precisely what is called for if we truly understand what it means to say Jesus is Lord in our lives.



Currently serving as district executive coach of the Baptist General Conference in Alberta, Helland has been a pastor, Bible college and seminary teacher, church consultant and seminar speaker. It is Roger Helland the pastor that readers find here, and he is well suited to the task presented in this work.

This book is a series of reflections on key texts from Paul's epistle to the Colossians, described by Helland as a "stunning art gallery of Christian theology, discipleship, spirituality and mission." In this rich display of spiritual truth, Helland seeks insights on practising magnificent surrender, which "releases the riches of living in the Lord."

As he unpacks the meaning of magnificent surrender, Helland explores the interface of faith and spiritual fruit, the meaning of truly living in the Lord, the Christian's relationship with culture, the need for spiritual renewal, the crucial role of prayer in our submission to Christ, and the need to live

authentically missional lives.

If you've pondered the all-too-often disconnect between Christian belief and practice, Helland's book will prove a good resource. With a masterful blend of instruction, exhortation, rebuke and encouragement, *Magnificent Surrender* reads like an intimate conversation with your pastor. When you finish the book, you will hunger for the experience where belief and practice meet in a life fully devoted to Jesus Christ – a life of magnificent surrender. –David S. Daniels

Not Sure: A Pastor's Journey from Faith to Doubt

Author: John Suk
Eerdmans, 2011.
211 pages. \$17.50

We only need to read of John the Baptist (Matthew 11:3) and the Godforsaken psalmist (Psalm 22:1) to see that doubt is part of the faith experience. However, doubt is not easily embraced in evangelical circles. The title of this book itself will raise a few eyebrows.

The tone is autobiographical. However, this doesn't mean it is written in narrative form (though there are large chunks of that).

Suk's frame of reference on his pilgrimage is the highly literate (and Calvinistic) Christian Reformed Church. He writes of being brought up in the doctrinal catechism of a parochial Dutch immigrant setting.

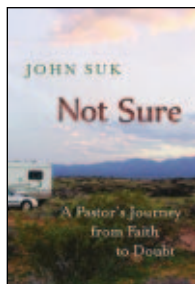
Armed with this highly rational faith, he finds himself questioning God as he visits the horrors of Hiroshima, Kenya,

and Rwanda during the years he served as editor of his denominational magazine.

Suk draws a parallel between stages of his pilgrimage and the historical stages of transmission of the Christian faith: the era of oral tradition before the printing press (his childhood), the literate and rational Enlightenment (his youth and adulthood), and the pluralistic post-modern era causing oral and digital faith (his present situation).

By the same token, he also rejects simplistic reduction of the Christian faith to a merely emotional "personal relationship with Jesus" or the health-and-wealth gospel.

Suk would prefer the word "trust" than the word "faith" to describe his convictions. You can understand how he perceives himself to be in doubt when he can no longer subscribe to the standard answers to the catechistic questions of his childhood.



We live in a world in which many enter through faith's door from backgrounds much less rational and instructive. Suk now gives himself the permission to park his faith next

to theirs. Most importantly, his God also gives him the permission to do so. –Pye Chew

The Church at Work: A Manual for Excellent Church-Agency Relations

Author: John Pellowe
Hignell Book Printing,
2012. 275 pages. \$30

John Pellowe is the CEO of the Canadian Council of Christian Charities, a Christian ministry serving

3,200 churches, denominational offices and Christian agencies. He brings significant and relevant expertise through the research and writing of this very pertinent book, based upon his doctoral thesis, for the benefit of the Christian church and Christian agencies in ministry together in Canada today.

I use the term "benefit" because Pellowe's objective in writing this book is to bring together the Christian church, in her various expressions, and the plethora of Christian agencies now in existence, for mutually healthy, supportive, accepting, respecting and vulnerable opportunities for doing ministry together.

It's that simple, yet that complex. Years of perceived competition, distrust, suspicion, misgivings, and downright opposition have existed between the Christian Church and independent Christian agencies seeking to serve Christ in the marketplace of ministry.

The short- and long-term effects have not served the Christian community well in many cases in its attempt to win the lost or build the Kingdom. However, in other instances this has not been the case, as with agency/church-developed ministries like Inter-Varsity, Child Evangelism Fellowship or Alpha.

Pellowe's goal in completing this volume is to help readers understand and resolve for themselves all the issues related to church-agency relations. Three generous sections out-



line (1) the complex nature of the church and its structures, and a model for church-agency relations, (2) the practice of successful church-agency relations and (3) an action plan. Two very helpful appendices are also included: (A) a paper presented by Dr. John G. Stackhouse and (B) sample church-agency covenants.

This book is well worth investigating for both churches and agencies who seek to accomplish successful ministry in a 21st-century context of collaborative co-operation and coexistence.

—R. Wayne Hagerman

The Third Grace: A Novel

**Author: Deb Elkink
Greenbrier, 2011.
306 pages. \$15.50**

To the dreamer, to the academic, to the romantic, to the practical, Deb Elkink's *The Third Grace* offers a story of grace for all.

Elkink's protagonist, Aglaia, struggles with a past that threatens to catch up with her.



Even fleeing the family farm and beginning a new life away from her roots cannot hide the glimmers of the faith she once knew and the boy she once loved. For

Aglaia a business trip to Paris becomes the catalyst for life-changing revelations, paving the path toward redemption and grace.

Elkink's pages drip with poetic language, vivid images of both myth and reality, strong character development and challenging questions.

The pace of this novel is more relaxed, allowing the reader to take time to consider these questions of faith, and journey with Aglaia as she is gently reminded of the One who refuses to let go.

When she strayed from her faith as a young girl, she chose instead to cling to ancient stories of Greek mythology as her anchor for life, mirroring François' (the French exchange student she worshipped as a teenager) religious beliefs. Elkink's description of Greek mythology reflects hours of research. This novel is saturated with a study on Greek mythology, art and even theology. You can't walk away without learning something new.

Yet the theme of grace and redemption is clearly the focus of Elkink's first novel. Aglaia has strayed from her Saviour, turning instead to worldly pleasure, searching for love in all the wrong places. How often do we fall into these same patterns? Elkink's novel reminds us of a God who pursues us. Even as Aglaia openly rejected her Heavenly Father, He does the same for us.

Most definitely worth the read. —Christy Dennis

Heresy: Ten Lies They Spread About Christianity

**Author: Michael Coren
Signal/McClelland &
Stewart, 2012. 256 pages.
\$29.99 (hardcover)**

Toronto author and broadcaster Michael Coren doesn't mince or waste words. In *Heresy*, his 12th book, he applies his uncompromising approach to sifting through a well-equipped

library to offer an easy reading answer to being "prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have" (1 Peter 3:15).

You don't have to memorize the Bible or read the 75 books listed in the bibliography to understand how to present a reasoned argument to some of the most common attacks on Christianity in contemporary Canada, but this book will whet your appetite to do so. If all that reading seems a gargantuan task, then take advantage of the fact that Coren has done it for us in this well-written, 12 point font, double-spaced book that facilitates underlining and note-taking, if you're so inclined.

If you've ever been challenged to "prove that Jesus existed," demonstrate the existence of a good God in a world where bad things happen, or

been confronted by bold statements that Christians oppose science and progress, you'll find the answers you thought you knew but had trouble verbalizing are laid out in a way you'll remember.

If you've been afraid to share your faith because "all the clever people are atheists," or already share your faith because you're not afraid of looking

stupid, then this book will help you develop and share your arguments in an intelligent way.

I have recommended this book to evangelical and Catholic friends, all of whom found it to be a first-rate introduction to Christian apologetics, written in layman's terms, with references that allow deeper exploration in areas of interest. The paperback edition of this book is scheduled for April 2013. —Don Hutchinson



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Contact Rev. Dr. Ernie Klassen at ernie@quintealliancechurch.ca or at 613-969-4473 for a more detailed job description.

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What Pastors Can Learn From Dentists

Professional sharing and collegial study make a major difference.

Our family has a pretty good dentist. We need him to be pretty good. My wife has terrific teeth, but the menfolk of the family – the three boys and I – well, not so much.

I know dentists, believe me. I have, in fact, an extensive (= horrible) dental history.

I sucked my thumb as a kid and exacerbated an inherited overbite. When I was eight years old, a quack of an orthodontist took a small fortune of my parents' money while correcting precisely nothing, causing me endless nights of pain from a badly fitted mouth appliance, and failing to detect food under the braces that, when they came off, had fed bacteria that ate grooves into the front surfaces of every tooth that was banded.

When I was nine, a friend and I were fooling around with his dad's golf clubs and a big plastic ball in the backyard. My buddy hauled out the big wooden driver and I failed to stand back far enough and – wham! It smacked me right in the mouth. Three hours in the chair resulted as our faithful dentist pulled my battered teeth back into line.

Another orthodontist started work on me in my teens, but then we moved before he could get anywhere. Finally, in my 20s, I told my parents I would choose the orthodontist and they would jolly well pay for it. They ruefully agreed, God bless 'em, and after two extractions and a long period of slowly wrenching my remaining teeth into place, I ended up with a passable smile.

All three of our boys needed braces. But two were also born with a missing tooth – and the same tooth missing from the baby set failed to develop in the mature set. So at age 19, after braces throughout their younger years, they got to undergo implant surgery and months more retention.

But back to me: fillings, crowns, wisdom teeth extractions, abscesses requiring emergency surgery, veneers (for those nasty grooves), and even an implant of my own – I'm

well on the way to my own doctoral degree in dentistry, given all the time I've spent on my back staring up at clinic ceilings while trying not to drown in my own juices. I have come to appreciate dentists.

I recognize a lot of dentistry is routine. But a lot of it isn't. There are all sorts of ways for the complicated ecosystem that is the human mouth (or even just my mouth) to go wrong.

I also recognize a lot of pastoring is routine. But a lot of it isn't. There are all sorts of ways for the complicated ecosystem that is the human heart, or the typical congregation, to go wrong.

But here's the difference. My dentist attends a study group every week to which members bring their most interesting and difficult cases. They bring full dossiers of information and help each other devise treatment plans. They discuss what they have learned in reading and conferences and online instruction, and

freely share their knowledge, insight, wisdom and even hunches. Then in subsequent meetings they follow up with each other, all to try to offer their patients the best possible care.

How many pastors attend similar groups? Ministerial associations instead are notorious for wasting time on small talk, petty rivalries, miserable complaining, doomed initiatives and, at best, predictable platitudes.

Where is the study? The seriousness? The collegiality? Where is the humble request for help, the pooling of expertise, the bearing of each other's burdens, the encouragement to keep honing one's healing skills?

Dental health matters, surely. But spiritual and mental and congregational health matter surely just as much, or more. And as I think of my dentist reporting with a smile (yes, a pretty impressive smile) how much he appreciates his study group – and how could he not, as colleagues help him succeed in a job he loves – I long for pastors to enjoy the same fellowship.

I long to see their wonderful smiles, too. **FT**

Where is the study?
The seriousness?
The collegiality?
Where is the humble request for help, the pooling of expertise, the bearing of each other's burdens, the encouragement to keep honing one's healing skills?

JOHN STACKHOUSE teaches theology and culture at Regent College, Vancouver. His weblog can be found at www.johnstackhouse.com and he tweets as @jgsphd.

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