

Faith Today

To Connect, Equip and Inform Evangelical Christians in Canada

MARCH/APRIL 2013



Faith Today

Now available
for your
Android or iPad

The Beauty and Pain of Disability

p. 18



**Evangelical
Perspectives on
Idle No More** p. 29

**Strengthening the Ties
Between Generations
in Your Church** p. 36

**Christian Law School –
Why Not?** p. 27

www.FaithToday.ca
CANADA \$5.40



Publications Agreement # 40069336



MEMBERS:

**YOU'LL
ONLY
WEAR
THIS
ONCE**

FaithLife Financial is a reliable not-for-profit insurance provider that helps people build solid financial plans based on Christian principles. Our financial Representatives get to know you personally — sharing their knowledge to create a financial plan that works for YOU!

Visit faithlifefinancial.ca to learn more about our investment and insurance solutions.

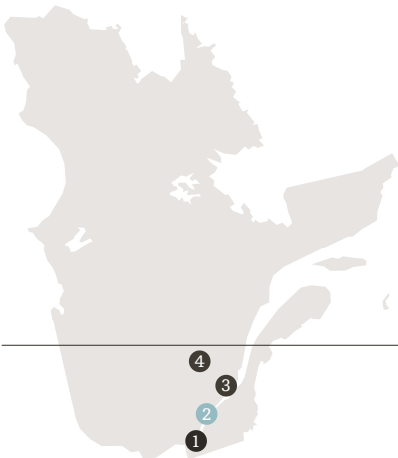
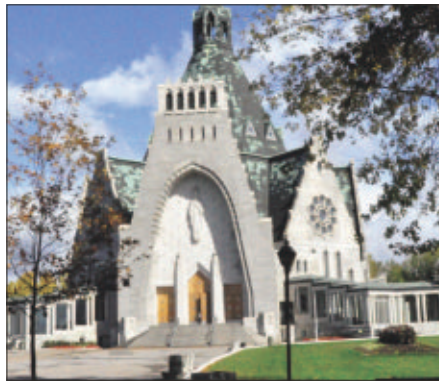


 facebook.com/faithlifefinancial |  twitter.com/faithlifefin

EXPERIENCE THE POWER
OF COMMUNION



OUR LADY OF THE CAPE



OUR LADY
OF THE CAPE SHRINE

Trois-Rivières, Québec, Canada

- 1 Saint Joseph's Oratory of Mount Royal
- 2 Our Lady of the Cape Shrine
- 3 Shrine of Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré
- 4 St. Anthony's Hermitage of Lac-Bouchette

QUÉBEC'S NATIONAL
SHRINES ROUTE

 QUEBECSHRINES.COM

Covering your Church... Inside and Out

church protection *plus*

It's our privilege to serve the insurance needs of churches and charities from coast to coast.

We invite you and your organization to contact us today and find out more about the protection, confidence and premium savings enjoyed by over 6,000 organizations across Canada.

Ken Hall, President



ROBERTSON  HALL
INSURANCE

1-800-640-0933
www.robertsonhall.com

CONTENTS

Faith Today



22

SUPPLIED PHOTOS

To Connect, Equip and Inform Evangelical Christians in Canada
March / April 2013

FEATURES

- 18** **Which Girl Would You Marry? How Christians Think About Disability** by Mark Buchanan / Worthiness is conditional, tied to performance, earned. Worth, on the other hand, is unconditional. It is rooted in transcendence. It is inherent.
- 22** **The Beauty and the Pain of Disability** by Stephanie Douglas / What is it like to raise a child with a disability? Where is God and faith in it all? There's much to learn from these five Canadian families.
- 27** **Christian Law School Proposal Raises Discussion** by Jeff Dewsbury / Some lawyers object to Trinity Western University's "community covenant."
- 29** **Listening to Idle No More** by Matthew Coon Come / The grand chief of the James Bay Cree shares why we need to pay attention to Idle No More.
- 31** **The Faith Today Interview With Ray Aldred** by Karen Stiller / Tough questions and answers about Idle No More from an Aboriginal evangelical leader.

IN EACH ISSUE

- 6** **BEHIND THE SCENES** / March – A Fresh Start by Bill Fledderus and Karen Stiller
- 7** **FAITH FORUM: LETTERS AND MILESTONES** / Kudos; Palestinian Interview; Youth Leaving Church; Thank You, Gail; Mental Illness
- 10** **KINGDOM MATTERS** / New Bible Miniseries Creates Excitement; A Church in Sarnia Fights for Right to Help Homeless; Unlikely Theological Library Grows
- 14** **THE GATHERING PLACE** / A Disability Doesn't Define a Person by Bruce J. Clemenger
- 15** **NEWS FROM THE EFC** / Evangelical Values Not Canadian?; Defend Dignity in Saskatchewan; Pope's Resignation Courageous; Religious Freedom Office Emerges
- 16** **Q&A INTERVIEW WITH CANADIAN EVANGELICAL LEADERS** / Q&A With Mary M. Turner
- 17** **ACTIVATE: CHANGE YOUR WORLD** / Undercutting an Anti-religious Undercurrent by Don Hutchinson
- 36** **HEMORRHAGING FAITH – YOUTH AND YOUR CHURCH** / How Your Church Can Become More Intergenerational by Karen Stiller
- 38** **WOMEN & MINISTRY ADVERTISING FEATURE** / Canadian Women Offer Strong Leadership
- 45** **WOMEN ALIVE** / Celebrate With Us by Michelle (Nagle) Arthur
- 46** **BUSINESS MATTERS** / Own a Business? Then You're Involved in Ministry by Keith Knight
- 47** **RELIGIONWATCH** / Newtown Darkness and Easter Light by James A. Beverley
- 48** **BLESSED IS THE MAN** / Giving Good Advice by Doug Koop
- 49** **A CHURCH YOU SHOULD KNOW** / Main Street Baptist, St. John, N.B. by Charlene de Haan
- 51** **THE NETWORK** / Ministry Directory
- 52** **BOOKS & CULTURE** / Book & Music Reviews
- 54** **CHRIST & CULTURE IN CANADA** / Are We Connecting? Or Just Correcting? by John G. Stackhouse Jr.

The columns God at Work in Denominations and Dispatches From the Global Village will return next issue.

Cover Photo: ERIN GORDON



PHOTO: THE CANADIAN PRESS IMAGES / DOMINIC CHAN

29

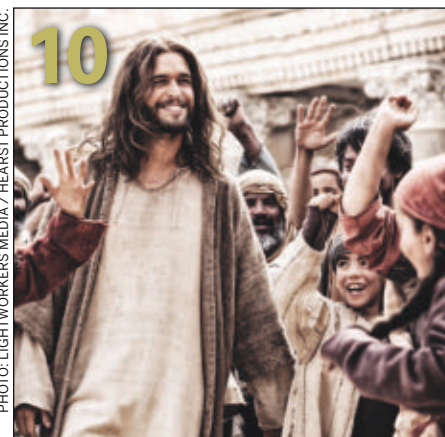


PHOTO: LIGHTWORKERS MEDIA / HEARST PRODUCTIONS INC.

10



March – A Fresh Start

How did it all come together?

As we began to plan this issue of *Faith Today*, conversations about euthanasia and abortion were on the rise in Parliament and the Canadian media.

Most of us can clearly articulate our opinions on these issues, and probably engage in ill-fated dinner party debates. But we began to wonder together about how clearly we have thought out our theology behind those opinions.

Why *do* we believe life – even life that is broken, imperfect, hardly begun or nearly over – is precious and worth protecting?

We turned to Mark Buchanan, a trusted B.C. pastor and author, to help us all think more deeply about what we might call a theology of disability – and do it in words that are beautiful and convincing. And he did!

We also knew theology done best is worked out in everyday lives, and so our cover package includes profiles of five families raising children who don't fit the definition of "normal," who generously agreed to open up their lives and their hearts to us.

This issue of *Faith Today* also introduces several changes and fresh starts, made from our desire to serve you better.

First, we're committing to offer a regular Faith Today Interview, a lively way to ask questions and get answers from people with important things to share with the Canadian evangelical Church.

We wondered where to start. Then, Idle No More broke

out across the country and the answer seemed clear. If every interview is as sharp as the one with Ray Aldred, we'll feel sure this department is succeeding.

We're also launching a new column called Business Matters. It will be written by a variety of experts, tasked to articulate the challenges and opportunities of living faithfully in the for-profit world.

Keith Knight starts us well, reminding and encouraging us to sharpen each other in these important areas.

Hemorrhaging Faith – Youth and Your Church is the final new department in this issue, a place for Canadian experts to share

practical tips to help us all respond to the challenges outlined in the seminal *Hemorrhaging Faith* report released last year.

We also have some exciting projects in the works for next issue, including a new column series looking at episodes of church history and their relevance today, a special feature celebrating the 50th anniversary of Trinity Western University and a special supplement about visiting Israel.

We pray you'll enjoy all this newness. Chaucer, in the *Canterbury Tales*, names "Aprille" as the month when folk "longen to goon on pilgrimages" and try new things – but we trust you won't mind if we're a bit early this year. **FT**

Bill Fledderus of Hamilton, Ont., and Karen Stiller of Port Perry, Ont., are senior editors at *Faith Today*.

Faith Today

Vol. 31 No 2

Publisher: The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, Bruce J. Clemenger, president

Senior Editors: Bill Fledderus, Karen Stiller

Associate Editor: To be announced

Production: Robert Robotham Graphics

Advertising Manager: Brian Shephard

Marketing: Gina Waugh

Distribution: Anita Kwan

Senior Writers: Jeff Dewsbury, Drew Dyck, Debra Fieguth, Alex Newman, Patricia Paddey, Karen Stiller

Copy Editor: Janet Dimond

Printer: Dollco/Lowe-Martin Group, Ottawa

Founding Editor: Brian C. Stiller

Founded: 1983

Member: Access Copyright, The Canadian Church Press, Christian Periodical Index (acl.org), Magazines Canada

Proud sponsor of: www.christianity.ca

Faith Today is a communications ministry of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada to connect, equip and inform evangelical Christians in Canada.

View and download complete issues for free at www.faithtoday.ca/digital
Sign up for free digital-only subscriptions at www.faithtoday.ca/subscribe
Download a free app for Google Android, Apple iOS, Kindle Fire or BlackBerry Playbook from www.faithtoday.ca.

TO GET A PRINT SUBSCRIPTION: Pay by credit card at www.faithtoday.ca/subscriptions or call toll-free at 1-866-302-3362 x236. Includes all taxes, digital access, print copies and postage: One year \$29.99. Two years \$49.99. Gift subscriptions and orders for addresses outside Canada are welcome.

TO COPY AN ARTICLE: *Faith Today* grants permission for any article to be copied for use in a local church provided no more than 500 copies are distributed freely. Such copies may also note: "Call 1-866-302-3362 x236 for a free sample is-

sue." Educational institutions should contact www.accesscopyright.ca for a copying licence. Republishing a *Faith Today* article in another publication requires permission from our editorial office.

TO ADVERTISE: Contact Brian Shephard, advertising manager, at 705-222-5025. Email: ads@faithtoday.ca. May/June 2013 ad deadline: Apr. 5, 2013.

DISCLAIMER: *Faith Today* does not endorse every opinion or event reported nor every product advertised. *Faith Today* does not endorse any advertiser, nor does it take responsibility for the accuracy of any claims made in the advertisements.

TO WRITE AN ARTICLE: Send a query letter first (editor@faithtoday.ca) describing a proposed manuscript. Unsolicited manuscripts and poetry are not accepted and will not be returned. Read our guidelines at www.faithtoday.ca/writers.



International Standard Serial No. 0832-1191
Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:
Box 5885 West Beaver Creek Post Office,
Richmond Hill, ON L4B 0B8

Kudos

Re: 30 Years (Jan/Feb 2013)
It's nice to see Billy Graham making it onto the front cover. I enjoyed reading your 30-year highlights story and also looking at how the cover art has changed over the years. Those editions from the '80s sure look like they were from the '80s!

You also had some great feature stories – including Emily Wierenga's first-person piece about her past eating disorder, Lisa Hall-Wilson's piece about Linda Lundström, and Debra Fieguth's article about the end of life. And who could resist reading Karen Stiller's review of *The Good Girl's Guide to Great Sex*?

Seriously, the entire package adds up to a really strong edition.

Jeff Adams
Calgary, Alta.

Palestinian Interview

Re: Dead Stones or Living Stones? (Jan/Feb 2013)

Thanks for the article on "The Forgotten Palestinians." Christians in North America need to hear this story.

Irma Janzen
Winnipeg, Man.

The interview with Salim Munayer left me with a bad feeling. It is good that he is working for reconciliation between Arabs and the Jewish people, but he seems to blame the Jews for all the problems. He goes so far as to suggest (without saying it in so many words) that the Zionists in Israel are as bad as the Nazis in Germany were.

In view of the fact that the Christian church has been

guilty of promoting anti-Semitism in the past, I find this trend today of great concern.

Arthur Joyce
Hanceville, B.C.

Youth Leaving Church

Re: Faith Forum (Jan/Feb 2013)
I just read David Rennalls' letter. I don't think he has the solution – in fact, his thinking illustrates one of the reasons our youth are leaving. He postulates only one problem: the Church is not preaching the need for salvation. The assumption seems to be that anyone who makes that one-time decision of repentance and faith, deeply understanding their need, will continue in the Church.

But how about the Church teaching better the things that follow faith? How about church members experiencing greater transformation (which does not automatically happen upon initial commitment)? How about churches better demonstrating

within themselves the gospel of love and reconciliation? How about churches sparing no effort to provide a place of belonging and engagement for youth and newer people of every age?

These things can't happen when the main focus Sunday after Sunday is on that initial call to repentance.

Lloyd Alstad
Stettler, Alta.

Thank You, Gail

Re: From the Editor (Jan/Feb 2013)

To [retiring managing editor] Gail Reid, we give our deepest appreciation. With a writer's

mind, a designer's eye and a pastor's heart, you have lifted *Faith Today* as a true servant of God's people, making it an accurate and interesting reflector of what the Spirit is doing in this place and age.

I have no doubt that each year there is always a question as to what the magazine has to offer, as a printed piece, to the wider community. I'm sure concerns about its viability increased as the electronic world seemed to eclipse the printed format.

Then came Gail. It wasn't long after she started as managing editor in 2000 before I could see in the finished product an eye for style and mind for substance. Not only did her personal skill and flair for writing give substance to the magazine, but her imagination for what it could do gave it presence. A magazine can be good and accomplished, but to get attention it needs to be talked about, a place people eagerly go for updates, to be pushed and informed on current ideas and issues. Also, she made the major leap of making it accessible electronically, a move not for the faint of heart.

Her life experience of writing and editing was of great advantage. She clearly loved the evangelical world, even with its struggles and internal disputes. However, she chose not to hang the dirty laundry for all to see. Her vision for *Faith Today* was as we envisioned in the early 1980s [editor's note: Brian Stiller was founding editor of *Faith Today*], which was to follow the footprints of



the Spirit, seeing His agenda and work in Canada. It was not that she was stuck with the old days. Rather she took that launching vision and turned it into what surely is among the finest of Christian magazines anywhere in the world.

Her effective connecting to this Christian community is evident in the varied people and groups who find within the magazine themselves, their world and the connection they have to this wider community of faith called Evangelicals. She wrapped her arms around them all and made them feel special and needed.

I am so grateful.
Brian C. Stiller
Newmarket, Ont.

Let me take this opportunity to publicly thank Gail Reid for her tireless efforts and superb work at the EFC. Thank you, Gail! I'm privileged to have met her on several occasions, and wish all *Faith Today* readers could have a chance to meet this joyful servant of God. Though I will miss her smiling face on the opening pages of *Faith Today*, I wish her God's richest blessing and congratulations on a job well done. "Being confident of this that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6).

David Guretzki
Caronport, Sask.

Gail Reid has been a supporter and encourager of Christian writers, and of reporting Christian news around the world

Continued on page 8



Salim Munayer is the founder of Mizlaha, a Christian movement for reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians based in Jerusalem. He also teaches at Bethlehem Bible College. He visited Kingston, Ont., in October, and Faith Today interviewed him. By Brent Lane and John Maclean

with honesty and grace.

Alex Newman
Toronto, Ont.

Gail greatly shaped the magazine over the years and improved its quality. She will be missed!



Gail Reid

God's richest blessings to her as she moves on to a new stage in her life.

Stephanie Douglas-Bowman
Toronto, Ont.

Mental Illness

Re: Understanding Mental Illness (Jul/Aug 2012)

Sarah Lampson's article is well balanced and written with class. She reveals the real struggles of people suffering the

effects of mental illness. With grace she encourages people in churches to minister effectively to people affected with mental illness.

I have suffered from bipolar effects for 35 years. What Sarah wrote is so true. I was first treated as a schizophrenic for 12 years. I completed a master's degree [and got married before the diagnosis was revised to bipolar disorder] and I started on lithium. Some fringe emotions remained like anger. In 1985 our only son was born.

Eight years ago a pastor realized something was in my past. After sharing it, Christ

exposed the roots of my anger and it was gone. Moods would swing every six months from lows to highs.

Time passed and divine healing resulted with more specific medicines. Moods have become level. Now, I appreciate my creative side and have good energy levels. Every day is more like that of a normal person.

Now, I am settled in God's will. Having two good pensions. Making the house payment and a few other bills. My wife works. We are still together enjoying life to the fullest. We own our home and have one small car. Life is normal, now.

Loneliness is still present. Much of the stigma is gone. I realize I did well over the years.

faithbook

Do you want to discuss articles from *Faith Today* with other readers immediately?

You can do it now at

[facebook.com/faithtoday](https://www.facebook.com/faithtoday).

Milestones

APPOINTED

Jeff Groenewald as president and CEO of Opportunity International, a charity which addresses poverty through micro-finance. Previously he served as director of development and strategy at Media Voice Generation, a charity that produces the TV show *Context With Lorna*

Dueck. He succeeds Bob Lawless and Paula Curtis.

Andrea Mrozek as executive director of the Institute of Marriage and Family Canada, an Ottawa-based research organization. She joined the institute in 2006

and appears frequently in national media discussing education, child care and women's issues. Past director Dave Quist, who helped start the Institute seven years ago, has moved to Calgary to become vice-president of the Manning Centre for Building Democracy.



Andrea Mrozek

Paul Feheley as managing editor of the *Anglican Journal*. He also serves as principal secretary to the primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, and as priest-in-charge at St. Chad's Anglican Church, Toronto. He succeeds Kristin Jenkins.

Christine MacMillan as senior advisor for social justice at the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA). Commissioner MacMillan, a Canadian Salvation Army



Christine MacMillan

leader with 30 years of experience addressing social justice issues on three continents, already serves as WEA's spokesperson on Human Trafficking (since 2008) and helped launch the WEA's Global Human Trafficking Task Force in 2009. Until July 2012, she also served in New

York as the first director of the International Social Justice Commission of the Salvation Army.

Melanie Humphreys as president of The King's University College, effective July 1. The King's is in Edmonton and has 700 students. Dr. Humphreys comes from the Vancouver area, but is currently a dean at Wheaton College in Illinois, where she has served since 2009, including as faculty in a graduate program. She holds a PhD in higher education from Azusa Pacific University and a masters in administrative leadership from Trinity Western University. She spent ten years as a vice-president and dean at LCC International University in Lithuania, Eastern Europe.

Richard Janes as president of Master's College and Seminary, effective June 2013. The Toronto institution began in 1939 as Ontario Pentecostal Bible School then Eastern Pentecostal Bible College. Rev. Janes, who has served as director of recruiting, communication and the "First Year" program since 2009, is the twelfth president.

Like being a dad, a husband, a published author and driving taxis for 12 years. Now, I am thankful and content.

Ross Edward Carne
Collingwood, Ont.

Letters to the editor

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

- Letters to the editor and writing queries: editor@faithtoday.ca
- Subscriptions and address changes: info@faithtoday.ca
- Advertising: ads@faithtoday.ca
- Or write to: Box 5885 West Beaver Creek Post Office, Richmond Hill, ON L4B 0B8. Fax: 905-479-4742.

RELOCATED

Sail and Life Training Society (SALTS), a charity which mentors 1,700 young people each year aboard two tall ship sailing vessels, has relocated its headquarters in the harbour of Victoria, B.C., after its former site was redeveloped. After a year of searching, SALTS has found a new home on Victoria's waterfront at 451 Herald Street, overlooking a marina that will provide winter moorage for its two tall ships. The miraculously small relocation expenses (about \$150,000) will be drawn from funds saved up since 2005 when the charity first learned of the potential need to relocate.

NOMINATED

For best contemporary Christian/gospel album of the year at the Junos, Canada's mainstream music awards: Colin Bernard's *Hold On*; Manafest's *Fighter*; Newworldson's *Rebel Transmission*; The City Harmonic's *I Have A Dream (It Feels Like Home)*; and Thousand Foot Krutch's *The End Is Where We Begin*. The award will be announced and given April 21 in Regina.

Church Administration is hard work... ...that just got easier!

Good administration means keeping calendars, published directories, schedules, facilities, ministries and websites current. And now you can...

with **Sunergo Systems**
FROM NCOL MINISTRIES



Sunergo is an online information management system for your church and makes many tasks easier, including:



SUNDAY SCHOOL CHECK-IN

With tools to print name tags, log check-in/check-outs and track attendance, Sunergo can help make Sunday School check-in safer and more reliable.



PICTORIAL DIRECTORY CREATION

Creating a church directory can be a painful process. With Sunergo's easy to use tools, making a new church directory can be as simple as choosing a few options and clicking print.



FINANCIALS

A common church administration frustration is dealing with end-of-year receipting. The giving module of Sunergo allows for quick and accurate receipting and reporting.



ONLINE NEWSLETTERS & EMAIL

Keeping your congregation informed through email can be a great way to keep interest high in church activities and upcoming programs.

Call for a no-obligation demo, and see what Sunergo can do for you.

CALL TOLL-FREE: 1-866-688-6265 (ext 3) OR VISIT ONLINE: www.Sunergo.net

New Bible Miniseries Creates Excitement in Canada



Jesus enters Jerusalem in a scene from the new five-part miniseries *The Bible*.

PHOTO: LIGHTWORKERS MEDIA / HEARST PRODUCTIONS INC.

Thanks to a massive international effort, including work by Canadian Evangelicals, a new five-part miniseries called simply *The Bible* will be released this spring.

The Bible is produced by husband and

wife team Roma Downey (known for her role in the TV series *Touched by an Angel*) and Mark Burnett, responsible for such megahit shows as *Survivor*, *Celebrity Apprentice* and *Are You Smarter Than a Fifth Grader?* The miniseries will be “the first

time the Bible has been done, Genesis to Revelation, in a docudrama form,” offering viewers a unique opportunity to really absorb the broader narrative path Scripture follows, according to Brian Stiller, global ambassador for the

Two Canadian Ministries Team Up for E-book About the Bible

When Annabel Robinson taught classics at the University of Regina, she never thought an assignment comparing the creation account in Greek literature with other creation accounts would stump a student.

Robinson, now the publications manager for Scripture Union (SU), received a phone call from third-year students who were having trouble finding the book *Genesis* in the library.

Robinson couldn't believe a young, well-educated person didn't even know *Genesis* was one of the books of the Bible. She later told that amusing but

disturbing story to SU president Lawson Murray. It triggered something he'd worried about for a while.

“For several years I've been concerned about Canadian society's decline and disconnect with the Bible,” says Murray. “There's little out there and [what is available] tends to be published for Christians already reading the Bible.”

The two teamed up and launched into writing and editing *Taste and See*, an e-book that provides an overview of the main Bible story, introduces 12 short sections of the Bible, identifies key themes found in the Bible and asks

thought-provoking questions. “We wanted to reach those people our regular delivery systems hadn't,” says Murray. “We were talking to the Canadian Bible Society (CBS) and they suggested we could do social media marketing. That led naturally to publishing it as an e-book.”

SU and the CBS have partnered to publish and promote the free e-book, gearing it toward those who have never read, or aren't naturally interested in reading, the Bible. It is available through



World Evangelical Alliance (WEA).

In an increasingly audiovisual world, he adds, "This will visually draw people in to read it more."

Stiller was one of two Canadians serving as script consultants on the project, along with Geoff Tunnicliffe, WEA's chief executive officer. Tunnicliffe has high hopes for the series' potential impact on the Church in Canada.

"It will give fresh eyes on the Bible to those who regularly read the Bible," says Tunnicliffe. "It will draw people who have stopped reading the Scriptures back to the book and it will encourage people who have never read the Bible to read it for the first time. And finally, it will provide an explanation of the Christian faith to those outside our faith." He is quick to add, however, that part of this potential will only be unlocked through a concerted effort on the part of the Canadian Christian community.

"For it to have the greatest impact in Canada," Tunnicliffe explains, "the Church needs to embrace this resource and support it in every way possible. If as Canadians we want more faith-based, value-driven and family-friendly TV shows, we need to make sure we get as many eyeballs on this series [as possible]. The TV networks and the advertisers will get the message that such a project is not only wanted but financially viable."

The Bible will be broadcast on History Television in early March, covering the five weeks leading up to Easter. **FT**

—*Ryan Paulsen*

Amazon, Kobo, Smashwords, or at the home sites of SU (www.scriptureunion.ca) and CBS (www.biblesociety.ca). *Taste and See* had 8,000 downloads in the first two months following its release.

Christians who have read it say *Taste and See* is well written and easy to navigate. Non-Christians who have read it appreciate how the e-book invited them to think about God – without being "churchy," says Murray. The only group he hasn't heard from are those who have read the book, encountered God and came to faith. "We're trusting that will be one of the outcomes," he says. **FT**

—*Robert White*

A Church in Sarnia Fights for Right to Help Homeless

SUPPLIED PHOTOS



Pastor George Esser and his church want to spend time helping people, not fighting for the right to help people.

A church's effort to launch a homeless shelter could affect the ability of churches nationally to assist those in need, according to Don Hutchinson, vice-president and general legal counsel for the EFC.

The case, before the Ontario Superior Court since July 2012, followed a November 2006 disagreement between the City of Sarnia, Ont., and River City Vineyard (RCV). The church's board of directors decided to launch a homeless shelter in their building. RCV, known for its humanitarian outreach to the homeless, installed beds and hung a sign outside, "Harbour Inn Mission."

The RCV site was zoned urban residential, limiting its use to church, school and parking. Calling it a "crisis care facility," the City issued a notice for RCV to discontinue all associated activities immediately.

RCV's senior pastor George Esser met City officials and agreed to apply for permanent rezoning and to renovate according to building code requirements, but contention arose during the application process. The City questioned the shelter's potential impact on RCV's neighbours. "We were told the city would not issue permanent rezoning because should problems arise, they would have no 'control,'" says Esser.

Any community resistance, Esser believes, is based on "fear and NIMBYism – not-in-my-back-yardism." He perceives the City's denials as infringements on RCV's religious freedom to help people in need. "We wanted to spend time helping people, not fighting for the right to help people," says Esser.

In spite of RCV's multiple rezoning requests, the City only granted temporary permits. When their third request was denied because a newly-built government-funded shelter was assumed to meet the City's homeless needs, RCV appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board. RCV's leadership dropped the appeal in April 2012 when they learned that churches have a legal right to offer shelter without requiring rezoning. They submitted their reasons, consisting of expert opinions and examples of previous national court cases supporting their legitimacy, to the City.

The City responded with a warning for RCV to cease shelter operations by July 2012, or face a superior court challenge for an interpretation of their submission. The church retained Klippensteins Barrister & Solicitors, and as of February 2013 has received the City's court documents.

Meanwhile, RCV, a church that has operated a food bank, soup kitchen and clothing distribution since 1998, has continued operations under the Charter helping from eight to 15 people a night.

Kent Elson, RCV's legal counsel says: "The materials from the City don't address the core issue, which is whether RCV should be allowed to love and care for the less fortunate and to follow their religious duties and moral beliefs as protected by the Charter. We think this is a really important issue."

The Charter of Rights and Freedoms provides for freedom of religion, which includes religious expression," says Hutchinson. "For Evangelicals, religious expression includes active expression ... such as caring for the poor and homeless." Hutchinson points out many churches offer services to the homeless in co-operation with civic officials without requiring a permit or rezoning to do so.

"Civic officials will watch for the outcome of this hearing," says Hutchinson. "The decision will also be raised in future court proceedings." **FT** —*Daina Doucet*

Unlikely Theological Library Grows

An office suite in a building scheduled for renovation – in an area of Hamilton, Ont., that's only beginning to show signs of growth – seems an unlikely place for a theological library. But it's here that The Scaffold, a collaborative library-workspace focused on theological and missional resources, is taking shape.


The name suggests a temporary structure, supporting workers and materials

about 700 volumes strong with more expected. Contributors can choose to retain ownership of their books or donate them outright.

For Kevin Makins, pastor of a thriving Hamilton church plant called Eucharist, The Scaffold benefits not just those who use it, but those who contribute. "It challenges us to hold our resources loosely, and allow others to benefit from what we have to offer," says Makins. "Perhaps more importantly, we realize that when we come together, it is possible to create something far greater ... a reminder that we are richer together than apart."

A cataloging website allows new books to be added easily. A volunteer manages The Scaffold at regular intervals each week, supervises and builds the collection, and helps participants use their time well – enjoying books, coffee and snacks that might be difficult to find otherwise.

To Dave Witt, TrueCity's network developer, The Scaffold's most promising aspect may be its transferability – the idea that similar projects could be developed elsewhere, if the vision and desire to implement them exist. Witt says spaces such as these help to build "practices that get people interacting more around study" as a shared spiritual discipline.

The Scaffold offers more than a quiet workspace. Less than three months after the principal contributors proposed this ministry to TrueCity and its partners, the library hosted its first event – a launch party for a book by Michael Knowles of McMaster Divinity College. Similar events are planned for the near future. 

—Matthew Forrest Lowe

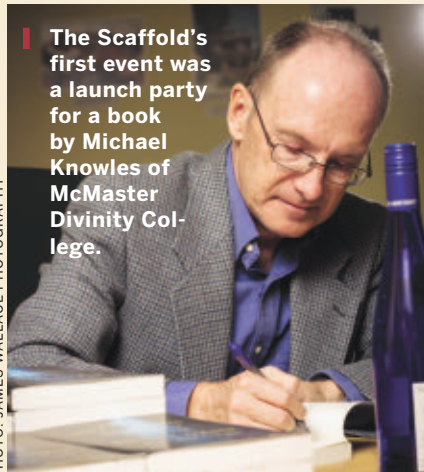


PHOTO: JAMES WALLACE PHOTOGRAPHY

The Scaffold's first event was a launch party for a book by Michael Knowles of McMaster Divinity College.

during phases of building or repair – an image appropriate to the roles churches and ministries play in Hamilton. The Scaffold operates in the office of TrueCity (www.truecityhamilton.ca), a movement of churches working "together for the good of the city," located in a building owned by Hughson Street Baptist Church, one of TrueCity's founding congregations.

The Scaffold is primarily intended for ministry leaders (especially those without office space) to work on individual and joint projects such as sermons or vision statements. The collection is now

Conference Addresses Abuse of Missionary Kids at Boarding Schools

Surviving a childhood of abuse at the hands of missionaries at a boarding school in West Africa has led to an unexpected journey for Beverly Shellrude Thompson.

Facing the facts of her abuse and how it damaged her life gave her the courage to join with other former missionary kids (MKs) in exposing perpetrators and calling for change.

President and one of the founders of MK Safety Net (www.mksafetynet.net), the Burlington, Ont. resident has been fighting for victims of missionary abuse for two decades.

In the early years, "Almost nothing happened," says Shellrude Thompson. But by the end of the 1990s, when an independent investigation confirmed stories of physical, sexual, emotional and spiritual abuse of dozens of children at the Mamou, Guinea school she attended in the 1960s, people finally started paying attention.

Slowly, realization in the Christian community dawned. If there had been widespread abuse at Mamou, operated by the Christian and Missionary Alliance, what about other missionary boarding schools around the world?

MK groups have grown up through social media, found a voice and begun working collaboratively. One result is the formation of GRACE (Godly Response to Abuse in the Christian Environment), an evangelical organization committed to



■ Paul Young

SUPPLIED PHOTO

Churches Pick Up the Hemorrhaging Faith Challenge

Churches across the country have picked up the challenge presented by *Hemorrhaging Faith: Why and When Canadian Young Adults Are Leaving, Staying and Returning to Church*.

Released last fall, the report surveyed 18- to 34-year-old Canadian youth, looking into their spiritual lives as children, teens and young adults, along with their church attendance patterns. *Hemorrhaging Faith* was commissioned by the EFC's Youth and Young Adult Ministry Roundtable, and sponsored by the EFC, Great Commission Foundation, Inter-Varsity Fellowship of Canada, Stronger Together 2011 and Youth for Christ Canada.

James Penner, one of the report's co-authors and researchers, led a seminar for pastors on the report's findings at Edmonton's Mount Carmel Bible School last November – where Calvary Community Church pastor OJ Zerbin and elder Bill Fox realized they needed to do something with the information.

"Two summers ago, when I was sitting on the deck at the lake reading, God spoke to me," says Fox. "He asked, 'Are you prepared to sacrifice another generation?' My response was 'no.'"

For Zerbin the report "represents an opportunity, not just a knee-jerk reaction that the Church is in trouble. It's an opportunity for renewal, revival, adjustment."

justice and healing.

Finally, "It seems we're on the cusp of some real change," says Shellrude Thompson.

MK Safety Net is a bilateral organization with five Canadian board members who hope to establish a Canadian-registered charity, says Linda Tripp, a former vice-president of World Vision Canada and an MKSN board member.

A Chicago conference April 19-21 will address many of the issues faced by survivors. The theme "Unexpected Journey" refers to the very difficult road survivors have travelled throughout their lives as well as the journey of healing, Tripp explains.

Paul Young (author of *The Shack*) will be the keynote speaker at the conference, himself a survivor of sexual abuse at a missionary boarding school in Indonesia. "He spent 11 years in counselling," Tripp notes. *The Shack* grew out of Young's own healing journey.

Helping past generations of MKs who are still suffering the traumatic effects of abuse is one thing. Recognizing there are still children at risk, despite widespread changes, gives organizations like MK Safety Net momentum to keep going.

"There are still about 18,000 children in missionary-owned and operated schools," says Shellrude Thompson. Some are day students, but many still board.

And that's part of the ongoing journey, says Tripp – putting into place policies and procedures that make sure no child of parents serving in missions has to be abused again. **FT** *—Debra Fieguth*

Do you have a Kingdom Matters story to share? Email us at editor@faithtoday.ca.

That opportunity came in the shape of a three-day workshop for the congregation in February. The workshop examined the cultural shifts needed to move from a fragmented, isolated and consumer-driven ethos for youth to a culture with more meaning. The workshop also presented the outcomes of the *Hemorrhaging Faith* report, and strategies to engage and retain youth and young adults.

"It's the beginning of a conversation that needs to happen in leadership teams," says Zerbin. "One weekend alone won't frame the entire conversation, but it's a beginning. For me, as a pastor, it's a chance to actively seek the Lord for what's next in our context."

Seminars like the one hosted by Edmonton's Calvary Community Church are popping up across the country. Other

recent workshops include:

Hebron Christian Reformed Church in Whitby, Ont. held an interdenominational conversation in early February led by Daryl Stogryn from Youth for Christ Canada, one of the report's partners.

Two more February seminars were led by EFC director of Research and Media Relations Rick Hiemstra – one in Brighton, Ont., and the other in Cobourg, Ont.

Zerbin's aware that as churches look into "what's next," the results may "not be comfortable for the institution and status quo. What is the best answer? We don't have it today. But the statistics show the current process and structure hasn't worked as well as we'd hoped." **FT** *—Robert White*

Manitoba Musician Balances Ministry and Music



PHOTO: RUSS DUECK

The Color, comprised of James Shiels, Gabe Boschmann, Jordan Janzen, Tyler Martens and Larry Abrams, has been nominated for five GMA awards.

Recording artist and youth pastor Jordan Janzen is blurring the lines between ministry and music, reaching teens who wouldn't normally attend church.

As the lead singer of Christian rock band The Color, Janzen has toured the country overseeing mosh pits and shredding guitars, or picking up awards like Best Song and New Artist of the Year at the GMA Covenant Awards last fall.

It's a life any musician would dream of, Janzen says it's just another facet of ministry. As the youth pastor at Westside Community Church in Winkler, Man., Janzen spends his time off the road leading students in prayer or organizing other youth events. Whether it's performing onstage at an awards show, or making thirty-plus ice cream sundaes for his youth, Janzen says he sees no difference between the two ministries.

"Music gives me a great opportunity to speak into so many kids' lives," he says. "I can connect with kids who wouldn't normally go to youth [group] or attend church."

And Janzen finds his music heavily influenced by his ministry with youth, seeing their daily struggle with identity and desire to feel valued, whether through popularity at school or acceptance on sports teams.

"Popularity doesn't last, sports teams end... only Christ can fill that need to feel valued," he explains, adding many of his songs materialize from his youths' stories.

The rising young artist says balancing a music career and a nine-to-five ministry position would be impossible without the support of his congregation and fellow clergy.

"We see God moving through his music," Westside lead pastor Konrad Loewen says. "We want to be able to allow him to continue pursuing music. We're about building the Kingdom, and that includes his music ministry."

"It's a tough balance," Janzen says, adding being on the road for weeks does take time away from church and family, but he feels God's calling at the concerts and awards shows just as strongly.

"Focusing on building the Kingdom takes obedience. But surrendering your will to God also relieves the pressure. We believe He has anointed us to continue in music, and He is opening the doors." **FT** *—Steven Sukkau*



A Disability Doesn't Define a Person

We are all image-bearers of God

The number is significant: more than 4.4 million Canadians report having a disability.

That means about 14 per cent of us have an activity limitation due to a physical or psychological condition lasting six months or more.

These numbers are from 2006, the most recent available. They have risen since 2001, when 3.6 million reported a limitation. And they'll probably rise even higher when the 2012 survey findings are released later this year.

Experiencing a disability is rather common, and will become more common as Canada's population ages.

Some of us are born with a limitation – it comes and stays – while for others it comes and goes. My family's experience is with the latter: a family member being in a wheelchair for over two years.

Those years were difficult, but we also witnessed the restorative ability of the body – truly amazing, as was the wonderful response of family, friends, coworkers and medical staff. Using a set of wheels for so long also brought us a deeper understanding of wellbeing, both personal and social.

Some aspects of the journey were minor annoyances. Yes, it's frustrating to wait while people without a physical limitation use reserved parking spots to run quick errands. It's also a letdown to make it past the curbs and into buildings only to discover you can't navigate inside to reach certain offices or washrooms.

Other aspects of living with a disability are more difficult to deal with, particularly how some of us relate to people with disabilities.

You would be amazed, if you were in a wheelchair, how many people talk slowly and loudly to you, as if a problem with your ability to walk means you must be limited in other ways.

This doesn't occur when someone is wearing a cast.

If you're in a wheelchair, many people avoid talking to you and talk instead to whoever is with you. Sometimes

they even talk *about* you as if you aren't able to hear.

Helping others learn to say "hi" and speak to a person in a wheelchair became standard fare for us.

Humour also helps. When people would say: "What's wrong with you?" our daughter's response was always, "There's nothing wrong with me, only my hip."

Disability does not define a person. Living with a disability does not mean you are a broken person. You are simply a person whose body doesn't function like other people's bodies.

Not only is your humanity intact, you become quite observant and insightful about life and people. You learn to live with daily disappointment – sometimes because of the disability but often because of the way people relate to you.

Historically the spread of Christianity actually revolutionized how we relate to those who are ill or disabled, as Gary Ferngren documents in *Medicine and Health Care in Early Christianity* (Johns Hopkins, 2009).

The Christian understanding of our being – created in the image of God and of inestimable worth – changed how people understood personhood, charity and the care owed others.

Physical limitations don't lessen one's value – this is what Christianity has taught. Instead, those who are ill or disabled deserve compassion and care. Their illness is not their fault nor the result of their sin.

In suffering, Christians experience what Christ and other Christians have endured. Suffering prepares Christians to comfort others.

Love and care for others is both a personal and communal responsibility to be extended to those outside the Christian community – to neighbours and, yes, to enemies.

All these revolutionary teachings made hospitals an outcome of the Christian worldview. "Wherever a church was founded," writes Ferngren, "it became a focal point for the care of the sick."

Having a disability does not diminish a person. Rather, such a person has much to teach us. As we care for them, it is *we* who benefit.

The next time you see someone in a wheelchair, look them in the eye and talk with them as you would any other image-bearer of God. Ask them about their wheels, but also about their dreams and interests.

You'll be sure to prompt a glint in their eye as they recognize someone who is interested in them beyond their disability. **BT**



Together for influence, impact and identity

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

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

Evangelical Values Not Canadian?

Should NDP Leader Thomas Mulcair apologize? When media started reporting on Crossroads, an EFC affiliate which gets government funding for digging wells in Uganda, Mulcair slammed “these types of evangelical groups with vision that goes completely against not only Canadian values, but Canadian law.” EFC Vice-President Don Hutchinson explored the issue at www.theEFC.ca/ActivateCFPL (see posts on Feb. 11 and 15) and in other media appearances.

Other blogs at ActivateCFPL address the controversy over a law school at the EFC affiliate Trinity Western University (Jan. 23, also printed in the *National Post*) and the Idle No More movement (Jan. 10), among other topics.

Defend Dignity in Saskatchewan

To encourage the abolition of prostitution in Canada, the EFC is partnering with the Christian and Missionary Alliance, an EFC affiliate, in an initiative called Defend Dignity. Defend Dignity advocates for law reform and equips churches and individuals to get more involved.

EFC Policy Analyst Julia Beazley will be one of the speakers at two information forums in Saskatchewan – April 20 at Prince Albert Alliance Church and repeated April 21 in Saskatoon at Circle Drive Alliance Church. Trisha Baptie, founder of Honour Consulting, will share her story as a formerly sexually exploited woman. A forum was also held recently in Caledonia, Ont., on March 1.

Find out more at www.defenddignity.ca and www.theEFC.ca/ProstitutionLawReform.

On the Calendar This Month

At www.theEFC.ca/calendar you can see a series of Promise Keepers and Women Alive conferences, seminars from the Canadian Council of Christian Charities, a World Vision series with Shane Claiborne called The Upside Down Kingdom, and more. Find out what’s new in your area or to add your event for free.

Locations for March and April events listed there include Banff, Caledonia, Cambridge, Edmonton, Grande Prairie, Halifax, Hamilton, Lethbridge, London, Niagara Falls, Ottawa, Port Perry, Prince Albert, Regina, Saskatoon, Toronto, Vancouver, Waterloo, Winnipeg and more. New events are added every few days, so make it a habit to stop by.

Dialogue With Roman Catholics

EFC Vice-President Aileen Van Ginkel met Dec. 5-7 with a group of six Evangelicals and six Roman Catholics who gather twice a year to pray together, study the areas of faith and practice where we disagree or misunderstand one another, and propose ways in which we can work together in the future. The meeting included an afternoon when nine guests joined the regular dialogue members in talking about what

we mean by “being saved.” Another major study area is the importance of Scripture in the lives of Evangelical and Roman Catholic believers.

Pope’s Resignation Courageous: WEA

The World Evangelical Alliance wishes “God’s blessing upon Pope Benedict in his retirement and prays for wisdom as the leaders of the Catholic Church select their next Pontiff,” according to Feb. 11 news release at www.worldea.org. It views the resignation as a courageous move made from a desire to seek the best for the Roman Catholic Church. Dr. Geoff Tunnicliffe, secretary general of the WEA, is a Canadian who also serves as the EFC’s director of global initiatives.

“I have found the Pontiff to be warm and authentic in our meetings,” he says. “I appreciate his courage of ideas, even when they do not resonate with contemporary attitudes.”

A historic document developed during Pope Benedict’s tenure was *Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World*, a statement shared by the Roman Catholic Church, the World Council of Churches and the WEA. A bilateral theological dialogue of the WEA and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity will release its results in 2014.

Religious Freedom Office Emerges

EFC Vice-President Don Hutchinson was a panellist at the Government of Canada consultation in 2011 about developing a new Office of Religious Freedom, and now in February he attended the announcement naming Andrew Bennett as its ambassador. Bennett, a Roman Catholic, is dean of Augustine College, a Christian liberal arts college in Ottawa. He has a PhD in politics from the University of Edinburgh and a master of arts in history from McGill University in Montreal.

Two End-of-Life Cases

The EFC is awaiting court decisions in two end-of-life cases.

The EFC’s previously submitted written arguments in *Carter v. Canada* will be presented in the B.C. Court of Appeal the first week of March. This case is a challenge to Canada’s laws that prohibit assisting someone to commit suicide. Learn more at www.theEFC.ca/carter.

A different case, *Cuthbertson v. Rasouli*, was heard in the Supreme Court of Canada in December. The EFC intervened there to address principles related to disconnecting medical equipment keeping someone alive. Learn more at www.theEFC.ca/rasouli.

Prayer Alert: Colombia

The EFC’s Religious Liberty Commission released an alert requesting prayer for Christians in Colombia who have increasingly been the target of persecution by illegal militants and guerrilla groups. Recently a pastor and his wife were threatened and then murdered by these groups. Read more and sign up for email alerts at www.theEFC.ca/alerts. **FT**

Q & A With Mary M. Turner



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Mary M. Turner is lead pastor at Calvary Evangelical Missionary Church in Owen Sound, Ont. She has been pastoring for 13 years.

What is your greatest joy in ministry?

My greatest joy is to witness lives that have been truly regenerated by the Spirit of God, and who continue to be transformed as they walk in obedience to the Word of God. I have no greater delight than to serve those who have truly been transformed and who are fired up about living and proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ.

What has been your greatest struggle?

Ministry requires much patience and that we remain “steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord our labour is not in vain” (1 Corinthians 15:58). My greatest struggle has been to learn to communicate in grace and truth with those who walk according to the flesh rather than the Spirit. I continue to be reminded of my desperate need to be clothed in humility and to appropriate His grace that is absolutely sufficient in all things.

What is the best theological book you’ve read in the last year?

I really appreciated N.T. Wright’s book *After You Believe: Why Christian Character Matters* (HarperOne, 2012). It reveals the Bible’s call for a revolution – a transformation of character that takes us beyond our earthly pursuit of money, sex, and power into a virtuous state of living that allows us to reflect God and live more worshipful and fulfilling lives.

What is your greatest concern for the Canadian Church?

I love the Church and I believe in the Church, but I’m concerned that the Canadian Church has lost her way. We have made many fans, but few fully devoted *followers* of Jesus who love Him so passionately that their delight is to obey Him completely and follow Him sacrificially, and to appropriate His grace that transforms us to be holy as He is holy.

What book is on your nightstand right now?

The Hole in Our Holiness: Filling the Gap between Gospel Passion and the Pursuit of Godliness by Kevin DeYoung (Crossway, 2012).

What is your best advice for those entering ministry today?

Remember that it’s about “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27). Lift Jesus up, preach the pure Word of God, pray continually, and lead your people to pray and rely on the power of the Holy Spirit.

What are the specific challenges – and joys – that you face doing ministry in your specific place in this time?

I love the church in which I’m privileged to serve. Calvary EMC is becoming a community of grace and truth, and she is taking seriously the call to live as God’s Kingdom citizens under the reign of the King of kings and the Lord of lords. The challenge is to finish the mission Christ began and to move the church forward on mission so that every tribe, tongue, and nation hears the gospel and bows their hearts and bends their knees to King Jesus. **FT**

Undercutting an Anti-religious Undercurrent

By Don Hutchinson

We can contribute to a better Canada by patiently speaking the truth.

Canadians are told in the media – almost daily it seems – that Canada is no longer Christian, Canada is less religious, Canada is secular, and Canada has no place for religion in public life. These statements used to make my blood boil.

But a better response – for all of us – is to find in such comments the inspiration to speak the truth. When we do so together, we undercut this anti-religious undercurrent.

Constructive response has long been evident in the EFC's work. Consider, for example, how we responded to allegations the biblically based position on marriage is "homophobic" and unacceptable in contemporary Canada under our *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. The campaign to keep the pre-2005 parliamentary definition of marriage was a fight "for" not a fight "against," and the EFC made that clear.

One result of our intervention was the Supreme Court of Canada affirmation that if the government changed the definition, it could not require religious officials to perform marriages that would violate their religious beliefs. The court noted "religious freedom is broad and jealously guarded in Canadian law."

When Parliament changed the definition of marriage by passing the *Civil Marriage Act* in 2005, it declared in the legislation, "Nothing in this Act affects the guarantee of freedom of conscience and religion and, in particular, the freedom of members of religious groups to hold and declare their religious beliefs," and "It is not against the public interest to

hold and publicly express diverse views on marriage."

More recently, in EFC presentations on proposed anti-bullying legislation in Ontario, we expressed interest for all students, concerned the emphasis on gay and lesbian students detracted from the needs of more than 90 per cent of those who experience bullying in Canadian schools.

We directly confronted the continuing improper use of the word "homophobic" as a slur in public debate, including in the media and political speeches. We did so before government as well as in the media, including my article "Is It Homophobic in Here or Is It Just Me?" that was linked to a *National Post* homepage story in May 2012.

Good news! We have contributed to a righting of this bias. In December 2012 the Associated Press, one of the world's oldest (est. 1846) and most respected standard setters in journalism,

changed its style guide. The AP states the word "homophobia" is not to be used in political or social contexts because its use has been imprecise and inaccurate.

Another oft-repeated mis-statement concerns "the separation of church and state," a legal doctrine in the United States based on their constitution. This concept was intended to protect churches from interference by the state. Ironically most people who raise the subject in Canada today want to suggest just the opposite



Don Hutchinson

– that the government needs to somehow be protected from the influence of churches!

In Canadian legal history our churches too were protected from the interference of government. This protection was affirmed in the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, which lists "freedom of conscience and religion" as the first of the fundamental freedoms

Canadians enjoy. The Supreme Court of Canada has interpreted this constitutional guarantee to apply both to individuals and religious communities, including educational and service institutions as well as congregations.

The court has also affirmed that Canadians can't be disqualified from participating in developing public policy because of our religious beliefs. Canadian religious individuals and organizations are welcome to engage in Canadian politics and public policy, as well as work co-operatively with government as appropriate to accomplish its purposes.

It's up to all Christians to ensure anti-religious undercurrents are not permitted to cut away at truth. We need to be attentive to and engaged in the world around us, or such undercurrents may undermine our very presence. **FT**

We directly confronted the continuing improper use of the word "homophobic" as a slur in public debate, including in the media and political speeches.

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.



Which Girl Would You Marry?

How Christians Think About Disability

By Mark Buchanan

I recently preached at a large church in Toronto. My text – John 5, where Jesus leaves a church banquet (a temple feast to be perfectly accurate) and travels to the rough part of town. He goes to the pool of Bethesda. “Here,” John says, “a great number of disabled people used to lie – the blind, the lame, the paralyzed.”

What unnerved me, long before I got up to preach, were Doug and Darlene. They’re a married couple in their 40s. Doug is an accomplished poet. Darlene can’t stop smiling. Both are in powered wheelchairs. As the music played they wove and veered in the space between the platform and the pews, carving exquisite arabesques of choreography in their wheelchairs. They were dancing before the Lord, like David leaping before the ark, like Miriam twirling and shaking her tambourine at the edge of the sea. Doug and Darlene offered their bodies as living sacrifices to God, holy and pleasing. My heart, not just my lips, sang at the sight.

That half hour was the purest act of worship I’ve ever seen.

So when I stood up to preach and asked the question Jesus asks the invalid in John 5, “Do you want to get well?” (“Are you willing to be whole?” is closer to the Greek), I was already

troubled by deeper questions. What *is* wellness? What *does* wholeness look like?

But God hadn’t finished His lesson with me yet.

In the church’s basement, between the services, I joined a class of adults with various disabilities.

There was (and here I change the names) Billy, with Down Syndrome, who is funny and charming and deeply tender.

There was Roger, who knew all the answers to every question, but whose tongue twists back on itself so his speech garbles, though several people understood him clear enough.

And there was Teddy, sweet and shy as a little child, and has earned three degrees – in law, Hebrew and biblical studies.

I went back upstairs, back to the “temple,” to preach a second time.

One of the mysteries of that story in John 5 is there are many people at the pool with disabilities, yet Jesus chose only one man, and a reluctant one at that, to heal. In the first service I wondered out loud about this, and offered a few thoughts. In the second service I wondered out loud about it again, but this time said, “I just spent time in your church basement with about 15 people with disabilities. I was in the presence of a deeper wholeness than



PHOTO: ERIN GORDON

I've ever known. So I wonder if Jesus looked at all the people at that pool, and chose one man to heal because he was the only one who wasn't whole yet."

What Does It Mean to Be Fully Alive?

"The glory of God," the church father Irenaeus said, "is a man fully alive."

That puts the matter succinctly. But what does he mean, *fully alive*?

Most theories of personhood try to locate human uniqueness in one or a combination of three things – our potentiality, relationality or functionality.

It's what we might become, or who we know or what we do. But all theories take their cues from a sentiment close to that of Irenaeus – humanness is discerned by studying humans at their best, in our hints of perfection.

"I was made for this," we say while base diving, or long distance running, or spinning complex algorithms, or teaching children how to use a microscope, or eating Thanksgiving dinner with loved ones. *When I run, we say, or I make a perfect chai latte, or I decode a computer virus, or I preach a sermon, or I*

embrace my daughter, I feel God's pleasure.

The glory of God is a man fully alive.

But an irony lurks here. We're saved by a man who was fully dead and made fully alive, by He who was "... pierced for our transgressions ... crushed for our iniquities" (Isaiah 53:5). A man first had to be broken and killed – utterly disabled – for any of us to be made fully alive.

And as we step into the life that man gives us, we find another irony. "We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body" (2 Corinthians 4:10).

A Christian theory of personhood must incorporate a larger reality. It must include brokenness, loneliness, hiddenness. It must see beauty in limitation and redemptive purpose in suffering. It must embrace the deep value of those whose life, by birth or injury or illness, is severely, perhaps permanently, curtailed.

It must find beauty – indeed, glory – in the least of these.

It must see wholeness where at first we see only disability.

It's not that Irenaeus was wrong. It's just that we tend to backfill his insight with modern philosophical assumptions, two especially – hedonism or utilitarianism. We presuppose a pleasure

principle or a work ethic. To be fully alive, we think, you must be having fun or you must be useful. Otherwise, what good are you? Much, it turns out.

The Mephibosheth Challenge

A man with a disability figures prominently in the story of King David. It's Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son, Saul's grandson. When Mephibosheth was a lad, his nursemaid, in panicked flight, dropped him on his head. That inflicted a brain injury that rendered him lame in both feet. Whether he also suffered mental diminishment – he seems shrewd enough and can hold his own in conversation – is unclear. But the point in the story is that he's a young man without prospects. His injury makes him useless, and his uselessness (plus his political lineage) puts him at risk.

Most of us, to some extent, tie human value to productivity. Most of us have a deep pulse of utilitarianism and hedonism beneath our skin. And so we avoid the man in the wheelchair. We resent having to care for those who can't give back or whose presence complicates matters. We have no room at the table for Mephibosheth.

But not David.

His motives, to be sure, are not purely altruistic – he's making good on an old promise to Jonathan, and in some ways consolidating his authority over the northern kingdom. But the end result is the same. He regally honours and lavishly provides for Mephibosheth. Not because of what Mephibosheth can do for him, but solely because of who Mephibosheth is – a prince's son, a king's grandson, a loyal friend's flesh and blood.

Mephibosheth is someone David loves for the sake of his friend, a friend who protected and aided him at his most vulnerable. Loving Mephibosheth is David's way of loving Jonathan, of thanking him, of joining his heart with him.

This perspective is the beginning place of a Christian view of personhood. We care for all people regardless of what they can or can not do, simply because human worth is independent of human usefulness or "quality of life" (a treacherous little turn of phrase, that). Our true identity – our real glory – is unrelated to our physical or mental capacity.

In God's eyes our value transcends our ability. We are all, at least potentially if not yet actually, sons and daughters of a great Prince to whom we owe our very survival. These are grounds enough for showering kindness on another, from the least of these to the greatest, and even to the worst of these.

But that is just where a Christian view of personhood begins. A fuller view embraces the gift the disabled are to us. Those who care for the disabled all tell me the same thing. They receive far more than they give. Having spent just 30 minutes among 15 disabled people, I began to *get* that. The unrestrained joy, the unconditional love, the unreserved welcome. I gave nothing, and came away rich.

Who has the deeper wholeness here?

We're still, though, gauging human worth by some standard of usefulness, measuring it by some system of exchange, by touchstones of give and take. But here's the great secret. In God's eyes no one's worth is tied to their usefulness. We matter because we just do. We are the work of God's hand, fashioned in His image, quickened by His breath, redeemed or redeemable by His blood.

This is true of everyone.

And if we are going to speak of disability, are *you* not somewhat disabled? Can you do all things well? Are you magnificent in every aspect of your humanity? Brilliant, eloquent, radiant, resilient? Are you virtuous and flawless in all things and all manner of things?

I thought not. Me neither.

We Are All in a Ditch

Herein lies the very reason for the cross. Christ found us naked, hungry, thirsty, imprisoned. He found us in a ditch. He found us dead already. Unless He acted on our behalf, out of sheer compassion, our plight would be hopeless. "Take a good look, friends, at who you were when you got called into this life," the Apostle Paul says to the boastful Corinthians. "I don't see many of 'the brightest and the best' among you, not many influential, not many from high-society families. Isn't it obvious that God deliberately chose men and women that the culture overlooks and exploits and abuses, chose these 'nobodies' to expose the hollow pretensions of the 'somebodies'?" (1 Corinthians 1:26-27, the Message). And even among those few who are "the brightest and the best," awestruck admiration is not likely one of God's reactions.

Indeed, He pities them. He pities us all.

Thank God.

Which gets to the heart of a theological issue – the distinction between worthiness and worth. We often confuse the two. They couldn't be more different. Worthiness is conditional. It is tied to performance. It is earned. Worth, on the other hand, is unconditional. It is rooted in transcendence. It is inherent.

God loves each of us, not for our worthiness, but for our worth. Christ died to reclaim something of great value. He did not seek us to save us because we deserved it, because we were worthy of it. He did it because He loves us, and we need it – we were that disabled – and we are worth it.

That difference is all the difference in the world.

Becoming Whole

All people have inherent worth, no matter how damaged or hidden. But here we meet another irony – striving for worthiness often hides true worth. Trying to prove our greatness often eclipses our real glory.

Mostly, the disabled do not fall prey to this. Billy does not posture. Roger does not try to dazzle or impress or manipulate. Teddy does not fret over what you think of him or contort himself to fit your expectations.

Each is just himself.

It is enough. It is whole.

Christopher de Vinck published a book, slim but potent, called *The Power of Powerless: A Brother's Legacy of Love* (Zondervan, 2002). The book grew from an essay he wrote about growing up with Oliver, his disabled brother. Because of a prenatal accident Oliver could not speak, see or walk. He could not bathe or dress himself. He was an infant in a 10-year-old's body. He lived nearly 33 years.

Yet his impact on the de Vinck family, and many others, was profound and lasting. Oliver called out the best in them, their true humanity in kindness, patience, goodness, gentleness, generosity,

and above all, love. Oliver helped each of them become fully alive. Whole. And Oliver himself, in his twisted, withered, inarticulate body, was strangely and beautifully alive and whole himself.

Oliver was the deciding factor in whom Christopher chose to marry:

I grew up in the house where my brother was on his back in his bed for almost 33 years, in the same corner of his room, under the same window, beside the same yellow walls. Oliver was blind, mute. His legs were twisted. He didn't have the strength to lift his head nor the intelligence to learn anything.

Today I am an English teacher, and each time I introduce my class to the play about Helen Keller, *The Miracle Worker*, I tell my students about Oliver. One day, during my first year teaching, a boy in the last row raised his hand and said, "Oh, Mr. de Vinck. You mean he was a vegetable."

I stammered for a few seconds. My family and I fed Oliver. We changed his diapers We bathed Oliver. Ticked his chest to make him laugh. Sometimes we left the radio on in his room. We pulled the shade down over his bed in the morning to keep the sun from burning his tender skin. We listened to him laugh as we watched television downstairs. We listened to him rock his arms up and down to make the bed squeak. We listened to him cough in the middle of the night.

"Well, I guess you could call him a vegetable. I called him Oliver, my brother. You would have liked him."

.... Oliver still remains the weakest, most helpless human

being I ever met, and yet he was one of the most powerful human beings I ever met. He could do absolutely nothing except breathe, sleep, eat, and yet he was responsible for action, love, courage, insight When I was in my early 20s, I met a girl and fell in love. After a few months I brought her home to meet my family. When my mother went to the kitchen to prepare dinner, I asked the girl, "Would you like to see Oliver?" for I had told her about my brother. "No," she answered.

Soon after, I met Roe, a lovely girl. She asked me the names of my brothers and sisters. She loved children. I thought she was wonderful. I brought her home after a few months to meet my family. Soon it was time for me to feed Oliver. I remember sheepishly asking Roe if she'd like to see him. "Sure," she said.

I sat at Oliver's bedside as Roe watched over my shoulder. I gave him his first spoonful, his second. "Can I do that?" Roe asked with ease, with freedom, with compassion, so I gave her the bowl and she fed Oliver one spoonful at a time.

Which girl would you marry?

Today Roe and I have three children.

Which girl would *you* marry? Or maybe better, which girl, or boy, or man, or woman will you become? Do you want to get well? Are you willing to be whole? **FT**

MARK BUCHANAN is a pastor at New Life Community Baptist Church in Duncan, B.C., and author of seven books, including *Your Church Is Too Safe* (Zondervan, 2012).

DAVID CROWDER **ALL SONS & DAUGHTERS** **JEREMY CAMP** **FAMILY FORCE 5** **STARFIELD**

LEELAND **GUNGOR**

SANCTUS REAL **THE ROYAL ROYAL**

REND COLLECTIVE EXPERIMENT **TENTH AVENUE NORTH**

BERUNA
music festival

July 19 & 20, 2013
The Flats at Molson Canadian Amphitheatre

unite LIVE NATION cts World Vision TRINITY WESTERN UNIVERSITY

For info and tickets visit www.BerunaMusicFestival.com

The Beauty and the Pain

Inside the Lives of Five Special Canadian Families

What is it like to raise a child with a disability? Where is God and faith in it all? Our writer explores and finds there is much to learn.

By **Stephanie Douglas**

Wonderful Did Soon Arrive

It wasn't all of-a-sudden wonderful when Jonathan Sigmund Biggs was born. He was a one-in-a-hundred kind of kid, born with an extra chromosome. For Jan and Stan, his parents, there was the initial disorientation that comes when your expectations shift from having "this kind of life," into the world of raising a child with Down Syndrome.

But Jan's biggest concern was for her husband. She wondered how Stan, an intellectual, would ever get on with his son.

With Jonathan there would be no defaulting to philosophy and books. They would have to learn a new way of communicating. And yet, 19 years later, Jan says this is precisely where the gift has been. Jonathan speaks a language of the heart, and their lives have become richer for joining in that conversation.

Jonathan, a recent high school graduate, lives with his parents in their home in Kelowna, B.C. His face bears the classic Down's traits and his speech is difficult to understand. He is clearly at a different developmental stage than his peers.

What you wouldn't be able to guess are the passions and quirks that make Jonathan who he is. He loves sports. He has a superb sense of humour. He is a people person. He's a fan of Christian music and an avid UNO player. Jonathan loves Jesus. "He has emotional intelligence coming out the ying-yang," says his father.

"Jonathan understands kindness, love, forgiveness, all of that stuff," says Jan. "He's very aware of what's going on. He just knows intuitively."

Stan and Jan have seen their son approach strangers and accurately and ably address the reality others miss: hurt, loneliness, pain. There's courage about Jonathan. He's not afraid to cut to the heart of the matter. And he gets away with it. He knows how to read the emotional and spiritual undertones in a room, and when it is not a safe place to be, Jonathan just leaves.

Over the years his parents have come to trust his judgement

on that count.

For Stan and Jan raising Jonathan has been their equivalent of a Damascus road experience. Before, they thought they had an inkling of what God's love meant. Now, says Stan, he is incapable of doubting God's love, "because I have been loved by such a profound love, unlike anything I've ever encountered – present in a little boy who has an extra chromosome."

Before, they thought they understood Kingdom values. Then they met their son, who in his very being embodies what is really important – not acquisition of things, not achievement – but the expression of the heart of God.

What saddens them are the people who, unable to see beyond Down Syndrome, miss the capacity of Jonathan's mind and heart. "He does perceive," says Stan. "He gets more than you realize. He can work harder than you can, he can respond to direction as well as you can. Start by talking to him."

Don't miss out on the conversation. This is what parents of children with disabilities want us to know. Our lives will be richer for knowing young men like Jonathan, and our faith enlarged. As Jan says, her son forces us to rethink why someone is important. "Jonathan stands like a kind of sentinel against the prevailing values of our society. He's not smart, he's never going to be rich – and he stands as a benchmark against that."

What saddens them are the people who, unable to see beyond Down Syndrome, miss the capacity of Jonathan's mind and heart. "He does perceive," says Stan. "He gets more than you realize. He can work harder than you can, he can respond to direction as well as you can. Start by talking to him."

A Surprising Legacy

When their twin daughters were born three-and-a-half months early, worry became April and Jim Plasteras' constant companion. Doctors put Angela and Carly's chance of survival at 5 per cent.

"Every hour of every day we worried they wouldn't make it," April remembers.

With those first medical crises April and Jim began a long journey of learning to trust God. The path has often been difficult,



Jonathan Sigmund Biggs is a people person who has several interests ranging from sports to cars to Christian music and, above all, loves Jesus.

PHOTOS: STAN BIGGS

of Disability



SUPPLIED PHOTOS

Jim Plasteras with daughter Carly and family, coming up to the finish line in the Vancouver Marathon in 2007. Inset: Angela is the quieter, more serious of the two sisters while Carly is the social butterfly.



Lantzville, B.C. The twins share a suite on the lower level of their house with an overnight caregiver and their two dogs – Digby, Angela’s assistant dog, and Chloe, Carly’s spoiled companion.

Both sisters, now 25, have cerebral palsy, which has left them wheelchair bound and dependent on caregivers.

Angela is the quieter, more serious of the two, although, like her peers, stays well connected with friends through social media. She is verbal and kept up in school except for math, which she despised.

Carly is the social butterfly. Although she has limited vocabulary, that doesn’t stop her from communicating with warmth and affection. “Carly knows way more people in this town than all of

demanding they focus on one step at a time. But the views have been spectacular, introducing them to a landscape of courage and love.

The Plasteras family lives in Lan-

us put together,” April says with a laugh.

April is honest about the challenges of raising children with disabilities. It can be deeply wearying. There are days where getting everyone out the door is a monumental accomplishment. When the girls were little, it felt like they were constantly rushing to keep up with other families, while juggling medical appointments and coping with the next issue that cropped up. Raising a child with disabilities can be frightening, as there are daunting questions about your child’s future. “We found it safer to focus on the present,” April says. “To just deal with what’s here right now.”

Learning to live in the present has been a good coping strategy, but it doesn’t take away the worry. Parents, April notes, are programmed to make things better for their children. But there have been so many times when she and Jim simply could not make things better for their girls. The only thing April knows to do is to lay her concerns before God. “When I do,” she says, “there always comes a feeling of love knowing that God has taken it over for me, and I can let it go.”

April began learning this way of trust early on when the girls were newly born and in hospital. It was an overwhelming time. She and Jim couldn’t hold their babies. They were unable to care for their girls in the most basic of ways. But things changed for April

when a young minister came to baptize the twins. When it was done, she says she suddenly understood they were not alone. "I felt such relief. 'I don't have to do all this myself! God has got them.'"

While she is forthright about the challenges, April talks more about the rewards of raising the twins. And the joys have outnumbered the struggles. Her daughters have taught her lessons about bravery and perseverance she would never have otherwise learned.

This is a mother who experiences joy every single day when she looks

at her daughters and knows just how far they have come. "My heart bursts with pride because even after all the obstacles, they are patient, have tremendous empathy for others, are loving and sweet. What more could a mother ask for?"

April also speaks of the difference Angela and Carly make in the world. "Us being out there, it changes people," she says. Both her daughters were fully integrated in the school system and enriched their classmates' lives. It's the empathy and compassion piece that is so critical for children to learn, April says.

Although the twins are now out of school, they are still active in the community. Jim has even run marathons with each daughter, pushing a wheelchair in front of him. People came up to talk to them, wanting to know about the smiles on their faces. "I find comfort in knowing that our family has made an impact on others. You don't realize it, but people are changed because of your child. If this is our legacy, I'm good with that!"

Welcoming Community

Grace Brouwer is full of news. Her family has found the most wonderful church where her son John is truly welcomed. It's the kind of Christian community she and her husband Gary have prayed for ever since their son was born with Down Syndrome 19 years ago. Her gratitude overtakes the interview as she tells story after story of this church's gracious inclusion of John. This too is part of the reality of families raising children with disabilities – the longing for their children to be included, to find a place in society where they genuinely belong.

John is so woven into the Brouwer family – originally from Peterborough, Ont., – and their now California-based life that Grace barely recalls what things were like before his birth.

John is the youngest of four, and his three sisters watch out



SUPPLIED PHOTO

John Brouwer on his handcycle, a graduation gift from a friend.

for him in the way big sisters do. Between them they ensure their brother is dressed fashionably, as well as learning the life skills he needs to achieve greater independence.

And John, in turn, shapes them.

Having John as a member of the family has meant, among other things, that life moves at a gentler pace. "You know how people talk about taking time to smell the roses?" says Grace. "Well, we don't just smell [them]. We stop and look at them, and take pictures of them." Grace describes a family life that has stretched and grown to accommodate John's special needs.

Seeing that John is included in wider society, however, is not as fluid a process.

Grace is very much his advocate, accompanying him to his community college where they have taken ceramics and hip-hop. "The classes aren't set up for someone with Down Syndrome," Grace explains, and so she facilitates things for him.

This role of creating a space for John is an ongoing part of being his mother. From the time he was little, Grace has been involved in John's schooling and social life as a gentle presence, making sure he is not left standing alone on the sidelines.

"John has never been excluded," she explains. "It's just that he's rarely been included." She understands. Many people have never met someone with a disability, and they simply don't know how to relate.

This is why their new church, fittingly called New Life, has come as such a great surprise. On Sunday morning not only is John welcome to stand in a group during coffee time, but people ask him questions. They want to hear his opinions.

John has been invited over to more people's homes during the last few months than over the past 19 years. People are getting to know him as a real person: John Brouwer, car lover, photographer, drummer and kindhearted friend. "They treat him like everybody

“ I find comfort in knowing that our family has made an impact on others. ”

else," Grace says, and you can hear the wonder in her voice.

She remembers the moment she first understood that at this church at least, she no longer had to worry about him.

His college and career group were going to an amusement park during what was one of the hottest days of the summer. Grace didn't want to go, but she was reluctant to send John off alone. She had seen too many cliquy things happen in other social contexts, leaving her son excluded.

While dithering she received an email from a young man in the group. He didn't understand why she was so worried, he wrote, because John was with them. But if it would make her feel better, he would take personal responsibility for him and make sure he was okay. "I cried when I got that email," Grace says. "It's what we always wished people would be like."

It takes conscious effort for the Church to include people who are different, Grace acknowledges. But it can be as simple as having a conversation, even if you don't understand what the person is saying. "I've always believed that every single person is important in the eyes of God," Grace says. "If one part of the body doesn't work, you have to figure out how to adapt things so the whole body works together."

Sharing the Journey

Shannon Aziz remembers it as a comfort.

In the midst of the chaos of the early days of her daughter McKenzie's diagnosis and the endless appointments that entailed, somebody phoned her and said, "I know you have an MRI coming up, and I'd really like to come with you. I'd like to drive with you, sit with you in the waiting room, just be with you."

Having someone come alongside you is a gift, Shannon says, because raising a child with a disability can be really hard. And when things get hard, life is always better with people by your side.

Shannon lives in Port Coquitlam, B.C., with her husband Osama and their three girls., - Melissa (12), Olivia (11), and McKenzie, seven-years old.

The sisters are as different as siblings can be, but Olivia and McKenzie share a medical diagnosis - both girls have cerebral palsy. They attend school, which they love, and are involved in extracurricular activities. The girls are popular with their classmates, and they love going to their home church of Wilkingdon Church in Burnaby, B.C.

Olivia and McKenzie hit milestones much later than their peers, and there are milestones they will never achieve. Olivia is in a wheelchair, and while she understands everything said to her, she is nonverbal, relying on head and hand signals to indicate yes or no.

McKenzie is more verbal, but like her older sister depends on others to meet her basic needs, whether it's dressing, bathing, or brushing her teeth.

Shannon describes Olivia as quiet and reserved, and McKenzie as the tease, always up for fun. Both sisters love being around people. They would far rather sit with someone and read a book than watch TV. "They are really sweet girls," Shannon says. "I appreciate who they are and what they have to give, even if it's

just little things. They don't have to grow up to be a ballerina! They have life, and you don't need anything bigger than that."

Shannon describes their home now as a place of peace. But it wasn't always like that. In the early days, they were in turmoil.

"It was terribly lonely," she recalls. "It was sorrow. It was grief." She wondered how God could bring anything good out of the situation, even as she repeated to herself that God was good and God was true. Nor was there time to gently tend their broken hearts at their girls' diagnosis.

While other parents were meeting for play dates, their family calendar was jam-packed with visits to specialists and fittings for orthotics.

And of course, out of necessity, Osama had to go back to work while Shannon took on primary responsibility for Olivia and McKenzie's care.

It was the kindness of others that kept them going in the early



SUPPLIED PHOTO

■ Sisters Olivia and McKenzie Aziz are as different as siblings can be, but share a medical diagnosis - both have cerebral palsy.

days. Their families rallied to their side, helping out wherever they could. And the healthcare professionals were simply amazing. "They get it," she says.

Shannon speaks of receiving cards with little notes or emails that reminded her she wasn't forgotten. What did she and her husband really long for? Someone to say, "I'm here for you." While there have been some amazing people along the way, on the whole those were words they didn't hear very often during those early days.

Shannon says there is an invisible barrier when a family has a child with a disability. "People don't know what to do with us."

Maybe it's that people don't know what to say, she muses, or that the lives of families with special needs kids are so different that people can't relate.

Shannon says it's okay not knowing what to say. It's enough



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Emma Miles' fifth birthday celebration in 2011.

to begin by saying you are there and ready to listen. And to offer a cup of coffee. "We just need someone to walk alongside us," she says.

A Certain Calling

When Amanda talks about her daughter Emma, she speaks in the past tense. Emma had spina bifida. She had profound, global developmental delays. Emma liked warm water, bright lights and chimes. Emma could smile, and her smile was beautiful. Emma Miles died a year ago at age five of an infection her little body couldn't fight. Her death has left a gaping hole in the Miles' home because Emma was an integral member of their family.

She was God-given, and a clear part of Amanda's calling as a mother.

The Miles' household in Stouffville, Ont., is busy with three young children to chase after. The family is very involved in their Newmarket-based church, The Meeting House, and during the week Amanda and her husband Curtis juggle children's activities and jobs in the community.

When second-born Emma was still alive, things were busier still. Emma's medical condition meant that she suffered from seizures and required 24-hour home care. She couldn't swallow, sit up by herself or control her bowel movements.

Building a relationship with her was a very different process than with their other children because Emma did not make eye contact. She couldn't speak. But she could smile and vocalize, making

happy or sad noises that gave Amanda and Curtis a sense of her likes and dislikes. Mostly, "Emma was content, a quiet presence in our home."

She came along with the family everywhere, whether it was to her big brother's activities or to a cottage getaway with her parents' small group.

Amanda found out Emma had spina bifida while still pregnant. Although it was a surprise this news did not radically change her outlook on life. She and Curtis had always believed nobody was immune to suffering. It was simply that now, in raising Emma, they would have firsthand experience.

"My life is perfect. Now it is going to be more perfect," Amanda remembers thinking. From the very start Amanda had a clear sense of God calling her to care for her little girl. That clarity gave Amanda a sense of peace and purpose, even in the face of her daughter's enormous needs.

"It wasn't my job to judge other people's calling in relation to Emma," she said. "I just needed to know *What is God asking me to do in this moment?*"

Raising Emma changed Amanda's view of power.

As she dealt with Emma's endless rounds of medical appointments and constant physical needs, it became obvious how little control she had. But she realized she *did* have control over her reactions. When it came to medical decisions for Emma's care, she and her husband *did* have choices, even if they were difficult ones. Knowing she wasn't powerless

prevented her from feeling like a victim. The same held true when dealing with the responses of people around her. While the Miles' family was blessed with a wide and supportive network of friends, especially their small group, Amanda was mindful of how easily her feelings could be hurt.

Even in this year of grieving Emma's death, it can feel to her like nobody understands, nobody says the right thing. "But really, what is the right thing? There is a job for me to do to have grace."

The lack of control over so much of Emma's life enlarged Amanda's vision of what living under God's blessing means. "In the West we are so used to being like gods. If it's dark, we turn the light on. If it's cold, we turn the heat on," she says. We are accustomed to getting things our way. "But I don't think contentment is situational, and I don't think blessing from God is getting what we want." Our focus, she says, ought to be on doing a better job of loving each other, whatever our circumstances.

Paradoxically, as Amanda and her husband discovered, it is often through suffering that people gain a deeper and more meaningful understanding of love.

We all have struggles, Amanda says. We all see suffering around us.

And when suffering comes, it demands faith and perseverance. "When situations look hopeless, it's not our job to withdraw or give up. Our job is to find out what job God has given us to do, and then do it." **FT**

STEPHANIE DOUGLAS is a Toronto-based freelance writer.

Christian Law School Proposal Raises Discussion

Some lawyers object to Trinity Western University's "community covenant."

By Jeff Dewsbury

Trinity Western University's proposal to add a law school to its Langley, B.C., campus has resulted in a public conversation about the university's "community covenant" and its appropriateness for a law school that would train a modest number of the country's future lawyers and judges. Those weighing in include the Canadian Council of Law Deans, the Catholic Archbishop of Vancouver and the B.C. Civil Liberties Association.

At issue is the section of the covenant (signed by all students, staff and faculty) asking for voluntary abstinence from "sexual intimacy that violates the sacredness of marriage between a man and a woman."

Trinity Western first proposed the law school in June 2012, with applications to both the B.C. Ministry of Advanced Education and to the Federation of Law Societies of Canada, an umbrella organization of all the provincial law societies which will make a recommendation to the B.C. Ministry. Both groups are reviewing various aspects of the proposal, from curriculum and policies to faculty credentials and governance models.

In a move that attracted national media attention, the Canadian Council of Law Deans (CCLD) expressed concerns in an open letter to the Federation of Law Societies on Nov. 20. The Trinity Western community covenant definition of marriage as between a man and a woman discriminates against gay and lesbian students, says the CCLD, and may violate both provincial and federal law – and is incompatible with a law school.

"Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is unlawful in Canada and fundamentally at odds with the core values of all Canadian law schools," the letter states.

In an interview with *Faith Today* Bill Flanagan, president of the CCLD, said its 22 deans are not questioning Trinity Western's Christian mission, but the focus on sexual orientation within the covenant, which seems out of step with fundamental freedoms in this country. "It is possible to have a good faith-based law school steeped in Christian tradition," he said. "What we're questioning is whether it's necessary to have that provision to preserve the faith-based nature of the law school – we feel quite strongly that it's not."

The debate is very similar to one Trinity Western faced in the late 1990s. Then, as the university sought to open its own post-graduate teacher's certification program, it was the B.C. College of Teachers which took issue with the community covenant. That turned into a costly battle that eventually wound up in the Supreme Court of Canada, resulting in a ruling that enabled Trinity Western to certify teachers.



The law protects the right for faith-based institutions to hold to the principles of that faith, says Janet Epp Buckingham, who headed up TWU's proposal.

The court ruled then that the guarantee of religious freedom does allow a religious institution to require staff and students to adhere to the beliefs and practices of its religion. The court also concluded that religious belief alone is not a good enough reason to disqualify a religious school or its graduates, noting "the freedom to hold beliefs is broader than the freedom to act on them."

Unless there is "concrete evidence that training teachers at TWU fosters discrimination in the public schools of B.C.," the court said, "the freedom of individuals to adhere to certain religious beliefs while at TWU should be respected."

That earlier decision should inform discussions about the law school proposal, says Don Hutchinson, vice-president and general legal counsel at The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, an intervener in that earlier case.

"The notion that the establishment of a Christian law school would somehow compromise some kind of Charter-dictated secular character is completely wrong," he wrote recently in the *National Post* (archived in a Jan. 23 post at www.theEFC.ca/activateCFPL).

"TWU has other well-regarded professional schools: a teacher's college, a business school and a nursing school," Hutchinson adds. "If a new Christian law school is or is not going to succeed, the deciding factors should be its ability to meet educational requirements, and the interest of students in attending. The only legitimate concern the law deans should have is that a law school

at TWU will continue to produce graduates that correspond with the university's hard-earned recognition as one of the best in Canada."

The B.C. Civil Liberties Association (BCCLA), which supported the school in the past case about the teacher's college on the grounds of freedom of religion, has also entered the law school discussion. In a letter to the law deans last month, the BCCLA said it rejects the deans' suggestion that "conscience-based" universities are "disqualified" from "providing an accredited legal education."

However, the BCCLA is also clear that supporting the school's right to have the covenant does not translate into support for the covenant itself. In a post on its website, the BCCLA clarifies: "any decision to grant or deny TWU's bid to have a law school accredited must be considered properly on its merits. . . . This Community Covenant clearly discriminates against lesbian, gay and bisexual students. BCCLA does not endorse the practice of TWU in this respect and it is not our place to do so."

Dr. Janet Epp Buckingham, a Trinity Western professor and a lawyer, headed up her university's proposal. She reiterates that the law protects the right for faith-based institutions to hold to the principles of that faith. "If you read the community covenant, it defines marriage as between one man and one woman, and students are to abstain from relationships that violate the sanctity of marriage. As a religious institution we can hold to a historic Christian definition of marriage. [In this area] there's no substantial difference between a law school and our School of Education."

Why a Christian Law School?

Epp Buckingham, who studied law at Dalhousie University, and later worked for The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, also believes a law school based on a Christian worldview would add diversity to an academic environment where issues of faith and conscience are rarely welcome in open discussion.

"It's unrealistic to say law school professors are objective and don't teach from a particular perspective," she told *Faith Today*. Many law schools teach from particular perspectives, such as business law or feminist law, she says. "In Canadian law schools today, however, a religious perspective is not very welcome in the classroom."

A law school at Trinity Western would be different from its counterparts because it would, among other things, focus on social justice and charities law, says Epp Buckingham. The school will also take a more practical approach – focusing on "core competencies" – than is typical in Canada, meaning Trinity Western graduates will be more prepared to step into the articling (similar to apprenticeship) stage of their education.

Flanagan, dean of the faculty of law at Queen's University, says since the story became public he has been contacted by at least two Queen's law school graduates who earned their undergraduate degrees from Trinity Western. He was also contacted by a former Trinity Western student who is now a lawyer. As a gay student, this letter writer said she felt unwelcome on the Trinity Western campus, and as a result is encouraging Flanagan to remain firm in his view that the sexual orientation portion of the covenant is not a necessary component of the overall Christian mission of the school.

In contrast, openly gay Trinity Western communications major Brian Samberg spoke positively of the school in a Jan. 28

interview on CBC Radio's *The Early Edition*, telling host Rick Cluff "I most definitely feel welcome. When I first came I wasn't expecting the extremely positive response I've had across the board. I've been elected to the student association twice. People that I've expected would not be accepting have been. I've even had one of my professors, at his house, pray with me that I would come to accept myself."

In a Jan. 24 editorial "Why Trinity Western University Should Not Have a Law School," signed by nine law professors and lawyers and published in the *National Post*, the writers claim discrimination of the type found in Trinity Western's covenant leads to an unhealthy academic environment and, ultimately, biased professionals.

"In order to permit entry into a provincial or territorial law society the law degree program must meet national standards in its curriculum," the writers state. "Those standards require critical thinking about ethical and legal issues. No person can truly think critically from one pre-determined lens, in this case, a lens mandated by TWU."

Flanagan is not prepared to go that far, however.


"Not in a million years would I suggest TWU students or students from other Christian law schools would not make good lawyers," he told *Faith Today*, citing several highly respected Christian law schools in the United States, including Santa Clara. The CCLD "is just focusing specifically on this covenant, which we believe is extreme and unnecessary to preserve."

In a February letter J. Michael Miller, the Archbishop of Vancouver, supported Trinity's law school bid, citing freedom of conscience and religion as two important principles to uphold in the debate. "The irony of the situation – with those who are at the forefront of the legal profession trying to penalize an institution for embracing and openly practising its convictions – is disturbing," he wrote.

Ted Lewis, a political science major planning to apply to law school, says there's a difference between a formal pen-to-paper covenant and the more complex realities of relationship and life at the school.

"If you take the time to look at the community and how it operates, I would say 'No, the covenant doesn't cause discrimination,'" says Lewis, who also sees the proposed law school as an extension of the school's overall mission. "One of the primary advantages TWU can offer is a holistic approach to the law. The idea of social justice is something thrown around a lot today, but people don't always have a good grasp of it. Trinity's law school would provide a place to really study that in depth and help potential lawyers learn how to be in the service of others."

Flanagan also says he is in favour of putting faces to the issue. "I think it's important to remember there is a human dimension to this," he points out. "We're not wanting to exclude, condemn and be self-righteous here. The president of TWU has confirmed that there are gay and lesbian students enrolled there. Is this the message you want to send to them, that they are unwelcome there, especially if you look more broadly at the Christian mission of the university?"

"Even those within the Christian community have differing views," notes Epp Buckingham. "That discussion is healthy to have. Those outside don't always know enough about our community to understand how diverse it really is." 

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

Listening to Idle No More



PHOTO: THE CANADIAN PRESS IMAGES / DOMINIC CHAN

■ An Idle No More rally takes place outside the British Consulate-General in downtown Toronto as part of the Aboriginal Day of Action in January.

Matthew Coon Come is the grand chief of Eeyouch, the James Bay Cree Nation. He was national chief of the Assembly of First Nations from 2000 to 2003. He shares why we need to pay attention to Idle No More.

By Matthew Coon Come

A boriginal peoples' protests have dominated the Canadian media over the past few months. It is winter. It is cold. Yet indigenous people of all nations and ages are gathering in the rain and snow in unprecedented numbers all across this country, under the brave, descriptive banner of Idle No More.

These grassroots expressions of deep anguish, frustration, and resolve are shin-

ing a bright spotlight on the deplorable economic and social situation endured by so many Aboriginal peoples in this wealthy, land-rich and resource-rich G8 country called Canada.

Idle No More began as a protest concerning what I believe to be unjust and unwise proposed changes to Canada's federal environmental protection regime, contained in federal bills C-45 and C-38. These pieces of so-called "omnibus" legis-

lation – which have now become law – have radically reduced the environmental protection processes that used to apply under federal law. For example, as a result of Bill C-45, 99 per cent of Canada's waterways – the lifeblood of our nations' territories – have abruptly lost the minimal protection that previously existed under federal law for environmental assessment purposes.

Idle No More is saying that these

sweeping changes to federal environmental protection laws are a serious frontal threat to indigenous peoples, and to our lands and waters. Most indigenous nations still live in the hearts of our traditional territories, and many still depend to a great extent on the birds, animals, and other natural resources with which we share our lands and waters.

The Federal Government intends to fast track unprecedented oil, gas, mineral, hydro and other resource exploitation across Canada. The government wants to weaken or avoid any prior assessment of the social and environmental impacts. The adverse impacts will affect indigenous peoples more than anyone else. We live in and depend on the sustainability of our lands and waters the Federal Government is targeting for mega-industrialization.

Importantly, these legal changes affecting our peoples and territories were passed into federal law without the prior informed consent of our peoples, and not even with any meaningful advance consultation about our aboriginal, treaty and other human rights.

Omnibus legislation is not a new phenomenon in Canada. And legislation passed without considering the rights of Aboriginal peoples and over our objections is, sadly, not uncommon either. But the broad groundswell of support Idle No More has activated is new and remarkable.

The breadth and depth of this movement presents a challenge and an opportunity for all Canadians – and maybe especially for the Church.

Canada is a country of enormous wealth and immense opportunities. It is also a country that *says* it upholds certain admirable values, including respect for fundamental human rights, environmental stewardship, and sustainable and equitable development. This may have been somewhat true in the past, but the messaging is wearing thin.

There are over 600 “First Nations” in Canada, and over a thousand communities. The average social and economic development status in indigenous Canada is decades or more behind the socio-economic

status of the country as a whole, whether you look at health, education, labour market participation, life expectancy or income. Idle No More is saying essentially, “This disparity is obvious and intolerable. It must



Matthew Coon Come

SUPPLIED PHOTOS

be fixed. Now and for the future.”

Canada has a sophisticated system of governance. It has a constitution, laws, a head of state, legislatures, judiciary, governmental machinery and many other institutions of governance. However, amazingly, none of these many features of this Great

Country were designed or implemented with the meaningful participation (or any participation, actually) of the original peoples in this land, namely indigenous peoples and their governments. They have been imposed.

Indigenous peoples have been completely excluded, dispossessed, sidelined, oppressed, suppressed and ignored. Two orders of government, namely the federal and the provincial, each sovereign in their respective spheres, have carved up 100 per cent of the total jurisdictional and resource wealth pie, and written the rules to serve themselves, and isolate and exclude indigenous peoples.

The result is that settler society in Canada – French, English, European and others who recently arrived on these shores – is doing very well in our territories, while Aboriginal peoples’ social development is languishing and we continue to experience mass poverty and unemployment, underdevelopment and despair.

Idle No More is not making up this harsh diagnosis. It is fully reviewed and explained in the 4,000 pages of the 1996 Royal Commission Report on Aboriginal Peoples. It can be read in many judgments of Canada’s non-Native courts, and in numerous UN studies and reports.

Aboriginal leaders, me included, have warned for years that Canada is sitting on a social powder keg. The recent courageous protests by our grassroots people are

the inevitable outcome of long-term and widespread frustration, anger, hopelessness – and now determination.

Up to now, indigenous peoples have been expected, indeed told, to be patient and “realistic.” Indigenous peoples have been told the many solemn agreements they have made in good faith with the Crown over the last 400 years – our Treaties – are no longer relevant or meaningful, and are part of Canada’s heritage, but no longer really part of Canada’s governing policies and laws.

The message of Idle No More is simple: Canada must commit itself to a new, consensual relationship with Aboriginal peoples, a respectful, nation-to-nation relationship based upon the Treaties. The Treaties are the only alternative to Canada being a colonial power in its own land. The only legitimate way forward is for Canada to acknowledge it has *three* orders of government: indigenous, federal and provincial. These three orders must now fully acknowledge each other’s existence, legitimacy and role in the

Indigenous peoples have been completely excluded, dispossessed, sidelined, oppressed, suppressed and ignored.

future of this country – including full participation in the benefit and wealth that lies in every indigenous people’s backyard.

Apologizing for historic wrongs, important as that may be, is no longer adequate. All the apologies must now be translated into changes to the rules – and profound and meaningful changes to social and economic outcomes – so indigenous peoples can soon experience standards of living and participation equivalent to that of Canadians in general.

The alternative is continuing illegitimacy for Canada, gross social disparities and unrest because Idle No More is not going away.

As I see it, Idle No More also means Excluded No Longer and Included Fully From Now On. Only when there is profound change – including constitutional change – in the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and the Crown, and when the social and economic disparities have disappeared, will the protests and unrest become unnecessary. **ET**

The *Faith Today* Interview With Ray Aldred

It may have been omnibus Bill C-45 that triggered it, but the Idle No More movement clearly tapped into far more than frustration over the bill critics say weakens environmental protection and First Nations land rights.

By Karen Stiller

Ray Aldred is a member of the Swan River Cree Nation in Alberta, and assistant professor of theology at Ambrose University.



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Ray Aldred is a member of the Swan River Cree Nation in Alberta, and assistant professor of theology at Ambrose University. He is involved with My People International (MPI), a faith-based organization focused on developing the full capacity of Native North Americans.

Aldred spoke candidly with Faith Today

senior editor Karen Stiller about the passion – and deep frustration – behind the Idle No More movement, and why all Canadian Christians should be paying attention.

FT: Ray, what do you think lies behind the Idle No More movement?

RA: Most Canadians are uninformed about their own history. Years ago they were

apologizing for assimilation, yet in every omnibus bill the government has hidden some small kind of assimilation to force First Nations to assimilate into Canadian society. The government just chips away and takes away.

FT: Did the 2008 residential school apology by the government do anything to

With this issue of *Faith Today* we introduce a new and regular feature, the **Faith Today Interview**. We will try to ask the questions that need to be asked of the people you would like to hear from. They will be thought leaders, activists, writers, politicians, ministry leaders, and others who have something to share with the Canadian evangelical Church – and our country as a whole. We anticipate honesty, new insights, the occasional moments of discomfort and disagreement – and a great new addition to our usual roster of news, features and columns.

help the situation?

RA: It helped Aboriginal people to affirm their own identity – that they were right and the government was wrong.

FT: What do you think is the biggest mis-

conception non-Aboriginal Canadians have about First Nations communities?

RA: Jacques Ellul (a French philosopher and lay theologian) says that legality is when a government passes a law to make

what they are doing legal. Ellul says that you shouldn't ask, "Will this lead to something good?" You should ask, "Is this something good?" Most people don't understand that when the treaties were signed, the incoming Europeans colonizers quickly realized they couldn't afford to buy the land off the First Nations people. At first they were trying to buy the land, but then they thought, *We will tax the settlers and pay annuities to the First Nations.* At one point the government realized they didn't want to pay these annuities, and that's when they tried to do a legality. If you claim to be a follower of Christ, you can't use [the excuse] that the end justifies the means.

FT: If Ellul's question – "Is this right?" – had been asked all along, how do you think Canada would be different today?

RA: If it had been done right, you'd have something that honoured the treaties. There have been times when it has been good, The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples said we should return to the time of treaties because things were better then. Canadians start saying, "Oh, these guys are taking all our tax dollars." Well, that was always the plan. That's how they would pay the rent on the land. Now, Canadians are saying we don't want to pay the rent. That's a legitimate conversation to have, but you have to have it in the right way. Idle No More is saying you can't just keep passing these laws that chip away at our communal identity. And our communal identity includes the land. It's not unlike some agrarian communities in Canada, this idea of belonging to the land.
FT: Ray, it feels like a legitimate concern on the part of the government and "other Canadians" that in some communities the money sent there does not seem to be well spent.

RA: I have worked in a denominational setting where the rhetoric was that we have put over \$1 million into First Nations ministries with little results, and we can't keep pumping money into this. On the face, that seems to have legitimacy. But when I tell you that the money was sent over ten years, so it's actually only \$100,000 a year. And then I tell you that it was split between ten churches, so all of a sudden it's \$10,000 a year. Well, that is the same thing is in At-tawapiskat. There are two things people forget. The government says what the money can be spent on.

Egypt in Crisis: In an Islamic country, Christian Egyptians are a minority who face constant criticism. Many of these fellow Christians have very limited church upbringing and a very limited understanding of the Scriptures. Due to much poverty, they are desperate for Bibles and Scriptures for children.

Bible Month



Egypt in Crisis

Help Egyptian youth receive the Bible's good news



Canadian Bible Society

The Word. For Life.

Toll Free: 1.800.465.2425

www.biblesociety.ca

Your \$12 a month brings
the Bible to Egyptian youth
hungry for its message
EVERY MONTH

There's one reserve in Saskatchewan that has \$20 million in a bank account, but can only use it to buy back land that was wrongfully taken from them. The government put so many caveats on it, it becomes impossible, so the money sits in a bank account. Think about Theresa Spence. A lot of that money was earmarked for certain things that sometimes can't happen, and if you divided that money over a number of years? It is a myth when Canadians say, "What are you First Nations doing with our \$7 billion?" That money goes to take care of a population larger than the population of New Brunswick. But when New Brunswick spends \$8 billion, no one says to NB, "What are you doing with the money?"

FT: So, in your opinion, what would be the ideal solution to this situation that just seems to be getting worse?

RA: At some point the government will cave to public pressure. They will repeal these laws they try and sneak in. You have to sit down with the people it affects. Paul Martin said it a few weeks ago. We can't come to grips with the fact that we are a colonial country. I believe that Canada is still trying to colonize First Nations people. Henri Nouwen said that we need to live in a way that when we encounter people, they experience the sense that they are welcome, that they are welcome here. When it comes to Christian hospitality, the idea is that we make room for people to be who God made them to be. The Conservative Government, when they apologized, they were doing it well. When you try to forcibly assimilate people without proper discussion, then you are engaging with legality. Harper always says that he likes the rule of law, but the rule of law is not enough to make a strong nation. I'm borrowing from Nouwen again. If we can make a society that is better at intimacy and a stronger sense of solidarity, then that's a just society.

FT: What do you think when non-Aboriginals join in with Idle No More demonstrations?

RA: It's cool. People know there is something right. What frustrates me is the media. The media is not going to help you understand Idle No More. The popular media only supports the status quo. You don't sell newspapers by having new ideas.

FT: What role can the Canadian Church play?

There is only ONE EMBASSY in Jerusalem. It's Christian and it's Yours!



The Bible verse "Comfort ye, comfort ye My People says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem" (Isaiah 40:1-2) birthed the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ) in 1980 through a Canadian couple, Merv and Merla Watson.

For 33 years, with representation now in over 70 nations, the ICEJ has fulfilled three key mandates.

Supporting Israel: Assisting Israel's most-in-need through our Aid projects (i.e. Holocaust Survivors), bringing Jews home (Aliyah) and caring for them in Israel is key. ICEJ Canada sends 100 percent of designated funds to projects in Israel monthly.

Teaching Truth: ICEJ educates Christians about Israel's unique calling, the social and political challenges. Best known for the annual Christian Feast of Tabernacles, ICEJ draws thousands of pilgrims worldwide to Jerusalem for worship, prayer, teaching, touring and community outreach. In Canada, regional teams offer free seminars on 'Understanding Israel.'

Promoting Justice: We confront anti-Semitism worldwide through accurate news reports and education. Palestinian Christians in Palestinian Authority areas need help, while Israel has a right to live safely in its God-promised land, with Jerusalem as its undivided capital. Under Jewish sovereignty all holy sites remain accessible to all and democracy allows rights to all people.

ICEJ Canada Aid and Development is registered as a Canadian Charity, is a member of the Canadian Council of Christian Charities and the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. Our team is mostly volunteers, women and men who follow Christ, who understand and act on God's promises and blessings upon Israel (Gen. 12:3).

—Donna Holbrook, Canadian Executive Director (volunteer)



www.icejcanada.org

chairtex

THE SANCTUARY SEATING SPECIALISTS™

888.724.2478 www.chairtex.com

Comfort, Durability, and Elegance

- ✓ Unbeatable Value!
- ✓ Lifetime Warranty!
- ✓ Ergonomic Comfort!
- ✓ Award-Winning Styling!
- ✓ Maintenance-Free Design!



QUALITY CHURCH CHAIRS.
100% MADE IN CANADA BY CANADIANS.



Ignite passion for **God's Word.**

The most popular Bible
seminar in America
– **updated** for a
new generation!

To Become a Walk Thru Instructor!

- If you are a gifted teacher with a passion to see lives changed by the Word of God, apply today!
- Instructor Training in Toronto this April! (See website below)

TAKE THE NEXT STEPS:

- See what other pastors are saying
- View new promotional video
- Book an event for your church
- Request a call from our Canadian Director



www.walkthru.org

RA: This is anecdotal, but I think about three years before Harper apologized, he said he wouldn't. The Church put on a lot of pressure. He apologized. He wouldn't say it was because of that, but it had to help.

FT: What do you want the Church to do?

RA: To join Idle No More protests, to write letters to MPs, to say, "It's not right, what you are doing to First Nations and to Canadians." Omnibus bills where there is not proper discussion is not democracy. You can't apply simple solutions to complex problems. You were on the right track when you apologized.

FT: How about the Christian media in Canada? What can we do better?

RA: *Faith Today*, *Christian Week*, they try, I think, to present both sides. In the end it's hard to know. Someone will look back and say. I think all media has to watch themselves. Society will try and force you to a particular way of thinking. Then it has a life of its own. It's hard to constantly critique.

FT: How have you felt about some of the coverage? Some has been particularly critical of Spence.

RA: That was racist, that was barely above the National Enquirer. I never saw so many red herrings. One report said she drives an Escalade, so you shouldn't take her seriously on this. Who cares if she drives an Escalade? There's more reserves than not who are successful. That is what the media does. It tries to paint the picture. You polarize an issue.

FT: Ray, what do you think will happen in the next six months?

RA: I think that protests will continue. I don't know how long Shawn Atleo will continue to be chief. I don't know what's going to happen. I think the cool thing about Idle No More is its young people realizing they have something in their Aboriginal identity that is worth something. My hope is in all these things, at some point, if we could say like Joseph said [in Genesis 50]: What you meant for bad, God used for good. If God is with us, we'll still be here in six months. What is a people if you take away their relationships to each other, to their land, to their language? Then haven't you tried to destroy a people?



COLLECT AIR MILES® FOR THE EFC

Get a **points card**
that gives support to
**The Evangelical
Fellowship of
Canada** –
at no cost to you.

theEFC.ca/airmiles



TYNDALE
• SEMINARY •

Flexible Course Options

Are you in full-time ministry, a volunteer position, or sensing God calling you to serve Him in your workplace, neighbourhood or life? There are many flexible course options to

fit education into your schedule – whether you want to earn a degree or take a single course.

Tyndale Seminary's spring and summer program offers one-week intensive courses, evening classes, online learning opportunities, retreats and study tours. You can travel and study with the Pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago in Spain or the Israel Study Tour: Historical Geography of the Bible. After work, you can take the evening class of Work, Vocation and Ministry to examine the concept of "ministry in everyday life." Spend a week studying principles and strategies involved in Evangelism & Discipleship. Learn about postmodern culture at home with the online course Gospel, Church & Culture. Develop the skills needed for ministering to seniors on Saturdays with Aging, Mission & Ministry.

At Tyndale Seminary you will learn where contemporary issues meet timeless truths. There are 40 course options to choose from. Register for Spring and Summer 2013 courses at


www.tyndale.ca/summer or call **877-896-3253**.

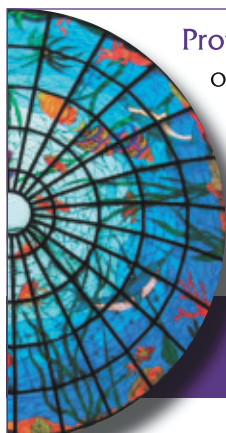


That is what Canada is trying to do to First Nations people. They are trying to kill a people. However, we have survived and we will survive, so we continue to work to develop better relationships. And we get stronger, so in 200 years we will still be here. The sun will come up.

Canada exists because of the goodwill of First Nations people and their graciousness. One of the problems with the Canadian Church and government is they think First

Nations exist because of *their* goodwill. We get this crazy idea and we forget we are all impoverished in some ways. And we all have good gifts in some ways. Like John Raulston Saul wrote in *A Fair Country*, we are a mixed-blood people. We need to learn how to live in a good way in this country. We need to write a shared story. The modern story? That one doesn't work anymore. It only works for a few powerful people.

FT: Thank you, Ray. 



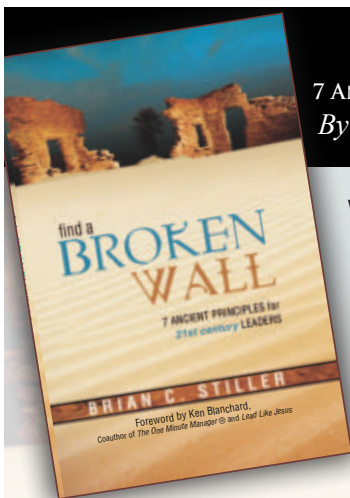
Protecting those who enrich the lives of others

Owned by a charitable trust, Ecclesiastical is a unique specialist insurance company. Working closely with independent brokers across Canada, we provide customized insurance solutions to faith organizations, retirement communities, educational institutions, unique properties, registered charities and non-profit organizations, and select commercial enterprises.

Ecclesiastical is deeply committed to protecting those who enrich the lives of others and to supporting local and global initiatives that help eradicate poverty and improve the lives of people in need.



www.ecclesiastical.ca



FIND A BROKEN WALL

7 ANCIENT PRINCIPLES FOR 21ST CENTURY LEADERS

By *Dr. Brian Stiller*; Foreword by *Ken Blanchard*

When it is assumed there is little more to say about leadership, Brian Stiller surprises us with new, fresh and creative insights.

Unwrapping the Old Testament story of Nehemiah, he identifies seven principles on building and renewing ministries and organizations, along with workable concepts connected to inspiring stories of faith.

Drawing on a lifetime of leadership, Brian examines the challenges that leaders face and how to move from an idea to effective completion. With fresh stories and clear council, Stiller skillfully applies the principles of Nehemiah to 21st century leaders. Leadership is not for the faint-hearted, and politics isn't everything but everything is political.



ENDORSED BY RON NIKKEL, BARRY COREY, DAVE TOYCEN, LORNA DUECK, KEVIN JENKINS, DONALD SIMMONS & OTHERS

Available at bookstores everywhere and www.CastleQuayBooks.com
Hard cover (\$26.95), Soft cover (\$19.95)



CAN'T AFFORD YOUR CAR THANKS TO HIGH INSURANCE?

SPECIAL RATES FOR MEMBERS OF AN EVANGELICAL CHURCH

Please give us a call and see if you qualify for special rates on your **AUTO-HOME-CONDO** or **TENANT** insurance through the Evangelical Group Insurance Plan.

PACKAGES ALSO AVAILABLE FOR ORDAINED PASTORS



1-800-240-5283

www.deeksinsurance.ca

Available in Ontario/Alberta/New Brunswick

D.L. Deeks Insurance is a proud supporter of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada

How Your Church Can Become More Intergenerational

By Karen Stiller

A major study called *Hemorrhaging Faith*, introduced by *Faith Today* last fall, has got the Canadian Church talking. To continue the discussion about how youth are walking out the church door and what to do about it, *Faith Today* is launching a practical new series *Youth and Your Church*.

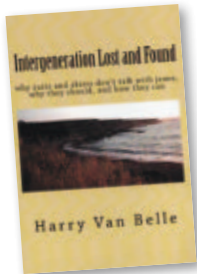
For one young man it was the prison ministry of some “older ladies” that really got to him. Why would they choose to serve so actively instead of slowing down in their retirement?

Their example strengthened his own faith, he told the authors of *Hemorrhaging Faith: Why and When Canadian Young Adults are Leaving, Staying and Returning to Church*.

James Penner and the other co-authors of the report heard such comments repeatedly in their interviews with 72 Canadians aged 18–34.

And they saw it again and again in the polling they did with 2,049 young people.

Put simply: A strong and authentic intergenerational value system in a church is an attractive feature for young Canadian adults.



Intergenerational means all the generations of course, but two come immediately to mind – youth and seniors.

Harry Van Belle is a 75-year-old retired psychology professor in Edmonton and author of *Intergeneration Lost and Found: Why Suits and Skirts Don't Talk With Jeans, Why They Should and How They Can* (CreateSpace, 2012).

“I am three times older than the young people we are talking about. They are weird. Nice and weird. I shouldn't be able to talk to them – but I can!” says Van Belle. “I'm a mentor to many of them.”

He says the first step to stripping away the fear and misunderstanding between generations is to

understand how they are different. “Young people aren't interested in final answers. They are questioning everything. Older people are into the certainty of knowing. When a young person asks a question, an older person says, ‘You can't ask that.’ When an older person says this has to be the truth, the younger person asks, ‘Says who?’ ”

Get the two groups talking, though, and great things happen.

“I don't want us to write another program,” says Van Belle. “I want

people to just be human with one another. We have to decide we're going to change the Church. If you're going to start a relationship with someone different from you, and that is true of the generations, then you have to love the otherness of others. You have to appreciate that they are not like you.”

Loving the “otherness of others” means you know them. Penner says a church that wants intimacy between

A strong and authentic intergenerational value system in a church is an attractive feature for young Canadian adults.

More Tips That Work:

- **Put some treasure where your heart is.** “You don't want to play into consumerism,” says Boucher, but if the children's ministry is working with “a felt board from the '70s, and then you walk into a glitzy sanctuary for the adults. . . You have to put your money where your mouth is and not give kids the leftovers.”
- **Have an intergenerational service.** Schedule services where the generations worship together. Some churches

do this once a month, some do it a few times a year, like Boucher's church. “I'm not talking about the depths of sanctification that morning, but we're not doing it light either,” says Boucher. “We try to structure the service based on who will be present.” Prior to the service Boucher has mined the church for celebratory stories like “the nine-year-old who no longer has to sleep with a night light, or a teen who is no longer cutting, or a marriage that got back together.” Those stories are told with permission, and the generations celebrate together.



generations shouldn't focus on "How do we make this [worship] more appealing," but recognize instead that the "core issue [is actually] 'Do we really know each other in this place? Do the young ones feel like they really matter here?'"

THESE are important questions for a church, says Jason

Boucher, lead pastor of Lifecentre, a multisite Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada church in Ottawa.

"If I moved to another part of the world, of course I'd have to understand the culture. How much more with kids and teenagers? It doesn't work to say to them, 'You matter, but we're not going to change anything.'"

The changes required to deepen the intergenerational ethos of a given church might not be all that complicated. "Once you start thinking intergenerationally," says Penner, "there are so many ways to seamlessly integrate this."

Strengthening the Intergenerational Character of Your Church

- **Cast a critical eye** on who leads your services, plays your music, reads Scripture, preaches and prays, advises James Penner. Are these roles "shared by all generations?" Are youth and seniors represented?
- **Involve youth** in running the church, says Harry Van Belle. "Why don't we put them on church councils? I like younger people to become apprentice elders and deacons."
- **Be open to discomfort:** At Lifecentre the shared assumption is that "Every group should be somewhat sacrificial. It's asking them to respect each other. Every group should be a little bit uncomfortable," says Boucher.
- **Break down silos.** Jason Boucher's church co-ordinates preaching themes with what the children's Sunday School is teaching, and vice versa. "We try to be able to say, 'You kids were talking about Elijah today, and so were we.'" As a lead pastor, says Boucher, "I have a vested interest in what is happening with the kids and the students. It matters to me. I have to care about it."
- **Integrate groups in service.** "There are things we do behind the scenes so that generations are serving together shoulder to shoulder," says Boucher. Ushering and greeting are obvious areas where generations can mix and serve together.

- **If you have a time to welcome each other** during a service, encourage people to seek out someone from a different generation.
- **Throw an intergenerational slumber party.** Wes Dobson is dean of Nipawin Bible College in Nipawin, Sask., but served for years at the Evangelical Free Church in Meadow Lake, Sask. "We decided to take our youth group and our church leadership group on retreat together," he explains. "We had done these retreats where we brought in a speaker who wowed the kids for the weekend. But then we figured, 'What if we had our elders be our speakers?' The first retreat, the elders told their life stories. "While I was there, we did that every year after," says Dobson. "The elders would answer a question like 'I'm still in the Church 40 years later - why?'"
- **Make moments.** "Create opportunities for them to interact," says Dobson. "If there is some way you can get generations to do an activity together as simple as who can build the strongest bridge using a bag of spaghetti and some glue, it's a goofy thing, but you get them working together."
- **Model reaching out** across the generations. "It could start with the pastor," says Van Belle. "Instead of talking about it, they would have to connect with young people more than they usually do. I'm trying to get older people in my church to do what I'm doing. At coffee hour I always single out the younger people, and it's catching on."



Do you have other practical advice and tips on how you have strengthened or experienced the intergenerational character of your church community? We'd love to hear about them and publish them in our letters section and on our Facebook page. If you haven't yet read *Hemorrhaging Faith: Why and When Canadian Young Adults are Leaving, Staying and Returning to Church*, download it at www.hemorrhagingfaith.com, or visit www.theEFC.ca/YouthStudy2012 to read last fall's *Faith Today* cover story about the report. **FT**

KAREN STILLER of Port Perry, Ont., is a senior editor at *Faith Today*.

Canadian Women Offer Strong Leadership

Briercrest College and Seminary: Unleashing people to work

Throughout Briercrest College and Seminary's history, women have been amazing servants, professors and leaders.

Over 75 years ago Annie Hillson's Bible



June Clark, vice-president enrolment at Briercrest College and Seminary, discusses an upcoming conference with Vi Thiessen, leader of the events management team.

study led to the calling of Henry Hildebrand and the beginning of Briercrest. Today women continue to play a prominent role.

The college and seminary currently have 13 women serving in the classroom; four have earned their PhDs and another is

a doctoral candidate. Many more women hold positions of leadership and serve in mentoring, service and counselling roles. These were chosen because of their expertise in Christian education and commitment to God.

"When it comes to women in ministry, the real issue is, What is our giftedness and how do we serve alongside each other?" said June Clark, vice-president enrolment.

"When I look at leadership, my first criterion isn't gender," she added. "My first criteria are competence and giftedness. We want to unleash our people to work and serve in areas of strength."

All of Briercrest's programs call both male and female students to a relationship with Jesus Christ as they become leaders and disciples who serve with distinction. Faculty and students share a passion for learning together, for studying the Scriptures and for preparing for lives of service.

Briercrest graduates are impacting the world. They are serving in a variety of vocations after getting degrees in business, theology, vocal music, worship arts, psychology, humanities, education, biblical studies, Christian ministry, communication disorders, youth ministry, addictions counselling, social work, global studies and TESOL.

Join over 20,000 former students who have discovered the Briercrest experience.

Visit www.briercrest.ca/seminary.

Campaign Life Coalition: Dedicated to pro-life

Deny Dieleman came to Campaign Life Coalition (CLC) to help out for a few months – that was 20 years ago.

Dieleman started as a receptionist, but very soon her organizational skills were noticed and she was eventually promoted to office manager. As she says, "There have been a lot of changes, I could barely use a computer when I started and didn't want to use email when it first came out."

Today she oversees a staff of 20 full-time and part-time employees and manages the bustling headquarters of CLC in downtown Toronto.

Wearing many hats and overseeing many projects, Dieleman is responsible for maintaining a data base of supporters, making sure that monthly mailings go smoothly, keeping interns busy and productive, and taking an active part in major projects, such as Life Chain in the Toronto area and the National March for Life in Ottawa. Over the years she has met a large number of politicians, both federal and provincial, and many up-and-coming pro-life notables, such as Anna Halpine, founder of World Youth Alliance, and Linda Gibbons and Mary Wagner, who both recently received the Queen's Jubilee Medals.

Apart from her day job, she is also quite active in her church, Bethel Canadian Reformed Church, where she recently became involved in the foreign mission committee, supporting two missionaries in Papua New Guinea.

Her heart is dedicated to the pro-life movement, and God always uses a willing heart. CLC is fortunate to have this spirited woman on staff at the head office. Visit www.marchforlife.ca.



Deny Dieleman

mmint.org



MMI
MEDICAL MINISTRY
INTERNATIONAL

MMI brings compassion and healthcare to a world in need using Jesus as our Guide.

MMI utilizes both Medical and Non-Medical Volunteers in Permanent Centers and Mobile Project Teams to execute capacity building programs to serve the poor throughout the world for over forty years.

MMI Canada PO Box 56086, Stoney Creek, ON L8G 5C9 [Facebook.com/MMICanada](https://www.facebook.com/MMICanada)

Celebrate Recovery: Setting free from the past

Deb Jones attended her first Celebrate Recovery (CR) meeting 10 years ago, seeking a place to grow and serve, unaware of her own co-dependency issues. She's since discovered a depth in her relationship with God and others that she didn't know was possible. In applying the Celebrate Recovery principles, based on the Beatitudes, she's found freedom from her past of guilt and shame.

Jones, the director of Celebrate Recovery at Creekside Church in Waterloo, ON,

is currently studying theology at Heritage Seminary and serves as the Eastern Canada Director for CR. She is passionate about seeing God use CR, a Christ-centred recovery ministry, set many individuals and families free from their hurts, habits and hang ups. She is married to Rick and they have two adult sons. Deb and Rick serve together in CR locally and nationally.



Deb Jones

Jones has been a guest on 100 Huntley Street and shared her testimony of God's grace. She says the ministry of CR becomes part of the church, ministering to the congregation to help people heal from their past or break free of any present struggle so they can move forward in all God has for them. It also provides amazing outreach into any community. Many pastors have seen great fruit from having a CR in their local church, or partnering with other churches to have a CR group in their community.

CR started at Saddleback Church in California 21 years ago and is now a worldwide ministry. Rick Warren, Saddleback pastor, says that "CR is a leadership factory" because participants are so grateful for the freedom they experience that they just want to give back.

Currently there are over 70 groups in Canada, not including CR Inside groups, which meet in correctional institutions across the nation. "We are seeing constant growth because of the changed lives, and as participants are telling friends and family counsellors, [now] pastors and social agencies are referring to CR as well," said Jones

Jones and those she serves with have provided many seminars to train volunteers in how to successfully start and run CR. She and other CR Representatives across Canada are eager to assist churches in implementing CR. They are currently organizing two CR one-day training events (May 4 in Guelph ON and June 22 in South Surrey, BC), where John and Cheryl Baker, the founders of CR, and their team will provide training for new and existing groups.

There is a lot of buzz this spring about a movie being released called Home Run, which is a story about a baseball player who finds CR as his life is falling apart. It's being released in the US April 19, and Jones is anxiously awaiting the Canadian release date. She is preparing for a wave of growth as God uses this ministry to set captives free and to draw to Himself those who are lost. For more information, check out www.

celebraterecovery.ca, or see the ad for the CR one-day training events in this issue.

Christian Horizons: Serving people with exceptional needs

Janet Nolan defies the traditional concept of a CEO. She took up running in her forties and recently ran the Cape to Cabot race in her native Newfoundland, with her husband and their three teenage daughters cheering her on. Nolan is the chief executive officer of Christian Horizons (CH), an international organization that reaches out to people with exceptional needs in Ontario and in

developing countries around the world through CH Global.

Nolan began her career with Christian Horizons in 1989 as a support worker. She rose through the organization, serving in multiple leadership roles before being appointed as CEO in June 2012. She demonstrates commitment to continual growth and development as she leads more than 3,500 dedicated employees and volun-



Janet Nolan

Using Surplus Produce to Feed a Hungry World

OntarioGleaners.org

Ontario Christian Gleaners
1550 Morrison Rd., Cambridge, ON 519.624.8245

WOMEN REACHING WOMEN
A GOSPEL FOR ASIA OUTREACH

In many Asian cultures, genders rarely mix, so men are limited (in ministering to women.)

However, millions who still wait to hear the Gospel can be reached through our dedicated women missionaries.

SPONSOR a Bible woman today!

GFA.CA/WOMEN

- suicide rate among young women in South Asia is **10** times higher than the world's average.
- over **250** million women in South Asia are illiterate.

Gospel for Asia • 245 King Street East • Stoney Creek, ON L8G 1L9 • 1-888-WIN-ASIA
SB33-FTWW

teers. Nolan exemplifies servant leadership, spending most of her time in communities connecting with staff, volunteers, partners and people supported by Christian Horizons and CH Global. Nolan is committed to stewardship, both in accountability for resources and relationships and by multiplying opportunities to serve and equip.

Christian Horizons and CH Global are funded by governments, foundations, donors and business partners. These

stakeholders work together to create inclusive communities for people with disabilities by providing programs, education and resources. Under Nolan's leadership, these organizations advocate for and support over 300,000 people around the world. Nolan is an exceptional woman, leading others with integrity, passion and a clear desire to model the life of Jesus.

To find out more, find us online at www.christian-horizons.org.

**Compassion Canada:
Focus on children**

In her 15 years with Compassion Canada, Deb Wilkins has expanded her team from a few people to more than 30 – all but two of them women. Service centre staff in London, Ontario, serve the child development agency's supporters, including the sponsors of more than 90,000 children. They encourage Canadians to write letters to their sponsored children and become champions for children living in poverty.



Deb Wilkins

"We bring people from small 'a' to big 'A' – from having a little awareness to becoming committed Advocates," Wilkins said.

A pastor's wife, Wilkins has pioneered several women's ministries at West London Alliance Church, including an annual retreat. She also founded the London chapter of Homeschoolers in God's Hands (HIGH Day), a weekly program at which parents teach courses in their areas of expertise.

"Through my experiences as a pastor's wife, God prepared me to serve families from many denominations," she said of her six years leading HIGH Day.

Wilkins joined Compassion because of the organization's focus on children and the Church, the two passions through which God has shaped her life. She initiated the first training trips for service centre staff, an investment that ensures "they can speak from experience and from the heart" on the phones. For three years Wilkins also led Compassion's global supporter services team, the prototype for other functional



Services provided:

- Confidential coaching for pastors to help them effectively and efficiently maximize their vision
- Assessments of their current church and how to move it forward
- Practical tools and online video coaching provided through Ministry Advantage
- Transitional coaching



Deb Mertin
Certified Coach
with Ministry Advantage

"I know first hand the stresses of management.... As a leader I have used strategic planning to navigate through challenges. I know the realities of burnout and can affirm that it is never a waste to go through it! It definitely is not a sign of failure." –Deb Mertin

**For more information
please contact Deb Mertin at
deb@ministryadvantage.org or visit
www.ministryadvantage.org/debmertin**

Celebrate Recovery

Christ Centered Recovery - Changing lives for over 20 years!

Are you reaching people in your church and community that are struggling?

One-Day Seminars—2 Training Tracks

The Seven Keys of Celebrate Recovery

Gets you started with the basics and proven best practices

Advanced Leadership Training

For existing Celebrate Recovery Leadership teams



LAKESIDE CHURCH, GUELPH, ON

MAY 4, 2013

PEACE PORTAL ALLIANCE, SOUTH SURREY, BC

JUNE 22, 2013

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION CONTACT: WWW.CELEBRATERECOVERY.CA

groups within the international partnership.

“God has given me what I need, and I can encourage others He will do the same for them if they walk with Him.”

Visit www.compassion.ca.

**Gospel for Asia:
Reaching women with the gospel**

Much of Southeast Asia’s female population is trapped by poverty, illiteracy and isolation, their lives and rights trampled on by their male-dominated culture. For vulnerable women in Asia, every stage from birth to death is a minefield. Even before a baby girl is born, her life is at risk, because she is considered worthless. The World Health Organization estimates that one-quarter of the world’s illegal abortions happen in India. Of those who survive, thousands will eventually be sold into prostitution. Women who are fortunate enough to be married off will be ostracized when their husbands die. The suicide rate among these women is 10 times higher than the world’s average.

Yet today in a hopeless situation, there is glorious hope!

Gospel for Asia’s women missionaries have dedicated themselves to taking God’s love to women in Asia. Given a culture where genders rarely mix, male missionaries are severely limited in ministering to women. “Bible women” can go where men can’t. They are well trained and full of compassion.

By partnering with

Gospel for Asia, you can help send committed women missionaries bring Christ’s love to the untold millions who live in poverty, illiteracy and abuse.

Sponsor a Bible woman today. Visit gfa.ca/women.

**Master’s College and Seminary:
Women and men serving side by side**

Peals of laughter rang from our kitchen – the sounds of nine young women enjoying their “dorm wing” event in our home. As we sat around the table long into the night, the talk turned to an open and intimate discussion about the unique challenges young women face as they prepare for ministry. As I sat sharing life stories with these young women, I realized again that one of the most important gifts I can give our students is to be present in their lives and to be transpar-



Jalem: a sponsored Bible Woman with Gospel for Asia.

we picture change.

Master’s College & Seminary
Peterborough, ON

@MASTERSPTBO MASTERS COLLEGE AND SEMINARY WWW.MCS.EDU

UrbanPromise TORONTO

REACH A CHILD.
RAISE A LEADER.
RESTORE COMMUNITY.

urbanpromise.com

exceptional vacations,
Exceptional Memories

Christian Horizons is a non-profit, faith-based charitable organization that has been providing supported vacations for persons with exceptional needs for over 45 years.

We take pride in creating opportunities for new friendships, diverse experiences, and fun adventures for over 600 people annually.

Christian Horizons
serving the person with exceptional needs

visit christian-horizons.org/vacations to learn more!



Master's "girls night out" with Academic Dean Linda Gibson.

ent with my own.

I have the honour of watching over an exceptional group of young women and men. They are passionate about preparing to follow the call of God on their lives. They serve and lead and learn. They care – for each other and for the broken world around them. I'm grateful to be part of a college that has a great history of women and men serving side by side for kingdom

purposes and demonstrates this still today.
 – Linda Gibson, Academic Dean, Master's College and Seminary

Linda Gibson has a strong educational, academic and leadership background and is creative, energetic, gifted and committed. She serves with excellence and is a great role model. She is evidence that a surrendered life opens doors of ministry and God gets the glory. It's no surprise that a group of women students would want to get together for an evening of connection, and even less surprising that they would

want to include Gibson in the journey.
 – William Morrow, President, Master's College and Seminary
 Visit www.mcs.edu.

Medical Ministry International Canada: Providing compassion and healthcare

Medical Ministry International Canada (MMI Canada) brings compassion and healthcare to a world in need, using Jesus as their guide. Executive Director Leanne H. Ferris, MBA, works to ensure that all donors and volunteers experience the measurable impact their contributions have around the world. Since Ferris took on her current role in 2007, Medical Ministry International has cared for 1.78 million patients, representing \$186 million in healthcare services provided to the poor. Lives are changing as a result of her intentional focus to bring proven business practices to the charitable sector in an effort to increase accountability and efficiencies.

Ferris's commitment to serving the poor started in 1991, when she had the opportunity to travel to Mexico to serve with an MMI volunteer team of eye surgeons and optical care specialists. Witnessing the extreme poverty that plagued the patients who visited the clinic each day humbled Ferris,

and she wanted to use her talents and resources to improve the lives of others. When she didn't get into medical school, a mentor asked if she had considered pursuing a Master of Business Administration degree. Her eyes opened to the reality that she could be involved in providing healthcare to the poor even if she was not the one examining patients or doing surgery.

"I work with a great team of men and women to facilitate the involvement of Canadians in supporting MMI's International Programs," said Ferris. "Opportunities exist locally and internationally for those who want to change lives."

For more information, visit www.mmint.org or www.facebook.com/MMICanada.

Ministry Advantage: Pastoral coaching for positive change

Today's church culture is starting to show a pattern: lead pastors are burning out and discouraged, trying to manage churches and wondering if their life's calling is worth the stress. Where do they go to unpack their concerns, fears and perhaps failures with-



Leanne H. Ferris



Equipped

Our seminary strives to equip our students to serve wherever they are called.

Susan Wendel is an example of someone who found her calling while attending our seminary. Susan earned her MA in 2004 and then furthered her education by earning her PhD from McMaster University in 2009. Susan returned to Briercrest and is a popular professor who teaches in our college and seminary.

Our modular class format allows for the options of either full-time or part-time study. Areas of study include counselling, biblical and theological studies, leadership and ministry.

BRIERCREST

www.briercrest.ca/seminary
 (800) 667-5199

out being judged or rebuked? Coaching is a confidential partnership that allows individuals to work through a questioning process to analyze their current situation and help them understand how to reach a preferred future. The God-given vision that was placed on their hearts can be refuelled and re-energized to impact the Kingdom, and coaching can be an instrumental investment to ignite this positive change.

Ministry Advantage strongly believes in the role of coaching relationships, and with the addition of Deb Mertin to the team, it has strengthened its ability to align leadership within the church. Coaching is not gender specific, but women can provide valuable insight and discernment in listening to the heart of a pastor. Through her personal experience as a church staff member who dealt with daily operations, the board,



Deb Mertin

finance and complex staff challenges, Mertin has the ability to filter information to help a pastor understand next steps.

Russ Olmon, president of Ministry Advantage, shared, "Deb is one of those people who will listen, encourage and give feedback to pastors as they work through

the material that Ministry Advantage has designed. She helps pastors regain confidence and balance, and supports them to start leading their church instead of managing it. With Deb on the Canadian side of the border, we positively impact more churches by using tools and resources that are vital to a congregation's healthy growth. Deb's gift of encouraging pastors is a tremendous asset to Ministry Advantage, and her unique ability to navigate through complicated problems and help pastors lead their church through change set her apart in the coaching realm."

Gregory Bourgond, director of online coaching certification, commented, "If I were seeking counsel regarding personal leadership development or how to be more effective as a leader in ministry, Deb Mertin would be on my short list. Any ministry or organizational leader looking to improve their effectiveness would do well to consult Deb. When they have done so, they will find themselves in a much better position to facilitate God's redemptive purposes."

If coaching is something you have been considering, perhaps you should connect with Mertin at deb@ministryadvantage.org or check out her websites for coaching at www.ministryadvantage.org/debmertin and www.livingintentionally.ca

Ontario Christian Gleaners: Feeding a Hungry World

Shelley Stone has managed the Ontario Christian Gleaners (OCG) since its inception in September 2008. As the only full-time employee of a ministry that has grown to over 300 volunteers devoting in excess of 1,000 hours weekly, Shelley is all about multi-tasking. Whether overseeing production, encouraging and mentoring volunteers, sourcing soup ingredients, coordinating shipments, speaking to various community groups or handling media enquiries, she does it all with efficiency, a sense of purpose and a servant's heart.

Stone is a visionary leader who has effectively mobilized a group of volunteers in common purpose. Volunteers are not only the driving force behind the operation of Ontario Gleaners but, through Stone's leadership, they have also become strong advocates in their communities for the needs of the world's less fortunate. Together they share a deep concern to "give justice to the poor and the orphan; uphold the rights of the oppressed and the destitute" (Psalm 82:3).



Shelley Stone

Ontario Christian Gleaners is an interdenominational Christian charity that partners with relief and development agencies to feed orphans, refugees and natural disaster victims in the developing world. Using surplus produce donated by growers, distributors and retail chains, OCG creates a dehydrated soup mix that feeds hungry people in over 40 nations worldwide. In 2012, Ontario Gleaners donated over 7 million servings of soup that were distributed in developing nations by various missions and relief organizations.

Ontario Gleaners is located in Cambridge Ontario. Find them on the web at www.OntarioGleaners.org or on Facebook at www.Facebook.com/OntarioGleaners.

2013 RESOLUTION: Grow closer to God.

TYNDALE

• SEMINARY •

416.218.6757 | 1.877.TYNDALE
tyndaleseminary.ca

UrbanPromise: Leadership development

Kelly Stouffer is the Director of UPward, a leadership development initiative for high school youth at UrbanPromise Toronto (UPT). Kelly has worked in the Warden Woods community of Scarborough for the past seven years.

I never attended Bible college; nor do I have any formal certification as a youth worker, but these past seven years at UPT have been an education.

Having grown up in a small town in rural Ontario, I often wonder how God can use me in the thick of the city.

My "in" was basketball. I became the "girl who could keep up to the boys" and was quickly accepted. I soon transitioned to a friend who cheered from the stands at sports events and watched proudly at school plays.

Over time I became like a sister to many of the girls. I celebrated at birthday parties and baby showers. I also attended parent-teacher meetings, court trials and probation hearings. Mothers ushered me into meetings with principals and lawyers



Kelly Stouffer

saying, "It's okay, she's family."

It's hard to believe that my role with the youth is now "Mama Kells," and mothers now call me for advice and support.

It doesn't make sense that a "little white girl" like me should be walking through Toronto community housing neighbourhoods with absolute fearlessness.

That's how I know God has called me to serve in these ways, for His plan and purpose alone. I pray that His love, through me, calls others out of darkness.

Visit www.urbanpromise.com.

Tyndale: Women and the Academic Life.

"All of us are to be people of spiritual influence for the kingdom. Women are equally called, gifted and commissioned to be a follower of Christ," said Dr. Janet L. Clark in a recent lecture at Urbana on Women and the Academic Life.

Dr. Clark is Senior Vice President Academic and Academic Dean of the Seminary at Tyndale University College & Seminary and therefore understands the call to be a follower of Christ and the call towards academics are interwoven. She states, "If you have a love for learning, a love to teach, an academic yearning, and if you are being drawn to a missional life, these things are not necessarily incompatible."



Janet Clark

Holistic theological education is a passion of Dr. Clark's. She believes that education should interweave spiritual, intellectual, vocational and missional dimensions of Christian leadership. This type of education should be encouraged for both men and women.

One of the difficulties that women encounter when considering higher academic learning is how other aspects of their life fit into school requirements. From experience, Dr. Clark knows that sometimes this journey is not easy. She states, "God never calls you to anything for which He won't help you. Enter into it with gladness."

Dr. Clark lives out this journey of combining the missional life and the academic life. She lectures in several countries and is a frequent conference and retreat speaker. Her work at Tyndale Seminary ensures that all students know their voices will be heard and their callings encouraged including the more than 300 female scholars.

Visit www.tyndaleseminary.ca. ■

God's love is girls in Asia, eagerly learning to read and write in their heart language, opening the doorway to a new world of educational opportunities.

You can help marginalized groups, the poor and the overlooked to have a chance to know God's incredible love and escape poverty. God's love is . . . YOU!

Visit joinus.wycliffe.ca to learn how you can be involved.

National March for Life Ottawa
May 8, 9, 10, 2013

PROGRAM

WEDNESDAY MAY 8
9:00 pm
 Candlelight Vigil
 at The Canadian Tribute to Human Rights
 corner of Elgin and Lisgar Streets

THURSDAY MAY 9
10:00 am
 Prayer Services and Masses
 (for locations check the website)
12 noon
 Gathering on Parliament Hill
1:30 pm
 MARCH through downtown Ottawa
 returning to Parliament Hill
2:45 pm
 Witnessing by Silent No More
 Awareness Campaign
4:00 pm
 Closing Prayer Service on Parliament Hill
6:00 pm
 Rose Dinner, Speaker: **Reggie Littlejohn**
 President of Women's Rights Without Frontiers
 Youth Banquet, Speaker: **Jason Jones**
 pro-life activist and movie producer
 Hampton Inn, Ottawa

FRIDAY MAY 10
8:00 am to 3:00 pm
 Youth Conference
 Hampton Inn, Ottawa

END FEMALE GENDERCIDE

Further information and ticket prices for banquets and conference are available by calling
 800-730-5358 (toll free)
 416-204-9749 (Toronto)
 613-729-0379 (Ottawa)
 or
www.marchforlife.ca

NATIONAL MARCH FOR LIFE

SPONSORED BY
Campaign Life Coalition



Celebrate With Us

Equipping and praying with Canadian women for 40 years.

The year was 1973. Pierre Trudeau was our prime minister, transistor radios were all the rage, and “Tie a Yellow Ribbon Round the Old Oak Tree” was playing on eight-tracks everywhere. Construction was beginning on Toronto’s CN Tower. Front page stories splashed the unfolding Watergate scandal, and radical feminists rejoiced in the Supreme Court ruling on *Roe vs. Wade*, making abortion a U.S. constitutional right.

Against this backdrop of social turmoil 1,200 women gathered in Barrie, Ont., for the first Women Alive conference. Speakers included Joni Eareckson Tada, Beth Moore, Kay Arthur and Dr. Helen Roseveare – favourite Christian teachers to this day.

For Nell Maxwell, a public health nurse and mother of two, the conference was a dream come true.

That dream had become clear to her two years earlier at a conference of 3,000 women in the U.S., where she felt God’s call to begin a deeper ministry to women in Canada.

She remembers, “I had sensed the need for a ministry that would challenge women to find fulfillment in their relationship with God and subsequently with their world. Never did I ever imagine what God would do in the months and years ahead.”

Women wanting to study the Bible together by the thousands piqued the curiosity of a young news reporter, Moira Hunt. She contacted Maxwell and soon after came to faith in Jesus Christ. Today Moira Brown is cohost of the Christian TV program *100 Huntley Street*. This April she’ll also host our conference in Waterloo.

One of Maxwell’s key desires back in the 1970s was to help women understand their God-given identity and worth. Many people tried to fit Women Alive into the burgeoning feminist movement, but Maxwell said the similarity ended with the desire to see women’s roles recognized and valued.

Prayer has remained foundational for Women Alive. “Corrie ten Boom was speaking at the 1975 convention of 4,200 women at the University of Waterloo,” Maxwell recalls. “There was a power outage throughout the twin cities except in our building. The university staff told us the only explanation was prayer.”

Volunteer teams sprouted up across Canada. The min-

istry added couples’ conferences, inductive Bible studies, schools of prayer, leadership training, Hope for the Abused, a publication called *The Branch*, and a related organization called Men Alive, directed by Nell’s husband Ted Maxwell. Women Alive also became a voice for social concerns affecting the family.

In 2001 Margaret Gibb became president, after serving as regional director for Saskatchewan and Manitoba. At that time, women blessed by the first 20 years of ministry were now raising daughters and facing new social issues such as permissible abortions and managing dual-income families.

Gibb’s experience as a pastor’s wife and speaker made it easy for her to connect with women and their struggles. She helped equip women through *Women Alive Magazine*, Leading Edge seminars, Expos, Debt-Free Woman events and a mentoring program called *i.e. girl – inspire excellence*.

It was at a 2005 Women Alive conference when I became aware how closely its mission matched my passion. There, Juno winner Deborah Klassen – whom I had met in the past and shared my heart for women and teen girls – asked me, “Does Women Alive know about you?”

The rest, as they say, is history. I volunteered as a leader for *i.e. girl* and came on staff as administration manager the

day after my university commencement. Since becoming executive director in 2010, I’ve seen an increasing need for discipleship resources. As such, the recently launched *Mentoring Women – A Catalyst for Churches*, Press Pause Retreats, and new website nurture intentional mentoring relationships.

It is Women Alive’s mission to equip and encourage Canadian women and teen girls to become dedicated followers of Jesus Christ, living out their God-given potential in their personal, professional and spiritual lives.

We celebrate our 40th anniversary alongside thousands of women whose lives have been forever changed. We are thanking the hundreds of volunteers, board directors and staff who have made a difference for Christ through Women Alive. We couldn’t do what we do without them – and most importantly, God’s power at work through them.

And the work has only begun! **FT**

Prayer has remained foundational for Women Alive.

MICHELLE ARTHUR is executive director of Women Alive. Celebrate our 40th anniversary with us in Grande Prairie (March 8-9), Toronto (April 13) and Waterloo (April 19-21). Visit www.womenalive.org or call 1-800-387-4753 for details or registration.



Own a Business? Then You're Involved in Ministry

Christian business associations are growing – and for good reason.

All that we have belongs to God. We hear that notion preached most Sundays, and we regularly rededicate our hearts and our lives to Him.

But when we head off to work and devote all those hours to the office, shop floor or jobsite, what does it mean to say all that time belongs to God or that entire budget belongs to God? Is there a problem if that devotion is not apparent all the time?

Building a strong connection between Sunday worship and Monday work can be difficult, especially trying to do it on your own. That's where a Christian business network or association can help.

Many of us feel lonely as Christians in the business world. Others may have found a small group, perhaps at church, where we can talk with other business people about work and faith and how they relate. Such groups can be great, but they can quickly lose their quality or even fade away entirely when a key member retires or moves away.

There is a solution to the loneliness and the unpredictable health of local groups. Canada has national organizations that support Christian individuals in business and boost the quality of local gatherings.

Thank God, the word is finally starting to get out. At the Canadian Christian Business Federation (CCBF) we have seen our membership explode over the past two years. Christian business leaders are seeing the benefits of connecting with each other. They want to rediscover in practical terms what the Bible says about their specific business challenges.

Two years ago there were eight groups of CCBF business leaders across southern Ontario who met monthly for discussion and mutual support. Today there are about 30 groups across Canada, and 2,000 Christian men and women are regularly connected to the CCBF. Those numbers grow weekly and membership crosses denominational lines: Evangelicals, Mennonites, Presbyterians, Anglicans, Reformed, Catholics and dozens of other denominational stripes.

Why? What motivates groups of men and women to get together at 7 a.m. over breakfast and conversation? And

for those who “just don't do mornings,” why do they want to belong to such an association? Here are three reasons I hear most often.

1. They want to belong to a support group. They crave a sense they aren't the only ones struggling with business issues from a Christian perspective.

2. Perhaps the biggest reason is they want to connect their faith to their business world in deeper ways. When they find out about CCBF, they often get most excited about our five-year curriculum of biblically-based study materials dealing with business or leadership questions.

One such question might be *How do you balance your company's long-range plan with waiting upon the Lord?* That inevitably leads to a profound discussion on the importance of prayer as you carry out your daily work and your long-term plans. And if we believe all we have – including our business – belongs to God, how do we reflect Christ in our business plans?

The CCBF discussion materials also talk about developing courage and taking risks when it comes to growing a business. Is risk taking biblical? Each of the monthly devotionals provides five biblical references, so there are wonderful examples of biblical characters who took risks, and the result of that risk taking.

Those monthly breakfast discussions look at building integrity, managing stress, making decisions, handling power and influence, supporting and encouraging staff, time management, developing a Christian character, being servant leaders, the importance of self-discipline, humility and more.

These discussions change lives. One of the recurring refrains within the CCBF is “If you're in business, you're in ministry.” One young entrepreneur confided he used to feel pretty good about himself when he gave away a good portion of his year-end profits to various Kingdom causes. When reminded his entire business belonged to God, he decided to include his Kingdom donations as a line item in his budget. It was no longer an afterthought.

3. People who join CCBF enjoy some practical benefits as well, such as free advertising at our online jobs webpage, participating in the *INturn* program that connects Christian university business students with local business owners, and enjoying the opportunities that come from being listed in our online and printed directories.

Whatever business you may be in, an organization such as CCBF can help you. Don't go it alone! **FT**

KEITH KNIGHT of Guelph, Ont., is the executive director of the Canadian Christian Business Federation (www.ccbf.org). Find more columns in this series at www.theEFC.ca/FTbiz.



Newtown Darkness and Easter Light

Jesus enables the miracle of facing evil with hope.

"Let the little children come to me," Jesus said, "and do not hinder them – for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven."

Charlotte. Daniel. Olivia. Josephine. Ana. Dylan. Madeline. Catherine. Chase. Jesse. James. Grace. Emilie. Jack. Noah. Caroline. Jessica. Benjamin. Avielle. Allison.

It is telling that American president Barack Obama chose to quote the words of Jesus in Mark 10 before he recited the names of the children killed in the December school shooting in Newtown. He had just come from visiting the families of the children and teachers who were killed.

This was the context for American pastor Andy Stanley's remark that Obama was serving at that moment as "pastor-in-chief" of the nation.

Evangelicals can disagree with Obama on abortion, gay rights and other issues, but his focus on Jesus in response to utter darkness deserves commendation.

Many times a year I have to face the issue of evil in terms of my thinking as a professor. I even teach a course on evil and suffering. This led my wife to once ask, "Why would anyone take a course like that?" Why indeed.

As we all know, the problem of evil is the biggest philosophical obstacle to belief in God. More important, the personal realization of evil is the biggest emotional obstacle to trust in God. This is another way of noting the huge gap between thinking about evil and the nightmare of experiencing it.

Nicholas Wolterstorff, an American Christian philosopher, divides his life into two stages: *before* his son Eric died in a mountain climbing accident in Austria and *after*. His book *Lament for a Son* (Eerdmans, 1987) is a heartbreaking read on how one's theology and philosophy change when evil strikes home. "I do not know why God would watch him fall. I do not know why God would watch me wounded. I cannot even guess."

Wolterstorff, now retired from Yale University, has written elsewhere that Eric's death made him realize certain views of God gave him little help. Despite his own Calvinist theology, he was not aided by focus on God's sovereignty, as if Eric's death could be explained with ap-

peal to divine providence. Wolterstorff was most helped by a view he picked up from Calvin that places emphasis on the God who suffered in His Son Jesus. "Instead of explaining our suffering, God shares it."

In John 6 we are told of a time when many disciples quit following Jesus. It was in the context of some demanding teaching by Jesus. Afterwards He asked the Twelve if they were leaving too, and Peter replied, "Lord, to whom would we go?" Peter sensed there was nowhere else to turn. I have often thought of this passage when pondering realities like the Newtown shootings.

Of course, many people choose different figures than Jesus or different answers than Christian faith. Many prefer Buddha and the promise of nirvana. Others prefer Krishna and the promise of reincarnation. Still others make the stark choice of atheism, with no hope beyond death. (The existence of evil brings many to passionately rail against God while remaining curiously unfazed their atheist universe holds no promise for the ultimate defeat of evil.)

Why do I think there is nowhere else to go but Jesus? For one, Jesus does not blame victims for their situation, as is common in some Buddhist, Hindu, New Age and pseudo-Christian teaching. My brother Bob is a psychotherapist and deals with really tragic, dark and evil situations

every week. In a recent open letter to gurus, therapists, life coaches and Christian leaders, he contrasts the wisdom of Jesus with the harmful and trite lines society often throws to the wounded, such as: "Just let it go." "People want their pain." "Time heals all wounds." "Move on."

Bob writes at www.findwisdomnow.com, "I find these sayings insulting, insensitive, and deeply mistaken about the lives of broken people in this very broken world. We can't 'just' let go of massive hurt. The same with 'move on' – the furniture in your soul is bolted down. Internal pain and brokenness go with you, even if you go out the back door and never return."

Another significant reality about Jesus is that He chose not to philosophize about evil, but rather face it, endure it (as Wolterstorff points out) and, most amazingly, conquer it.

His victory, as we experience it, is both total and yet still working itself out. It's awful we must still face Newtown and 9/11 and the Holocaust. But we do so knowing the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus are a sure sign evil's end is certain.

That's the hope of Easter. **FT**

Jesus does not blame victims for their situation.

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



Giving Good Advice

Listen carefully. Discern properly. Guide gently.

Stan was struggling. On the surface he appeared to be doing just fine. He would arrive at work each morning at 8:30, a half hour early. He often stayed late. He was making some progress on a major project. He was busy and engaged, putting his education to work. He was even developing friendships in the workplace.

Stan was working hard, learning new things, getting a solid start to his career and collecting a decent paycheque. But one evening over an iced tea with an older companion, he began to acknowledge some concerns.

The work he produced never seemed enough. More was expected. His boss was always on the job an hour before he arrived and still on duty when Stan left. A relentless influx of new tasks – each one urgent – drew him away from the major project he'd been hired to complete. He felt the heaviness of expectations he would never be able to fulfil. Work time was like *doing* time.

Maybe if he got there at 8:00 he could leave at 5:00 without getting the feeling he was shortchanging the company. Maybe then his boss wouldn't give him the hairy eyebrow when he left for the day. Maybe that would leave him enough time for church responsibilities, sports teams and, ahem, his girlfriend who was – confidentially speaking – starting to complain about how her future husband seemed stressed out about work.

The more anxious he got, the more he wanted to huddle under the covers of his bed in the morning. He'd sleep in a little later and, to make his self-imposed early arrival deadline, end up rushing out the door unshaven and less kempt than he wanted. He'd feel bad about himself, and every comment or glance from his boss would strike him as a silent rebuke.

This wasn't helping his productivity – it had him looking for distractions. It had him burrowing into minor tasks and neglecting important ones. He was tumbling things around rather than turning them over. He was getting stuck, and it wasn't fun anymore.

Sound familiar? To Stan's companion that evening, a middle-aged Christian man with some management experience, the issues troubling the younger man seemed ordinary and relatively easy to address.

He suggested Stan ask his roommate to make him accountable to be out of bed at 6:30. That would give him

time to shower and shave, and report professionally and promptly to his desk by 8:30 each morning. Then he should also feel free to leave promptly and unapologetically at 5:00.

That small step helped him realize both the extent and the limits of his responsibilities in the workplace. He didn't have to buy into the bond-slave culture his boss embodied. He simply had to do his job. It's important to do work well, but there *is* life beyond the workplace.

How to Give Advice

Surely all of us would like to be a help like Stan's companion. The Book of Proverbs says, "The godly give good advice to their friends" (12:26 NLT) and "The lips of the righteous nourish many" (10:21 TNIV). How do we do that? Here are three principles.

First, *listen carefully*. Stan's companion made time for the younger man in a casual atmosphere, enabling Stan to speak frankly of matters below the surface.

He was also careful not to let the conversation deteriorate into a gripe session. While he encouraged candid conversation and was careful not to trivialize the heart of the concern, he was careful not to indulge a culture of complaint.

Second, he aimed to *discern properly*. His questions, nods, and quizzical looks invited a search for remedies that could actually be realized. He was wise enough to know that changing a habit, as difficult as it might be, was easier than changing the patterns embedded in a company or boss. He knew better than to try to solve it all at once.

So he looked to find a helpful approach and focus on one doable item. The young man needed a victory, and it didn't need to be large. Nothing motivates like results, and making progress in one area creates confidence to move into another. The older man could see this, even though Stan couldn't.

Finally, the companion needed to find a way to help Stan discover such a solution. For that to happen he knew he needed to *guide gently*. When a solution seems blatantly obvious to us, we need to remind ourselves the one we're advising is sincerely stuck. We need to find a simple, helpful step to improve the situation, and then give the recommendation in a way he can receive.

May God equip all of us with the humility to seek advice from a godly brother or sister, and the wisdom to bless someone who may be seeking such counsel. **FT**

DOUG KOOP is a freelance writer and spiritual care provider. He posts some of his articles and blogs occasionally at www.dougkoop.ca.



| Nurse Sheree Trecartin sees someone at the Hope Mission clinic.

SUPPLIED PHOTO

Main Street Baptist St. John, N.B.

How can a church planted in 1842 still be relevant today?

Main Street Baptist in Saint John, N.B., is a great example of how with each new generation a church can experience new life and negotiate change. Today it describes itself at www.mainstreetbaptist.ca as “a mosaic of diverse people from different ethnic, economic and age backgrounds,” reflecting core values in phrases like “beautiful church – mission DNA – journeying community – moving forward.”

Like any journeying community, it has needed to deal with many ups and downs since its birth – in Main Street’s case, way back in 1842. It was originally founded, like several other churches in Saint John, by an uptown congregation affiliated with Canadian Baptist Ministries.

One of those “up times” for Main Street Baptist was the 1960s, reports Rob Nylen, senior pastor. At that time it was the second largest CBM congregation in Canada

But over the past 30 years its Old North End neighbourhood has become “a large concentration of low-income families,”

according to John Knight, community outreach pastor. Single parents live on limited incomes. Many face employment challenges. About 85 per cent rent rather than own their homes, says Knight.

During recent “down times,” Main Street’s ministry presence in its neighbourhood dropped to a single program. But in the late 1990s the congregation experienced a two-year “reawakening,” and by the year 2000, congregants felt a fresh call to re-engage their community.

Knight arrived at Main Street in 2004 after growing up as a missionary kid in South India. He has no problem imagining what the neighbourhood looked like a century ago, he says, as “a bustling place with stores lining Main Street. The hardworking middle class was involved in shipbuilding, and riverboats plied their trades.”

As he got to know congregants he heard many grew up in the neighbourhood, moved to the suburbs but continued to

attend – a phenomenon he describes as the “family borough.” Relational ties are strong.

Cultural Change

Today the city includes a large Chinese population, and Korean business people are arriving. There are also international university students, many of whom come to Main Street for worship.

Main Street’s congregation is becoming more comfortable with diversity. Attitudes are changing. “It’s not going to be a neat and tidy place,” he says. “We’re re-learning how to be good neighbours.”

Knight senses a personal call to hang out in this neighbourhood for a long time. “It’s only when you become part of the fabric of the community yourself that you earn the right to chat with your neighbour about life.”

Main Street Baptist is a recognized neighbourhood fixture. Non-churchgoers have reportedly warned off other door-to-door proselytizers by saying, “You’re on

Main Street Baptist territory, you know.” Neighbours trust the church, says Knight. “They know we’re here for them during their tough times.”

The church keeps building trust with its neighbours in one-on-one relationships, but also in outreach programs and events such as a fall corn boil, annual Mom’s dinner, and summer outings that take neighbours to the beach, whale watching in the Bay of Fundy, fishing and fellowship over a potluck meal.

“We want people to encounter Jesus Christ, but openings for this conversation are broader in nature,” explains Knight. One-fourth of the baptisms in the past decade resulted from such community relationship building.

Here are snapshots of some of those new people (with names changed for privacy). Joe was in a dark place for a number of years before his slow journey back to becoming a man of faith. Now his Christ-centred focus is reflected in his family.

Lily was a “psychiatric nobody” from the world’s perspective, but the outreach team saw Jesus in her life. Now she is referred to as Main Street’s “resident evangelist.”

Larry, an intelligent professional, lost his way. He fell into a destructive lifestyle before he cried out to Jesus.

Joan was battered down, quiet as a church mouse. Since committing her life to Christ she has become an active contributor to Hope Mission, a twice-weekly meeting that offers teaching, worship and a hot meal. A clothing bank is also available.

Active in Local Mission

From a congregation of 500 members, at least a hundred are actively using their practical, relational and spiritual gifts to apply their sense of call to God’s mission in their neighbourhood. Many have faced tough experiences in their own lives, shaping their intuitive capacity for mercy ministry.

Pat Scott, a member of the Hope Mission ministry team, says, “My perspective of God’s Kingdom has come alive. My work at Hope Mission has permitted me to see God at work in the lives of ordinary people.” She is witnessing God’s shalom in the city.

Another congregational ministry is Prime Time, an intergenerational disciple-

ship ministry that meets on Sunday afternoons to nurture the deepest need in the community – a sense of belonging.

The church also joins with like-minded churches in partnerships that address poverty and justice issues, bringing a united voice to the city table. For example, One Change is a coalition of citizens focusing on community renewal – youth at risk, education and housing.

Quality housing for seniors is a city-wide concern. Main Street partners with the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches to assess needs in its congregation, neighbourhood and city. Main Street’s plans for church expansion incorporate a seniors’ housing complex that will include units subsidized by the provincial government.

When neighbours heard of the plan to rebuild, they anxiously asked, “Does that mean you are leaving us?” Main Street Baptist has moved three times, always remaining in the same neighbourhood. Nylen is concerned its “current facilities function as a lid. To grow we need to move. But we’re only moving one mile as the crow flies.” Not willing to abandon its community, the existing building will be repurposed as an outreach centre.

“It’s easy to provide meals and send people home at the end of the program,” says Nylen. “How we integrate people into our lives is much more challenging.” He rejoices when the lines are blurred at Hope Mission on Tuesdays and Fridays when he can’t pick out church members from neighbours. It warms his heart to see how his congregation has taken ownership – not for the program, but for the people in Main Street’s community.

He quotes Ezekiel 47:9, “Where the river flows, everything will live.” In the city known as the meeting place of two rivers, Nylen states confidently, “Main Street Church is the river in our neighbourhood, bringing life into the community.” **FT**

Charlene de Haan is a freelance writer in Toronto. She is also the executive director of CAM International of Canada and founder of Step Up Transitions Consulting. Read all the profiles in this ongoing series at www.faithtoday.ca.

Rosebud School of the Arts

Live the Theatre!



**Our Graduates Get Work
Apply Now For September**

rosebudschoolofthearts.com
1.403.677.2350



MinistryDirectory | BUSINESS CARD ADS

The Shepherd's Lounge Ltd.

If you have a pastor this is a must read:



**"Freeing Your Pastor
To Serve with Joy"**

Go to www.theshepherdslounge.com
and order your book today.



CHAIRS FOR:
Sanctuary • Fellowship • Banquet



Lethbridge, Alberta

www.ctsmanufacturing.net/cdn

1.888.678.2060



Called to Ministry?

Looking for liberty to minister the gospel? In ministry, and looking for accountability through ministerial credentials?

Contact: Evangelical Christian Church in Canada (Christian Disciples) @ www.ceconline.net
Email: cecc@rogers.com
Toll Free: 1-888-981-8881



ChurchWatch
Canada's Church Management Software



smart. powerful. easy to use.

www.churchwatch.com 1.877.955.3657

**ARE YOUNG PEOPLE
LEAVING YOUR CHURCH?**



A new **Canadian report** studied **2,049 young adults** and suggests ways to **reverse the trend.**

Commissioned by the **Evangelical Fellowship of Canada Youth and Young Adult Ministry Roundtable.**

Visit www.hemorrhagingfaith.com to order your copy today.



is seeking a candidate for the position of **Director, Admissions**

The Director, Admissions is primarily responsible for engaging with the community to build relationships with feeder schools, churches and community organizations in support of achieving mission-critical enrollment targets. The Director is a key member of Redeemer's Enrollment Management Team and directs all efforts of the Recruitment Department.

To be successful in this role, the Director, Admissions must be a dynamic, outgoing relationship builder, successful at driving results through others and possessing the ability to establish rapport quickly with internal and external stakeholders.

A complete outline of the position can be found at www.redeemer.ca on the Employment Opportunities page.

Applicants are requested to email their application materials including a statement that articulates how their faith relates to the mission of Redeemer University College to: HR@redeemer.ca.

777 Garner Road East, Ancaster, ON L9K 1J4
T. 905.648.2131 | 1.877.779.0913
www.redeemer.ca

Guide for the Christian Perplexed, with Study Guide

Editor: Thomas P. Power
Pickwick Publications/Wipf and Stock, 2012.
286 pages. \$31

People of faith in the Middle Ages cherished Maimonides the Jewish philosopher, whose book *The Guide for the Perplexed* was published in 1190 AD. In our times they continue to seek help from spiritual guides much like him.

Thomas Power and 15 others, writing mainly from an evangelical Anglican tradition, join forces in this new book to offer such guidance to the modern conflicted reader.

Their topics include: what we know of Jesus, the meaning of suffering, the function of doctrine, the pleasures and complications of sexuality, and diverse forms of spirituality.

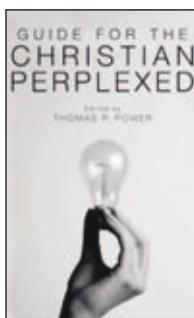
Thoughtful Christians are always legitimately perplexed. Sadly, many throughout history and still today have not found safe places to address their confusions with intellectual candour and integrity. This book will help.

"We have called the book a guide. We are not advocating a particular theological tradition or presenting the manifesto of a school of thought," declares the introduction by Alan Hayes and Thomas Power (both church history profs at Wycliffe College, Toronto).

Each of the book's contributors has a point of view, but all try to recognize the legitimacy of other points of view, and they respect the reader's right

to weigh the evidence freely.

One interesting chapter is Ephriam Radner's "God Bless the Atheists: Faith and Anti-faith Today." Radner gives helpful background to the rise of what has been termed "the New Atheism." While clearly opposed to many perspectives of modern atheists (Radner considers them not that new), he offers a balanced critique and includes counter-arguments from outside the Church. Atheism today should not be viewed as an enemy, he suggests, but an encouragement to more clarity and substance



on our part.

Other topics in the book reflect similar careful thought. You'll grow by reading this book. —Wayne A. Holst

Find a Broken Wall: 7 Ancient Principles for 21st Century Leaders

Author: Brian C. Stiller
Castle Quay Books, 2012.
176 pages. \$19.95

One day 35 years ago, after Brian Stiller spoke in chapel at my Bible college, I met with him and unburdened my young heart. A week later he wrote to me. "God has a purpose in allowing us to encounter people and ideas and, through that, have our minds stretched so that we can serve Him in a more adequate fashion."

For Stiller, serving God "in a more adequate fashion" has meant "rebuilding troubled and broken organizations." He

should know. Since the 1960s he has developed his calling by leading "broken-down, distressed and underdeveloped ministries," whether Youth for Christ/Canada, The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) or Tyndale University College & Seminary. (Incidentally, at the EFC he was founding editor of *Faith Today*.)

Now, he has distilled a lifetime of wisdom about leadership in perhaps his most autobiographical book to date. No ivory tower theoretician, he writes about lessons learned in the trenches.

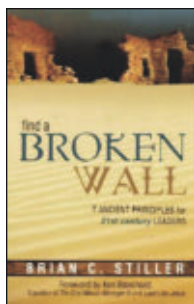
Couching his insights in imagery drawn from Nehemiah, who directed the rebuilding of Jerusalem's crumbling walls, Stiller retrieves practical leadership principles.

However, the burden of the book is his personal experience in actually rebuilding broken walls. He states, "Broken walls are places where we can build new and vigorous communities of faith and life."

Stiller is refreshingly candid and transparent, admitting that when asked to define EFC's mission in 1983, he "stumbled and fumbled."

He suggests leaders must 1) listen for and 2) recognize opportunity in chaos, 3) exercise faith, 4) discover the value proposition, 5) bridge the dialectic of passion and planning, 6) recognize that recruiting resources is a litmus test of leadership, and 7) recognize the politics.

Today's leaders can profit from those tried and true principles. Stiller's belief that "Lessons come by way of failure and success" makes *Find*



a Broken Wall a must-read-and-heed manual for leaders of both troubled and healthy organizations. —Burton K. Janes

At Peace with War: A Chaplain's Meditations from Afghanistan

Author: Harold Ristau
Wipf and Stock/Resource Publications, 2012.
108 pages. \$13

Following two Afghanistan deployments, Harold Ristau, a Lutheran chaplain in the Canadian Armed Forces, has seen most everything a war can dish out. *At Peace with War* contains his personal reflections following approximately 300 days of service involving time in the hospital at Kandahar Air Field, serving alongside medics on the front lines, and stationed in various forward operation bases with one to 300 soldiers.

Ristau does what chaplains in war zones do: pray with soldiers, provide spiritual counsel, lead worship services, administer communion and baptism, participate in ramp ceremonies for those killed in battle – the list goes on. But he also chooses to work *alongside* the men and women, moving supplies, running patrols, and recovering the dead, sometimes a body part at a time.

There is nothing glamorous about war, but Ristau is convinced war is sometimes unavoidable if people ever hope to experience freedom and security.

These are not esoteric musings on the philosophical and spiritual components of military life in a war zone. Ristau's reflections are a frank, at times brutal, glimpse into the world of chaplains and the soldiers they

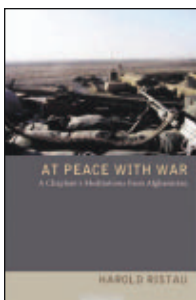
serve. Like the rest of us, chaplains experience fear, joy, anger, doubt, boredom – the gamut of human emotion. War zones are messy places to serve.

While names, places, and dates are sometimes changed to protect those still in the arena of operations, Ristau introduces readers to Canadian men and women who courageously and sacrificially lay their lives on the line daily in the belief their work can lead to a better life for the Afghan people.

Robert Bugbee, president of the Lutheran Church–Canada, says Ristau introduces us to “a workaday chaplain showing

how faith and soldiering can walk together.” If you want a fresh perspective on Canada’s role in Afghanistan – a perspective devoid of political spin and editorial bias – this book is worth reading.

–David Daniels



The Best Is Yet To Be: The Memoirs of Vern Heidebrecht

Author: Vern Heidebrecht Judson (www.judsonlakehouse.com), 2012.

100 pages. \$15

This is a book that will warm the heart, encourage the soul, and introduce readers to someone whose life has been and continues to be deeply lived in love with his Lord.

Vern Heidebrecht may not be a household name, but his pastoring career included helping Northview Community Church in Abbotsford, B.C., grow into one of the largest churches in Canada.

In his memoir he takes you on a guided tour of his life and ministry, built around the title phrase “the best is yet to be” (a quote from the 19th-century poet Robert Browning).

Rather than a full-scale autobiography, Heidebrecht carefully outlines those intervals of his life that coincide with highlighted aspects of his ministry.

The first five chapters provide the fundamental events and dynamics of his early years, leading into to his first pastoral posting. These include family life, schooling, and events that served to mould

him into both the man and the minister he would become. These chapters are essential reading for the who, what, where, how and why of Heidebrecht’s early life and, most of all, the moving influence of God at each juncture.

These descriptive episodes give way to the remaining chapters, which convey thoughtful, introspective contemplation of God’s powerful and constant presence in leading this gifted pastor through many years of faithful service for his Lord.

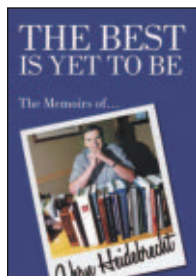
Heidebrecht is open, honest,

and vulnerable in describing his life and service as a minister of the gospel. There is no impression of self-importance or pride, no attempts to persuade you to “look at me.” Humbly yet passionately he gives confirmation of the orientation of his life as one lived for God.

The operative phrase “the best is yet to be,” tucked away appropriately in every chapter, is not simply a quaint saying, but the measure of this man’s self-identification with his life’s meaning, purpose and finality, as a son, Christian, husband, pastor, father, Christ follower and more.

Highly recommended.

–R. Wayne Hagerman



Recently Released Resources

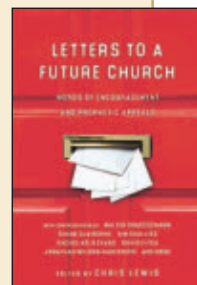
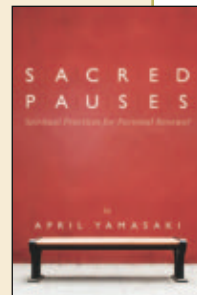
Sacred Pauses: Spiritual Practices for Personal Renewal by April Yamasaki (Herald Press, 2013). The author, a pastor in British Columbia, explores refreshing spiritual practices from Scripture reading and prayer to making music and having fun. Personal and practical, for personal or group use.

Letters to a Future Church: Words of Encouragement and Prophetic Appeals edited by Chris Lewis (InterVarsity Press, 2012). “If you could write a letter to the North American church today, what would it say?” Thinkers including Andy Crouch, Ron Sider, Walter Brueggemann, Rachel Held Evans, Shane Claiborne and Makoto Fujimura – as well as Canadians Tim Challies, Wendy Gritter and Aileen Van Ginkel – offer passionate and thought-provoking answers to this question from a fall 2010 conference in Toronto.

Biblical Hermeneutics: Five Views, edited by Stanley Porter and Beth Stovell (InterVarsity Press, 2012). Scholars, some Canadian, explain five approaches to interpreting Scripture: historical-critical/grammatical, literary/postmodern, philosophical/theological, redemptive-historical, and canonical.

Downstream from Eden: The Amazing Gift of Water for a Thirsty World by David L. Knight (Westbow, 2012). The author, a pastor in Waterloo, Ont., and former national leader with Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship Canada, offers a comprehensive study of water and the Bible, touching on social justice, spirituality and the environment.

Work Matters: Lessons From Scripture by R. Paul Stevens (Eerdmans, 2012). A survey of perspectives on work using characters from the Pentateuch (Adam and Eve, Cain, Jacob, Joseph, Bezalel), through the historical, wisdom and prophetic books, all the way to the New Testament (Martha, Paul, John, Priscilla and Aquila). The author is professor emeritus of marketplace theology and leadership at Regent College, Vancouver.





Are We Connecting? Or Just Correcting?

Can we devote more resources to building bridges rather than barricades?

A cloud passed over the delicate features of the Chinese woman listening intently to what I was saying. She was a student at Wuhan University, a university almost the size of the University of Toronto, and she had been attending my lectures this past summer on Christian ethics.

She enjoyed the lectures, she said, but was confused by one crucial point. What I described as the basic truths of the Christian message were not lining up with the writings of the Christian theologian to whom she was devoting her doctoral dissertation. She had been attracted to this theologian because of his interest in Buddhism, and was looking to him for guidance on how to connect Chinese Buddhism with (Western) Christianity.

The theologian was John Cobb – well known in academic circles as a “process” theologian who, in his commendable concern to make rational sense of the Christian religion, has ended up discarding belief in the deity of Christ, His atoning death and resurrection, and a number of other elements of what most Christians would regard as the heart of the gospel.

I referred her to standard theological textbooks that would provide a doctrinal “baseline” by which she could see how far Cobb had strayed. That seemed to help her recover her bearings, at least a little. But it left me thinking about how things are back here in North America.

For at least a century now, we Evangelicals have devoted a lot of intellectual resources to analyzing alternative viewpoints and warning each other of their deficiencies. True to our Protestant heritage we produced our lists of what was wrong with Roman Catholicism. We noted the many problems with liberal Christianity. We were vigilant against what sociologists call “New Religious Movements” and what most of us called “cults.”

We learned what “secular humanism” was and are learning now about the (not so) New Atheism. We have cautioned each other about the perils of postmodernism, even if many of our watchmen clearly haven’t understood it very well. And especially since 9/11 we have been educating each other about Islam and, to a much lower degree, other religions cropping up increasingly in our cities.

We need to do this kind of work to protect ourselves and our children, and assist our neighbours as they con-

sider spiritual options.

What we have not done well yet, however, is what missionaries have done since the time of the Apostle Paul – namely, look for commonalities with other outlooks to build bridges for mutual education.

We generally have not approached these alternatives with anything like sympathetic understanding, let alone genuine willingness to learn something from them, in our eagerness to tell them what we think is true.

So which kind of Christian theology do thoughtful Buddhists and Muslims respectfully study? The kind that has been open to studying their traditions respectfully – liberal theology.

Whom do feminists read? Again, they read mostly liberal Christians, since many Evangelicals can’t even pronounce the word “feminist” without wincing or sneering, and way too much evangelical theological energy is still being devoted to the decades-old debate on whether women can even preach or pastor.

Some Mormon scholars do read some Evangelicals, but that’s because of a few extraordinary individuals on both sides of a small Mormon-evangelical conversation that always stands in peril of official disavowal by the Utah authorities.

How about homosexuals? As we Evangelicals feel embattled by a culture that seems to press us more and more on a variety of related issues, how hard are we listening for authentic concerns that deserve our respect and even support? What bridge builders do we have to offer them?

Don’t get me wrong. Evangelical theology ought to remain staunchly orthodox. I have no sympathy for evangelical theologians who allow the great truths of the gospel to be nibbled away by intellectual compromise or eroded by confused sentimentality.

What I want to be is truly evangelical, and a “gospel person” should be someone who emulates the great missionaries of the church. Those people studied their neighbours’ ideas so thoroughly that they knew where to build bridges as well as barricades. We’ve been doing rather too well at the latter task for a century. Can we devote more resources, without fear but with humility and caution, to the former?

Can we have something positive to offer the next friendly Buddhist – or Muslim or feminist or homosexual – who wants to explore a respectful form of Christianity? Or is all we have to say simply this: “Aha! I know about you. You’re wrong. Now listen to me...”? **FT**

JOHN STACKHOUSE holds the Sangwoo Youtong Chee Chair of Theology and Culture at Regent College, Vancouver. He is author of *Can God Be Trusted? Faith and the Challenge of Evil* (IVP Books, 2nd edition, 2009).

This spring don't miss

THE BIG 72 HOUR SALE



ONLY \$12.99
Reg. \$24.99

Jesus of Nazareth (2 DVD)
"A sincere faithfulness to the Bible. A must see!" Director Franco Zeffirelli creates an accurate portrayal of Christ's birth, life, death and resurrection.
ISBN 9781400311934



ONLY \$4.99
Reg. \$9.99

Who Is Jesus (DVD)
The perfect introduction to Jesus. Excerpts from the Visual Bible. A moving portrayal of a humble carpenter who changed the world forever!
622308017890



NEW!

Burning Lights CD
Chris Tomlin
5099960707727



ONLY \$13.99
Reg. \$15.99

Zion CD
Hillsong United
9320428227591



ONLY \$5.99
Reg. \$10.99

All Occasion Value Box
24 Cards with scripture with 24 envelopes, 2 each of 12 designs.
692403194655



ONLY \$7.99
Reg. \$15.99

ONLY 16¢ PER CARD

All Occasion Value Box
50 Cards with scripture with 50 envelopes, 2 each of 25 designs.
692403193375

Ceramic Mugs
Capacity 14 fl oz
Packaged in a gift box.



Blessed
MUG272



Treasured
MUG273



Grace
MUG274



Peace
MUG275

Mugs with Scriptures

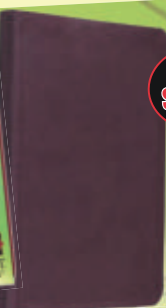
ONLY \$4.99
Reg. \$10.99



ONLY \$9.99
Reg. \$15.99

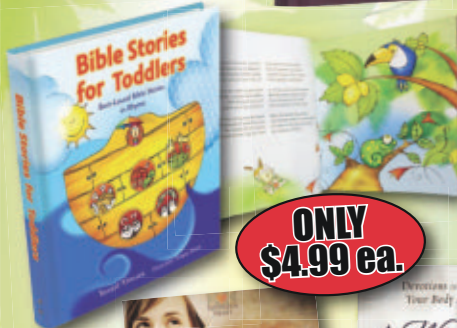
Great Deals on Bibles!

NLT Bible
Premium Value
Bible Slimline
Red Brick
ISBN 9781414364704



ONLY \$14.99

ESV Gift Bible -
Tru-tone
Black
ISBN 9781433535611
Coffee
ISBN 9781433535628
Burgundy
ISBN 9781433535635
Pink
ISBN 9781433535642

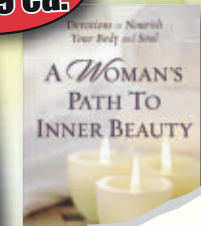


Bible Stories For Toddlers
Best-loved Bible stories in rhyme.
Reg. \$10.99
ISBN 9781770368484

ONLY \$4.99 ea.



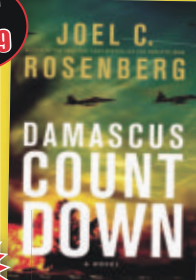
A Dream For Hannah
Hannah's Heart Series #1 of 3
Torn between her strong Amish faith and longing for adventure, young Hannah discovers she has much to learn about life and love.
Regular \$12.99
ISBN 9780736930451



Invitations to Renewal
A WOMAN'S PATH TO INNER BEAUTY

THE BIG 72 HOUR SALE

Special Edition \$14.99



NEW!

From New York Times Bestselling Authors... Damascus Countdown, The Twelfth Imam Series #3
Author Rosenberg's novel eerily mirrors current world events in this compelling story taking place in the Middle East conflict between Iran and Israel. CIA Operative David Shirazi infiltrates the Iranian regime after Israel launches a strike against it and races against time to prevent nuclear disaster.
ISBN 9781414380728



ONLY \$14.99
Reg. \$15.99

Follow Me, A Call to Die. A Call to Live.
Platt reveals a biblical picture of what is meant to be truly Christian: what we must forsake of this world and the indescribable joy and deep satisfaction when we live for Christ.
ISBN 9781414373287

Over 60 participating stores in Canada, 72 hour specials are easily accessible.

For a list of participating stores and the complete flyer, visit www.godeeper.ca or e-mail 72@godeeper.ca




WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO
TRULY **END POVERTY** IN
THE LIFE OF A CHILD?

**IT TAKES
THE GOSPEL.**



That's why Compassion works **only with the local church** in 26 of the world's poorest 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**.

CONNECT WITH COMPASSION:
www.compassion.ca | facebook.com/CompassionCA

 Releasing children from poverty
Compassion[®]
in Jesus' name