

Faith Today

To Connect, Equip and Inform Evangelical Christians in Canada

JULY/AUGUST 2013



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Social Media for Social Good

How ministries are building their followings in the Twitterverse



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**Keeping Our Youth
in the Faith** p. 39

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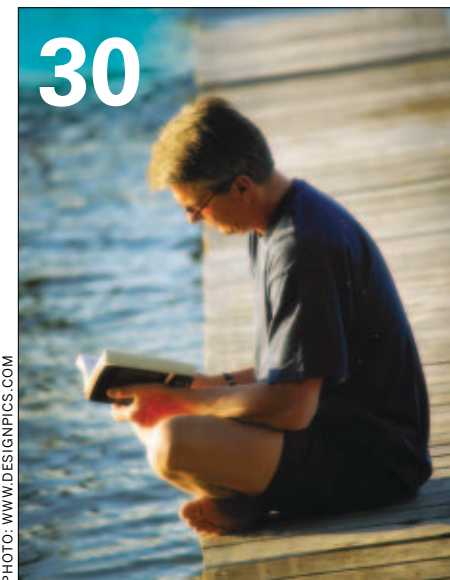


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Tweet Like Jesus

Learn about social media and find some good summer reading.

More than half of Canadians (52 per cent) are active users of social media to either make their thoughts known on public policy issues or to learn more about the issues in the first place, according to a new Ipsos Public Affairs study.

We're not surprised. Canadians have always ranked high on Internet usage and social media engagement.

Many of our ministries and churches are also using social media to reach their audiences and further their missions.

All of us, whether new to social media or experienced users, can re-think our approach and learn some emerging best practices. Our cover story helps meet both those needs.

And when you read this issue online, you'll also benefit from the ways the stories (and advertisements) can come to life with video clips and helpful hyperlinks.

Some of the video clips are funny ("Bill, why are we up a tree?") and feature our authors giving helpful background information (so that's how Jim Beverley and John Stackhouse actually talk).

Please support *Faith Today* by sharing one of our articles or videos with friends online.

For your summer reading pleasure, this issue also includes book recommendations submitted by a variety of evangelical leaders from across the country. Peek over the shoulders of Dave Toycen, Bill Fietje, Marg Gibb and others to find something to add to your own summer reading list.

This issue we finally get to welcome onboard Stephen Bedard, our new associate editor. You'll find a full-page introduction to him on page 16. He has made contributions throughout, but he especially shines in the interview with Leonard Sweet, putting our social media use into a larger, gospel context.

Our favourite line from that interview is: "Jesus would tweet, but not as the world tweets."

So may you tweet like Jesus – and follow Him in every way. Have a great summer! **FT**

Our favourite line from that interview is: "Jesus would tweet, but not as the world tweets."

BILL FLEDDERUS of Hamilton, Ont., and **KAREN STILLER** of Port Perry, Ont., are senior editors at *Faith Today*.

There's a video clip with this article. View it at www.faithtoday.ca/summer2013page7.

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Expression or Law Breaking?

Re: Cases Challenge Limit to Free Expression (May/June 2013)

"Linda Gibbons," writes Stephen Bedard, "has spent ten of the last 20 years in jail for her attempts at expression." And later: "Shouldn't there be room in a mosaic for those who support . . . pro-life and pro-choice?"

Linda was not jailed for her "expression." She was jailed for breaking the law. She was protesting inside of the legal 150-metre boundary. Nobody has ever tried to prevent her from expressing her opinion (even though she is clearly attempting to silence theirs). She

just has to do it while also respectfully submitting to legal boundaries. It's simple courtesy.

Why devote your life to being a public nuisance, a taxpayer burden and the misguided voice of God? There is no biblical precedent for Christians to impose their moral convictions on a resistant secular culture. Moral deviation from Christian values in Paul's day was rampant, but does Paul ever encourage protests or pickets? Never. Perhaps because he was so incred-



ibly busy trying to clean up sin and moral decay inside the church. Also because he was kinda big on obeying the laws in whatever country he inhabited.

Thanks for giving me the opportunity for free expression :)

Mary Manson
Guelph, Ont.

Financial Questions

Re: Listening to Idle No More (Mar/Apr 2013)

I am in favour of helping people in need and also helping them find a way out of their misery,

but after reading the stories Matthew Coon Come and Ray Aldred give in the magazine, I just had to answer.

As broadcaster Ezra Levant pointed out in January (details at www.ezrlevant.com), Attawapiskat has 21 full-time paid politicians for a town of 300 homes, \$450,000 a month pours into Attawapiskat in welfare payments, and Attawapiskat First Nations owns \$9 million worth of stocks in Apple, Disney and Chinese cellphone companies.

Coon Come and Aldred are making a laughingstock out of honest and charitable Canadians.

Ernie Konrad
Kitchener, Ont.

Milestones

APPOINTED

Angela Draskovic as president and CEO of Yonge Street Mission, succeeding Rick Tobias and Bill Ryan. Draskovic has

26 years' experience in business and not-for-profit leadership, including at Muskoka Woods Foundation, Lucent Technologies, Zhone Technologies, ZOÉ Alliance Incorporated and on various boards including Yonge Street Mission and The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. Yonge Street Mission has been reaching out to meet the needs of people living in poverty in Toronto since 1896.

David H. Johnson as president of Providence University College and Theological Seminary. He has been serving as interim president (since the 2012 retirement of August Konkel) and previously held several vice presidential roles. Johnson is a professor of New Testament and holds degrees in economics/education, Old Testament/Semitic studies, and theological/biblical studies.

Kevin Tabuchi as president and Teresa Tabuchi as CEO/dean of CHAKAM

School of the Bible in Prince Albert, Sask. They succeed founding president/CEO John Fryters. Kevin and Teresa are co-pastors at the Canadian Revival Centre in Prince Albert. CHAKAM, established in 2002, has campuses in Uganda, South Sudan, Ghana, Tanzania, Kenya, Peru and Canada. CHAKAM is officially registered with Saskatchewan Advanced Education, and offers a number of biblical studies and missionary training programs on campus and through its distance education division.

Yaw Perbi of Montreal as president of International Student Ministries Canada, headquartered in Three Hills,

Alta. He succeeds Paul Workentine, president for the last ten years. Dr. Perbi was born and raised in Ghana and graduated from Ghana Medical School in 2005. He has leadership experience in three countries.

ISMC began in 1984, and works with international students in more than 18 college and university cities across five provinces in Canada.

PARTNERED

Three francophone theological schools in Quebec – one Mennonite Brethren, another Christian & Missionary Alliance, and the third Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada – signed a partnership agreement in March. The three are accredited through l'Université Laval. Kristen Corrigan is president of l'École de théologie évangélique de Montréal. L'Institut Biblique VIE is headed by Jean Martin. Gary Connors is president of l'Institut Biblique du Québec. A fourth school, la Faculté de théologie réformée Farel, also partners in limited ways, but is accredited through l'Université de Montréal.

Providence University College and the **North American Institute for Indigenous Theological Studies** (NAIITS) signed an agreement in May to offer a bachelor's degree in community development studies. The program, to start January 2014, will be designed and delivered by Indigenous people and will include a significant component of in-community internship.

AWARDED

"A Visit to the World's Newest Country," an article by Faith Today senior editor Karen Stiller, won this year's

PHOTO: WWW.THINKINGFORWARD.CA



Angela Draskovic



Yaw Perbi

Gender No Big Deal

Re: Q&A (Mar/Apr 2013)

Thank you for featuring a female lead pastor and not making a big deal about gender.

Carol Stewart
Surrey, B.C.

Faith Today loves to receive your letters. Even when you disagree (or we disagree with your disagreement!), your letters remind us all that we live in evangelicalism's big tent, where there is ample room for many opinions. Visit us at www.facebook.ca/faithtoday to join in on discussions sparked by letters to the editor and more.

A. C. Forrest Memorial Award for socially conscious religious journalism. Three other *Faith Today* articles from 2012 were also applauded at this year's Canadian Church Press awards, including a service journalism article on Bible software by Mark Carroll, the magazine's regular media reviews section, and its use of multimedia. Judging comments for these, along with awards for many of Canada's other vital Christian periodicals, are available at www.canadianchurchpress.com.

RENAMED

Thrive is the new name for *The Evangelical Baptist* magazine, published quarterly by the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada, a denomination of 500 churches headquartered in Guelph, Ont. Managing editor is Lynda Shultz. Fellowship president is Steve Jones. *Thrive* is published in both English and French.

Live is the new name for *The Link & Visitor*, a Baptist magazine for women published bi-monthly by the Canadian Baptist Women of Ontario and Quebec. CBWOQ is headquartered in Etobicoke, Ont., and headed by Brenda Mann. Editor is Renée James.

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All-Canadian Bible Resource Hits the Net

Reading the Bible and having a regular devotional time just got easier. Scripture Union's new bilingual interactive bible reading guide is now available online. Powered by the Canadian Bible Society, theStory (www.scriptureunion.ca) provides easy access to the chronological biblical narrative from the Old and New Testaments.

Each installment also includes a reflection on the Bible passages, authored by a who's who of Canadian Christian media personalities, church and Christian agency leaders.

The accompanying prayer is tailored to support the teaching and all are linked to social media. The guide's features were developed to appeal to all denominations and a global audience, with an emphasis on the Canadian perspective.

theStory is a response to research findings that most Canadian Christian churchgoers, and many Canadians, are not reading the Bible.

And while theStory is designed to appeal to young adults, "Its delivery is cognizant of the world we live in, a more modern framework," explains Murray Lawson, Scripture Union president.

The format, with software that tracks a user's frequency and date of use, allows each site visitor to follow the biblical narrative chronologically, at their own pace. Readers may choose from several translations of the Bible.

theStory is a way to "bring the bigger community into the biblical story, that is the story of the whole of humanity, and at the heart of it is the cross of Jesus Christ," says Lawson. "We are characters in the ongoing story as are the characters we read about in the Scriptures today."

Users of theStory are encouraged to respond to the writers and share observations with fellow readers in a blog format. The entire bible can be read in four to five years through theStory.

Future plans for theStory include separate versions for youth, children and families, a visual timeline, youth writers, additional languages and Christian visual art. **FT** —Michele Zarins

New Proof That Child Sponsorship Really Works



Barry Slauenwhite, president of Compassion Canada, with children at a Compassion project in Kisoro, southern Uganda.

PHOTO: COMPASSION CANADA

If you sponsor a child through one of the many Christian organizations that offer that option, you might have been met with cynical stares from skeptical friends who doubted it made any difference.

Now, there's proof it does.

Bruce Wydick, an economics professor at the University of San Francisco, had a graduate student interested in measuring the benefits of sponsorship. From those discussions emerged an important study in six countries that tracked the benefits experienced by adults who had been sponsored through Compassion as a child, one of the best-known Christian child sponsorship organizations.

"Although we do our own internal studies, I was shocked that this was the first independent group investigating the effectiveness of child sponsorship," says Barry Slauenwhite, president of Compassion Canada.

If that aspect of the study was surprising, the actual results were just as important. Wydick, who has considerable experience testing the effectiveness of relief projects, was also surprised at what he found. "We are used to very modest results from other projects. However, the Compassion study revealed that there was a significant impact, something surprising and exciting coming from previous experiences," explains Wydick.

The study, published in the April 2013 edition of the *Journal of Political Economy*, demonstrates that child sponsorship, at least a Compassion-style model (where the funds support an individual child and not the entire community), leads to measurable benefits later in life.

The study tracked a significantly higher chance for a sponsored child to complete high school, attend university and acquire a white-collar job. Not only did the sponsored child benefit, there was a spillover benefit for younger siblings, even if they were never sponsored.

Slauenwhite is also pleased the study looks at those who are now adults, measuring the effectiveness of the program some years ago. "We have greatly improved our program and if the study was repeated with those children currently sponsored, we would expect even greater outcomes," he says.

While all those interested in child sponsorship will be encouraged by these results, this study did not examine a community-centred model of child sponsorship. **FT**

—Stephen Bedard



Bruce Wydick

SUPPLIED PHOTO

An App to Redeem Your Commute

Can you plant a church with a smartphone? Ryan Sim has an app for that. It's called Redeem the Commute (www.redeemthecommute.com) and he's hoping people will download it, share it with others, and eventually help plant a new church in Ajax, Ont.

Sim, a priest of the Anglican Diocese of Toronto, recently moved his family to Ajax, a suburban community east of Toronto. From here Sim is reaching out to commuters, a group he says has precious little time for family and community with so much time taken up each week just getting to and from work.

The concept of the Redeem the Commute app, which launched in Nov. 2012, is not to start with a building and invite people in to worship.

Instead, Sim explains, the idea is to first serve people's needs in order to create new followers of Christ – and then build groups of disciples who can come together to create a church community.

The Redeem the Commute app offers online courses on topics such as marriage and parenting.

The course content, provided by Alpha Canada, is divided into manageable sections, with videos or podcasts that require a commitment of 10 minutes per day or less.

"This is a great evangelism tool," says Sim, "because it allows people to start conversations about things that matter with people they know." Sim suggests that a commuter might



PHOTO: ROBERT ROBOTHAM

say, "We have kids the same age. Why don't we take this parenting course together?"

Groups can register on the Redeem the Commute website, take the course together, and begin to form community. "It will take time," he says. "Discipleship takes a long time." The original intention was to open a new church in the fall of 2013, but the spring of 2014 is looking like a more realistic target.

As of May 2013, almost 700 people had installed Redeem the Commute on their phones.

In addition to online courses, Sim creates special content for his app, which is also available on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and on the Redeem the Commute website.

He describes these "Daily Challenges" as "discipleship-focused content with a weekly rhythm." There is a different topic each week, which is explored and presented using short videos from Monday to Friday. Topics to date have included priorities, divorce and grace.

There are no challenges on weekends as Saturdays are for rest and Sundays are reserved for community – and eventually a new church community planted in Ajax. **FT**

–Mary Lou Harrison

Note-worthy

Attendance at Religious Services Lowers Risk of Depression

Regular attendance at a religious service lowers the risk of depression, according to a study published in the April issue of the *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*. Researchers at the University of Saskatchewan were quoted as saying the incidence of clinical depression was 22 per cent lower among those who attended church services at least once a month. The study found that people identifying themselves as spiritual but not attending any religious service did not experience any health benefit.

Canada's Non-Christian Population Growing

Two-thirds of Canada's population – just over 22.1 million people – report affiliation with a Christian religion, but the number of Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists is increasing, according to a StatsCan survey. Across the country the Muslim population is growing at a rate exceeding other religions. More than 7.8 million, almost 25 per cent of the population, had no religious affiliation.



PHOTO: SUE CARELESS

Author Explains The Great Evangelical Recession

Author and pastor John S. Dickerson explained his thoughts about a declining evangelical North American Church in an interview with the CBC's Jian Ghomeshi. Dickerson argues the dramatic decline of evangelicalism in North America comes from the lack of major evangelical role models, combined with recent social



PHOTO: WWW.JOHNSDICKERSON.COM

John S. Dickerson

movements. Link to the interview at www.theEFC.ca/dickerson2013, beginning at the 52-minute mark.

Polyamorists Strive for Legal Recognition

Polyamory – having more than one intimate relationship at a time with the knowledge and consent of all involved – was confirmed legal in Canada in 2011, but advocates are hoping for more. The Canadian Polyamory Advocacy Association (www.polyadvocacy.ca) held its first Canadian conference in Vancouver May 31 to June 2 with the theme "Claiming Our Right to Love." The association aims to promote awareness of polyamory and gain the same legal recognition as other couples.

Wycliffe Issues New Translation Guidelines

Wycliffe Bible Translators issued new translation guidelines in May, updating controversial guidelines from 2011 that affirmed the importance of recognizing the familial relationship between the divine Son and His Father, but left flexibility to use other language depending on the cultural context. Some Bible translations used in Muslim-dominated cultures avoided the phrase "Son of God." The new guidelines state that Bible translators should use the words "father" and "son" to refer to the distinct persons of the Trinity whenever possible. However, it also recommends choosing "the most suitable words in light of the semantics of the target language."

Millions of Baby Deaths Preventable

The riskiest day of a child's life is the first day, according to a new report from Save the Children. More than a million babies die on the day they are born every year. The 14 countries with the highest rates of first-day deaths are all in Africa. The report identifies three major causes of newborn mortality – birth complications, premature birth and infections, and says universal access to inexpensive products could save more than a million babies a year. **FT**



–Darryl Dash

Christians Welcome Migrant Workers Through Concert



PHOTO: © JANE ANDRES

A welcome concert thanks migrant workers for their hard work in harvesting crops in the Niagara area. In May, the concert featured the Toronto Mass Choir.

The annual arrival of international migrant workers into Canada's farming communities is a dramatic change in the makeup of those communities.

Over 26,000 migrant farm workers come to Canada each year through the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program, a government program that helps Canadian farmers hire international labour.

Ironically, those same workers often feel invisible in their temporary home. But Christians in at least one farming community are working hard to make

migrant workers feel welcome.

Jane Andres is the owner of Applewood Hollow Bed and Breakfast in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont. Her first attempt at outreach to the migrant workers that moved into her community each year was modest – the draping of a Jamaican flag and a sign with a simple “Thank You.”

When a worker asked her the reason for the sign, Andres responded, “I just want to thank you for your hard work in harvesting our crops.”

Eventually, along with the crops a friendship grew. Andres even visited Ja-

maica to meet some of their families. “It was wonderful to meet their awesome families and to get a sense of what they leave behind to come to Canada,” explains Andres.

With her eyes open to the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of migrant workers, the next step for Andres was to get other people on board and organize an event to reach out to them.

A welcome concert in 2007 featured soul musicians Newworldson, whose reggae influence appealed to the migrant workers.

In May 2013 the welcome concert featured the Toronto Mass Choir, and it was another huge success. The event was hosted at Orchard Park Bible Church in Niagara-on-the-Lake to accommodate the growing numbers. It was a time for migrant workers, farmers and people from the community to join together and experience

something beyond cultural differences.

“One of the scripture passages that inspired me to action and sustained me over the years was Jesus’ command for us to love God and love our neighbours,” explains Andres.

She sees a huge need to reach migrant workers and dreams of a time when churches will catch a vision for this ministry. “The place to start is not with programs but with friendship, with taking the time to get to know the workers personally, to do something as simple as offering a ride to church.” **FT** *–Stephen Bedard*

Apologetics by Blog

A group of Canadian bloggers has grouped together to form a blogging coalition to provide apologetics to a generation that lives online. The Canadian Apologetics Coalition (CAC) collaborates in writing, encouraging one another and promoting their respective work.

The CAC presently consists of a dozen blogs. Some of the blogs belong to individual writers, while others are maintained by multiple bloggers and contain feature articles posted from other blogs and websites.

The bloggers live in B.C., Alberta, Ontario and Quebec, and

share a Twitter feed (@maplecoalition) to keep one another and their readers updated on their writing activities.

They are also proudly Canadian, acknowledging that a distinctly Canadian approach to apologetics acknowledges the multicultural, multifaith reality of our country.

Jojo Ruba is a Calgary youth pastor and executive director of Faith Beyond Belief (blog.faithbeyondbelief.ca), one of the participating blogs.

“Modern apologetics is different because young people are so desperate for this kind of information, and all this information is available online about why Christianity is not true. It’s so important for us to be online providing reasons for why

Social Media Ministry Energizes Back to God Ministries

Social media has ushered in a new phase of Back to God Ministries' media ministry. Since its first radio broadcast from Chicago in 1939, Back to God Ministries International (www.backtogod.net) has been using media to share the gospel. That is the ministry's mission – "To share the gospel in communities worldwide using radio, the Internet and other technology."

The ministry began working in Canada in 1977, using phone support volunteers to answer questions about *Faith 20*, one of its TV programs. Back to God Ministries also developed Internet outreach programs through international media teams worldwide.

"We literally saw outreach multiply exponentially," says Paul Vandersteen, advancement officer at the Canadian office in Burlington, Ont.

Back to God Ministries International currently has 34 websites in 10 languages. Of these sites, 32 link to Facebook, 11 to Twitter, and 11 to blogs.

Ministry teams use various social media tools to provide podcasts, devotional messages and discipleship resources to different language groups. The Chinese ministry team uses Renren (Chinese Facebook), sinablog and weibo (Chinese Twitter). The Japanese ministry team uses pajapaja.jp (Japanese Facebook). All these forms of social media allow Back to God Ministries International to reach untapped audiences.

"An Arabic Facebook page that introduces the teachings of Jesus has a significant following of those disenfranchised by the more radical element of Islam," says Vandersteen. In Russia Back to God Ministries International sends text messages to people who have subscribed to the service. When Back to God Ministries International started using social media in China, they received more than a million responses to their websites in a single year.

Social media also provides unique opportunities to share the gospel in places where freedom of expression is limited.

"In the Middle East many listeners want to respond secretly to our radio or online outreach," says Vandersteen. "Many listeners can send private text messages, which



Back to God Ministries use social media tools to provide podcasts, devotional messages and discipleship resources to different language groups. Inset: Paul Vandersteen

PHOTO: HANS MULDER

our staff answers through secure SMS (Short Message Service, also known as text messaging)."

When listeners in the Middle East indicate a sincere desire to follow Christ, "They receive weekly mentoring calls via Skype," Vandersteen says. "When possible, new believers are enfolded into secret groups of Christians who meet for prayer, worship and discipleship."

Back to God Ministries in Canada urges Canadian Christians to keep ministry teams in prayer. "Pray for wisdom to use our resources to develop gospel outreach in developing countries where social media is increasing," says Vandersteen. **FT**
–Rachel Baarda

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

this faith is true," says Ruba. "We want to make sure we have resources online so young people can find reasons there for why faith is reasonable."

Ruba says that, ironically, the sheer volume of material available makes good information more difficult to find and the CAC's blogging efforts even more strategic and necessary.

"The way we write is important. I come from a journalism background. Blogging lends itself to the kind of writing that appeals to a generation with a short attention span," says Ruba. "People, Christian or not, are looking for reason to hope. A culture that says there is no right or wrong can never give hope because it cannot explain hopelessness."

The CAC does not shy away from controversial issues. "Contending for Life and Sexuality" was a recent theme and included posts on subjects like abortion.

Paul Buller of the Network of Christian Apologists in Calgary and another CAC blogger (whyjesusblog.wordpress.com) appreciates the CAC's opportunities for cross-promotion. Beyond the obvious strength in numbers and interdenominational unity the coalition offers, Buller says, "There is a diversity of expertise and interests. I don't have to be an expert in everything when other bloggers tackle other subjects with great mastery. Properly answering the question 'Why believe?' is a task of potentially eternal importance." **FT**
–Matthew Forrest Lowe



Two Days in June

Are our laws on prostitution and euthanasia outdated?

It was an unusual day. On the steps of the Supreme Court were two groups, mostly women with banners and placards. One group wore blue T-shirts, the other wore red.

One group decried the victimization of women and youth in prostitution. Canada should prosecute the johns and the pimps instead, they lamented.

The other group's red T-shirts were emblazoned with the word "whore" (using a familiar Coke-style font). Canada's laws on prostitution are outdated, they lamented – it's none of the government's business if someone wants to be a "whore."

The Justices were very animated. Usually when lawyers present their arguments, judges occasionally interrupt. This day their questions came fast and often.

Presenters from all sides reminded us prostitution isn't illegal in Canada, although many activities associated with it are. Clearly Parliament's aim in the past was to restrict prostitution. The questions asked that day were: Do current laws violate the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*? Are they causing more harm than good?

Some, like those in the red shirts, see the laws as constraints, as chains inhibiting their freedom to make money by selling sex.

Others, like those in blue (and the EFC), say we need laws to protect the vulnerable. Studies suggest 90 per cent of prostitutes would prefer to do something else but feel trapped. They would not be better protected if Canada were to decriminalize prostitution-related activities.

Such a step would be regressive, not progressive. In the trajectory of recent history in the West – from the abolition of slavery to the development of employment laws to universal condemnation of human trafficking – each stage involved rejecting practices that subjugate and exploit.

Selling sex should not be an industry, sex should not be commercialized and people commodified, and youth and women should not be exploited.

The day before the hearing, the Government of Quebec

announced it plans to permit euthanasia in limited circumstances. It contends euthanasia is a form of medical treatment – hence a provincial and not a federal matter – and the Criminal Code sanctions on euthanasia should not apply to medical treatment.

Historically Canadian laws have drawn a bright line affirming it's wrong to kill another person. This is consistent with the sixth commandment. Tracing back to the Hippocratic oath, medicine is committed to "do no harm," and our healthcare system defaults to the preservation of life, not the hastening of death.

Groups representing people with disabilities are particularly wary of attempts to amend the laws. They see legalization as a direct threat.

In the early 1990s the EFC intervened along with the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops to argue our laws on euthanasia affirm the sanctity of human life. And the Supreme Court of Canada agreed.

Yet a growing number of people today see laws against physician-assisted death and euthanasia as chains that limit their freedom to die as they wish.

Psalm 2 has a verse that now leaps off the page for me: "Let us break their chains and throw off their shackles." Usually such language in Scripture refers to the liberation offered by the gospel. But in Psalm 2 the "chains and shackles" refer to the decrees of God the kings want to break. They seek freedom in rejecting God's law.

Are our laws restricting euthanasia and prostitution shackles on our freedom? Or are they good news to the vulnerable who would otherwise be exploited?

Relief from bondage or oppression is not found in the absence of law, but in good laws. Years ago the Law Reform Commission of Canada wrote, "In truth the Criminal law is a moral system. It may be crude, it may have its faults, it may be rough and ready, but basically is it a system of applied morality and justice" (Report No. 3, 1976, p. 16).

These issues are emotionally charged because they drive to the foundational principles that sustain our "system of applied morality and justice." These issues raise profound questions about how life is to be valued and stewarded, what it means to uphold or violate the dignity of others, and when we agree to limit our freedom for the well-being of others.

The debates ahead will be vigorous. We should not shun them, but engage with wisdom and respect so we all will come to understand the comfort and security of good laws. **FT**



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.

There's a video clip with this article. View it at www.faithtoday.ca/summer2013page14.

Prostitution Challenge Reaches Supreme Court

The EFC intervened in the Supreme Court of Canada in a June case which challenges Canada's prostitution laws (*Attorney General of Canada v. Bedford*). The EFC argued that the decriminalization of prostitution would lead to increased rates of human trafficking and victimization of vulnerable people. The court's decision is expected in a few months. Keep updated at www.theEFC.ca/bedford.

EFC Board Appoints New Chair

Bill Fietje, president of the Associated Gospel Churches, became chair of the EFC's board of directors on May 10. Past chair David Wells, general superintendent of The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, has now completed his term of service, along with board members Jessica Di Sabatino and Angela Draskovic. The board includes members from across the country who ensure the mission, vision and strategic ends are pursued effectively. They work closely with EFC President Bruce J. Clemenger. To pray for board members by name, visit www.theEFC.ca/board.

Prayer Alerts for Syria and Vietnam

The EFC's Religious Liberty Commission recently issued prayer alerts for Syria and Vietnam. Read the latest alerts (or sign up to receive them by email) at www.theEFC.ca/alerts. Prayer over these troubled places remains needed.

National Prayer Breakfast

EFC President Bruce J. Clemenger and other members of the EFC team again attended the National Prayer Breakfast in Ottawa, an annual June event that draws politicians and government staff from all parties. Interns from the EFC's Centre for Faith and Public Life also participated in the related National Student Forum.

Military Chaplains Retreat

EFC President Bruce J. Clemenger recently participated in the annual Canadian Forces Military Chaplains retreat in Cornwall. Clemenger is a member of the Interfaith Committee on Canadian Military Chaplaincy and represents the 50 regular and reserve force evangelical chaplains. He invites Christians to pray for chaplains in the military, corrections facilities, hospitals and other institutions.

Questions on Bullying Bill

The EFC released its analysis of Manitoba's antibullying legislation in May, expressing concerns about serious flaws. *Falling Short: Manitoba's Bill 18, The Safe and Inclusive Schools Act* can be downloaded at www.theEFC.ca/Bill18. The EFC has identified a dozen areas of concern in this short bill, says Don Hutchinson, the EFC's vice-president and general legal counsel. "Our concerns, as well as those expressed by representatives from the Jewish,

Muslim, Sikh, Coptic and Catholic communities, should give Manitoba's legislators a reason to pause."

Religion in Public Discourse

EFC President Bruce J. Clemenger and Policy Analyst Julia Beazley were two of the speakers at Bridging the Secular Divide: Religion and Canadian Public Discourse at McGill University May 27-28. It included religious leaders as well as secular thinkers. Details, including links to some media coverage, at www.theEFC.ca/bridging2013.

Pray for Family and Congregation of Tim Bosma

EFC President Bruce J. Clemenger assured the family and congregation of Tim Bosma that the EFC community would pray for them. The Ontario man went missing May 6 and his death was not confirmed until May 14. Please join in those prayers – coast to coast – for God's abiding mercy and grace toward his widow and child, parents and family. Words of encouragement can be sent in care of www.ancastercrc.org.


Colleges Consider Native Theological Education

Christian Higher Education Canada (CHEC) is an independent association of 33 post-secondary schools affiliated with the EFC. Aileen Van Ginkel, an EFC vice-president who represents the EFC on the board of CHEC, recently participated in its annual conference and board meetings in Winnipeg. She also participated in a symposium co-sponsored by CHEC and the North American Institute for Indigenous Theological Studies (NAIITS). Participants considered partnership frameworks that will help meet the needs of indigenous Christians for theological education in Canada.

Catholic-Evangelical Dialogue

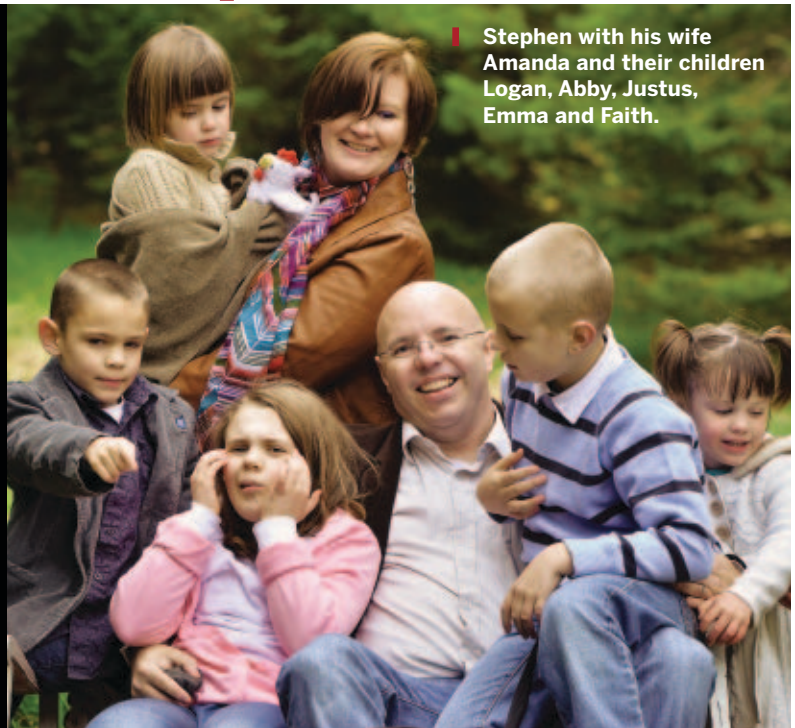
Aileen Van Ginkel, the EFC's vice-president of ministry services, attended an April 17-18 meeting of the Roman Catholic-Evangelical Dialogue. This group of 12 meets twice a year to pray, study areas of faith and practice where there may be disagreement or misunderstanding, and propose future projects. In the past 20 years the EFC and Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops have engaged together in several court cases.

Condolences on Deaths of Elijah Harper, George Beverly Shea

EFC President Bruce J. Clemenger extended condolences in May upon the death of Elijah Harper, calling him a "courageous man" whose call in 1995 for aboriginal and non-aboriginal religious leaders to join for a Sacred Assembly resulted in a significant statement. Clemenger also extended condolences upon the death April 16 of Canadian soloist George Beverly Shea at age 104. Details at www.theEFC.ca/current. 

Q & A With Stephen Bedard

Stephen Bedard is *Faith Today's* new associate editor. So, in the space normally used for brief interviews with EFC affiliate pastors, we've decided to grill him this time instead. Bedard is an editor, writer, pastor, chaplain and scholar. He lives with his wife and children in Cambridge, Ont. We're happy to have him on board.



Stephen with his wife Amanda and their children Logan, Abby, Justus, Emma and Faith.

PHOTO: CHRISTINE REID PHOTOGRAPHY

What would you most like to know about *Faith Today* readers?

I'd like to hear from them about how God's Kingdom is being revealed in their communities. I love that *Faith Today* includes a wide geographical and denominational variety. I want to know what God is doing within all of this diversity.

You were in pastoral ministry before taking a break and then joining the *Faith Today* team. What connection do you see between that work and this?

I see this as a continuation. What I loved about pastoral ministry was helping people make the connection between their faith and the world around them. *Faith Today* brings readers face to face with the hard issues and challenges them to apply a faith perspective. *Faith Today* allows me to continue the pastoral work that I love.

What Bible passage do you most connect with right now?

For a long time my favourite passage has been "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect" (1 Peter 3:15). This reflects my interest in apologetics, but I also see in this passage a guide to healthy communication with our culture. It reminds us that we have a hope to offer people based on something real, and that we must express ourselves with gentleness and respect. I attempt to model all that I do on this passage.

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

One of the best books that I have read lately was *Churches That Make a Difference: Reaching Your Community with Good News and Good Works* by Ronald Sider, Philip Olson and Heidi Unruh (Baker Books, 2002). The authors argue that when it comes to evangelism and social justice, it's not either/or but rather both/and. I also recently read John Stackhouse's *Humble Apologetics: Defending the Faith Today* (Oxford University Press, 2006). Stackhouse does a masterful job of explaining the cultural forces in today's society and how the Church can effectively engage our world.

What is your biggest concern for the Canadian Church?

My biggest concern is the lack of biblical literacy. The temptation for many churches is to adjust to where the people are at, rather than to help them grow in knowledge. Discipleship never has the short-term benefits of entertaining programs, and yet in the long term it is the only hope for the Church.

How do you see a magazine like *Faith Today* playing a role in the Canadian Church?

What I love about *Faith Today* is that it brings to our attention the things that are happening across Canada and helps us to learn from them. We learn about the challenging issues taking place in our culture and we learn about the exciting things happening in Canadian churches. *Faith Today* is an important resource that helps us to see the bigger picture. Canadian churches can see that what they are doing is taking place in a larger context. This helps us to work together and to learn from one another. **FT**

Are Morals Still Relevant?

By Don Hutchinson

Some say our prostitution laws should not enforce morals.

Ethics, morals and rules of right conduct have generally been established based on principles. Lately though, it seems they are being based in the more flexible currency of values, particularly personal values.

Principles by definition are firm and established, like the Ten Commandments or the call to “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and love your neighbour as yourself” (Luke 10:27).

But with “values” we are more likely to consider the Ten Strong Suggestions; or love the Lord our God for an hour on Sundays and not think about Him the rest of the week unless we’re in trouble; or love those neighbours who are kind to us and hate people who disagree with us.

Kijiji, eBay and Craigslist illustrate quickly how people value objects differently. Each individual’s claim to values has led to a societal mire where morality is derided as old fashioned, based in dubious religious texts. Perhaps it’s relevant to how you might want to live your life, some say, but your personal morality is irrelevant to how I want to live mine.

A friend of mine (a politician) notes that all laws are expressions of morality. Why is murder illegal? Our society has accepted the principle that we should not kill each other. Our legislature has passed legislation to enforce that moral position.

He adds that all budgets are moral documents. What we choose to spend money on identifies what the government values and what it does not. What is or is not valued reveals the underlying principles the government has accepted.

In June we were before the Supreme

Court of Canada on behalf of the EFC presenting principled arguments in support of laws against prostitution.

Many people are surprised to learn that in Canada prostitution has never been illegal. Our early parliamentarians chose to make the acts surrounding prostitution illegal, those acts that make human beings into commodities to be bought and sold. So we have laws that forbid communicating to sell or buy (which generally places power in the hands of the buyer); operating a brothel (where women are often hidden from view and kept from leaving); and living on the avails of prostitution (getting paid, most often forcibly taking payment from the women held in the “stable” of the pimp).

Such laws don’t imply approval of prostitution. This legal heritage indicates an understanding of the inherent vulnerability of almost all women, children and men who find themselves for sale in need of redemption rather than imprisonment. (To be clear, it is primarily women who are prostituted.)

There may be more effective laws to deal with prostitution – laws which directly rather than indirectly target the purchasers and purveyors of sex – but these are the laws we currently have, and they’re being challenged.

The current challenge is that the laws are “moral” and presumably should not be. Could there be any weaker or stronger attack on our laws in the top court of our land than to allege that those laws seek to impose morality?

I say “weaker” because the laws clearly



PHOTO: FRED CHARTRAND

Don Hutchinson

reflect a morality based on the principle that no person should be exploited by another – the same principle that informs our rejection of slavery.

But I say “stronger” because the new morality is perceived to be my right to do whatever I want with whomever I want – without your interference or the interference of the government (unless you can prove

what I’m doing is harmful). Individual rights and personal choice rule!

Let’s not kid ourselves. The link has been established by police force after police force and criminal organization after criminal organization in nation after nation that prostitution is inextricably intertwined with slavery (a.k.a. human trafficking). Virtually all those whose bodies are for sale or rent are in a vulnerable position for any variety of reasons – addiction, abuse, poverty, being without a defender.

While the law does not guarantee protection, the lack of law guarantees exploitation.

It has been said that you can’t enforce morality, which is perhaps why we need law. Morality may not be the outcome of the law, but law has no other source than the moral principles of a community. It’s true you can’t be forced to respect women, children and men on principle – whether the biblical principle of all being made in God’s image or the biblical principle of loving our neighbours as we love ourselves – but our society can, and must, provide a measure of protection through the law. **ET**

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. He blogs at www.theEFC.ca/activateCFPL.

There’s a video clip with this article. View it at www.faihtoday.ca/summer2013page17.



Social Media

If you're an old hand at social media or the new kid on the block, this article will give you fresh ideas and courage to move ahead.

By Patricia Paddey

When Scripture Union (SU) Canada began planning their launch of *theStory* – a free, online Bible reading guide targeted at young adult Canadians – they realized they were going to have to incorporate social media into their marketing strategy. After all, says president and CEO Lawson Murray, “We recognize that younger adults primarily connect through social media today.”

Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Instagram, you name it. *theStory* had a presence there.

“I had no background in any of this,” admits Murray, a grey-haired, 50-something leader who says he’s been surprised to learn social media can be a “key way” of building community. “But I recognize the digital world is here to stay.”

Gathering insight and intelligence from outside experts and younger SU staffers, Murray set out to learn about the world of social media. Together with his colleagues, he drew up a strategy intended to help SU achieve 25,000 subscribers to *theStory* within the first year. Two months into the campaign, Murray reports feeling encouraged – by the anecdotal evidence and the numbers – that their strategy is making headway. They’ve had people from around the world contact them through Facebook and Twitter to encourage, ask questions and pursue associations on a whole other level. “I continue to marvel at how we are connecting in ways that we never did before,” he con-

PHOTO: WWW.GLOWIMAGES.COM

for Social Good

cedes. “Those kinds of connections can lead to all sorts of other relationships.”

Building a following for an online Bible reading guide may not be a typical use of social media, but you could argue it’s all part of a wider trend among non-profit organizations wanting to use social media for social good.

Whether it’s a Facebook status update encouraging friends or fans to sign a petition; tweeting links to a YouTube video educating about a cause; engaging in group discussions on LinkedIn to heighten name recognition and an organization’s profile; or posting gorgeous photographs and quotes to Pinterest in the hopes of inspiring and attracting new supporters, the not-for-profit sector was quick to recognize the value in spreading the word about their work through such popular channels.

After all, when you need to reach the people, you go to where they are. And today, the people are hanging out in online social networks.

The influence of social media is truly staggering. Facebook claims more than a billion monthly active users. Twitter reports their platform “lends itself to cause and action.” Statistics Canada reports 80 per cent of people aged 16 and older in this country use the Internet for personal reasons. A majority of those – 58 percent – use social networking sites. Maybe that’s because in this age of carrying connectivity in our pockets (close to half of all Canadians now own a smartphone), folks have learned social media can empower the powerless.

Scripture Union Canada may be late to the social media game, but they’re not alone. If your church or organization hasn’t yet jumped into the social media pool – but is dipping its toes in the water – take a few deep breaths before you get your feet wet, and consider some expert advice.

Even if you’ve been doing social media for years, it’s a good idea to stop and think about why you do what you do – and try to do it even better.

Develop a Strategy

Taking time to think about what you hope to accomplish through social media is a critical first step, says Jonathan Burns, a Toronto-area digital marketing strategy expert. Burns spends most of his time helping CEOs of small

and mid-size firms develop Internet marketing strategies. Strategy Cube, his consulting firm, offers training sessions several times a month.

“Not everybody’s message lends itself to social media,” Burns cautions. Citing Facebook, Burns says the world’s largest social networking site suggests four reasons people “share” there. “They are: to make life easier, to build relationships, to help others and to craft their identity. So the key question to ask is, ‘Does whatever I’m doing fit well into one of those four things?’”

Even if you think your organization’s mission and mandate will lend itself to one message that goes viral after another, it’s important to know the audience you want to communicate with before you attempt to engage them. Are you reaching out to church members or people in the broader community? People who already believe in the work your organization is doing, or people who need to be convinced? Donors or potential prospects? Adults or teens?

“There are organizations that work on things that are

When you need to reach the people, you go to where they are. And today, the people are hanging out in online social networks.

Ideas From Others

When devising your own social media strategy, it can be helpful to look at what others are doing. Check out these Christian organizations for some ideas:

- In addition to having a presence on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, Compassion Canada offers discussion forums and a prayer hub.
- SIM Canada has a weekly blog and photostream on Flickr.
- MEDA held a video contest and posted finalists – offering inspiration and information – on Vimeo. They’ve got blogs by interns working overseas and have developed quite a following on Google+.
- World Vision Canada has developed a significant following on LinkedIn and a website that’s devoted to engaging with churches.
- Kelowna Christian Center makes sermons available by podcast, and in a video format for viewing on mobile phones.
- The Salvation Army in Canada is doing something right on Twitter – where they’ve amassed more than 28,000 followers. **FT**

less socially acceptable,” explains Burns. “There are things that Christians believe in, and get excited about, that are not acceptable in the mainstream.” Citing the Apostle Paul’s example in addressing the men of Athens (Acts 17:16-34) Burns says understanding your target audience will enable you to be wise in addressing them. “Paul knew what would offend [the Athenians] and get him nowhere, and he knew how to bridge off things in their culture that would allow him to make some progress.”

Being aware of the people you want to reach will also allow you to determine which social tools will best reach them. Business people, for example, tend to congregate on LinkedIn, while artists and more traditionally creative types hang out at deviantART.

And remember the word “social” in “social media.” If your idea is to spew a steady stream of fundraising messages, you won’t be building community, and you may find your friends and followers start tuning you out.

As American newspaper columnist and author Sydney J. Harris once observed, “The two words ‘information’ and ‘communication’ are often used interchangeably, but they signify quite different things. Information is giving out; communication is getting through.”



PHOTO: STRATEGY CUBE INC.

Jonathan Burns: Not everybody’s message lends itself to social media.

In other words, it’s not enough to just build a presence on every social networking platform in cyberspace. You need to think about why you’re there, who you want to speak to, what it is that you want to get through to them and what sort of results you’re hoping for. Developing a strategy up front that includes some measurable goals will help your social media efforts stay on target.

What About the Money?

If you’re a non-profit organization, chances are you’re used to keeping a close eye on the bottom line. So it’s important to recognize the fallacy that social media is free. It’s not. There may

not be a fee associated with opening a Facebook account or setting up a Twitter profile, but participation – and engagement with a community – takes time.

“If we look at a small not-for-profit with 10 employees that’s doing a good job with social media, my bet is they’ve got a person spending at least 20 hours a week on it,” says Burns. “That’s not an insignificant amount of time.”

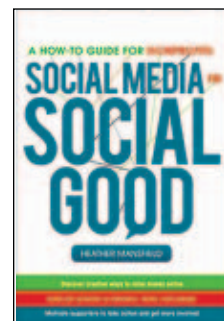
It’s a mistake, he says, to default to letting your youngest or most junior staffer handle all your organization’s social media needs. “You have to be authentic and original in your social messaging, which often means it’s the voice of a senior leader, so that everything they share improves and sharpens the [image of the organization].”

Given that level of investment, what about a payback?

There’s no doubt the explosion of social media has changed marketing, fundraising and awareness building. People have figured out social media can be a great place to ask questions and get advice. But donor fatigue is a real issue. People are tired of being asked for money on the phone, at the door, in the mail, in their inbox, everywhere.

So, is it still realistic to hope social media can be used for fundraising?

Yes and no, says Heather Mansfield, owner of DIOSA Communications and author of *Social Media for Social Good: A How-to Guide for Nonprofits* (McGraw-Hill, 2011). In a training webinar on “How nonprofits can successfully utilize online fundraising and e-newsletters,”



Heather Mansfield wrote *Social Media for Social Good: A How-to Guide for Nonprofits*.

Best Practices

Authenticity comes before marketing. Focus on telling the story of your non-profit and its cause.

Don’t be afraid to show some personality, but be gracious. If people send you a compliment, say thank you. If they send you a complaint, show you care by listening and responding appropriately. Don’t just ignore it hoping it will go away – or worse – delete it hoping no one will notice.

Build community. It’s not all about you. Focus on being interested as well as being interesting.

Tweet, Like, Post and Pin unto others as you would have them Tweet, Like, Post and Pin unto you.

Common Pitfalls

Not having a social media strategy. A solid strategy will increase the likelihood your efforts will succeed.

Stretching yourself too thin. It’s not necessary to be on every social network. Decide which ones best suit your communications goals and stick to those. If you find one’s not working, feel free to try something new, but know why you are making the switch.

Not tracking statistics. Take time out at regular intervals (weekly or monthly, for example) to record and review the statistics from your social media sites. A simple Excel spreadsheet can do the trick and will show progress over time. **FT**

Scripture Union Canada recently launched **theStory** – a free, online Bible reading guide targeted at young adult Canadians. Inset: Lawson Murray marvels at how Scripture Union Canada is connecting in ways that it never did before.



PHOTO: SCRIPTURE UNION CANADA



PHOTO: SCRIPTURE UNION CANADA

And that's where the real money is made.

Citing U.S. statistics Mansfield says currently, "More on-line donations are made from a click in an e-newsletter than any other source," and on average in

2011, "an email address was equivalent to \$12.92 in online donations, up from \$12.48 in 2010."

But this reality too is changing. Mansfield reports email use among teens is dropping. They prefer social networking and text messaging, which would suggest even if you're coming late to the world of social media, it's better to come late than not at all.

And sometimes coming late may require a teensy bit of courage and a whole lot of leadership.

Over at Scripture Union Law-

Mansfield says while "direct pitches on social media don't work," there has been "a correlation between the rise of social media and online giving."

That's because social media can form an important part of a larger, overall communications strategy designed to build relationships with current stakeholders and help develop new prospects and donors, one that integrates such things as your organization's print materials, website, blog and e-newsletter.

son Murray agrees. "Even though social media is not in my portfolio of work as a CEO, it's in my portfolio of life now," he says. "It wasn't a choice anymore. I had to personally take that step." **FT**

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

There's a video clip with this article. View it at www.faithtoday.ca/summer2013page21.

Where to Go for Help

The world of social media has given birth to an entire industry of experts, some of which specialize in the unique needs of non-profit organizations. They offer webinars, newsletters and other resources (some free, some not) for people just getting started in social networking, and for those wanting to take their social media campaigns up a notch. Here are a few to check out:

- **Network for Good** – offers training and services to help organizations raise money and engage supporters online.
- **John Haydon** – has a helpful blog featuring such topics as "Five Creative Ways to Thank Your Facebook Fans" and "Three Instant Facebook Page Tweaks That Maximize Reach." Also conducts webinars and video tutorials.
- **DIOSA Communications** owner Heather Mansfield's blog is a valuable resource featuring how-tos, statistics and helpful social media tools. Also offers webinars on social media and mobile technology training as well as online communications audits.
- **Social Media for Nonprofit Organizations** is a lively, active and helpful discussion group (run by Heather Mansfield) on LinkedIn. Members post tips, ideas and suggestions. It's also a great place to ask questions or seek advice. **FT**

The Faith Today Interview: Leonard Sweet

Leonard Sweet (LS) is a scholar and Christian social media guru, who teaches at Drew University in New Jersey and George Fox University in Oregon. He spoke with *Faith Today* associate editor Stephen Bedard (FT).

FT: Leonard, on the one hand, social media enables you to contact others who may be thousands of miles away. But since the other person cannot see your facial expressions and hear the tone of your voice, it can be easy to misinterpret the words you type. Do you believe social-media actually enhances or handicaps communication?

LS: In some ways every technology is equidistant from eternity. Clearly, certain technologies bring certain blessings and bring certain curses. You could make the same critique with print technology. Think about writing letters. A person reads a letter from a friend without any of the advantages of face-to-face communication.

I think a lot of the critique of social media is about crankiness and people who don't want to change. But there are some real dangers with social media. Yet, if we are in missional mode, we have no choice but to use social media to engage the culture. In God's sovereignty, in the providence of God, God has raised us to serve in the moment God has given us. That's the challenge of Christian response to technology. We will have to give an account of our charge as we serve this TGIF culture – the Twitter, Google, iPhone, Facebook culture.

FT: How can we use social media to enhance our interpersonal relationships without replacing them?

LS: What I think social media is doing, and I say more about this in [*Viral: How Social Networking Is Poised to Ignite Revival* (WaterBrook Press, 2012)], is creating a huge hunger for personal relationships. There is a movement from Facebook to face-to-face relationships. The more we move to social media, there is an increase in desire for community. There is no more antisocial media

than print media. We take a book and go off by ourselves, and silently listen to an unseen author or authority.

Social media promises connections, promises relationships, but can't fulfil them. The appetite for relationships is being tickled by social media. People are ravenous for

the real thing. There is a great possibility for the Church. It is a great day for the Church to offer community and relationships.

FT: I'm wondering if and how social media affects one's attention span?

LS: Yes, I do think social media affects attention spans. That is some of the danger of social media, and we need to develop certain disciplines. I think social media enables people to do many things at once.

We are called to use our whole bodies to serve God. Jesus taught us to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind" (Luke 10:27). We were created to do many things. We were created to multitask.

Print culture forced us to do one thing and one thing only. Social media allows us to go off and do all

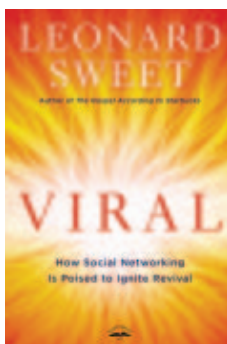
sorts of things at the same time. So I don't have a problem with that sort of blessing. The curse, though, is that we lose the ability to sustain one thought over a period of time. This encourages a culture of grazers, always grazing and never settling down. So, there are some challenges, but it is a little more complex than how people critique it. The more you use the accelerator, the more you need to know how to apply the brakes.

It's the same with blogging. I have a whole chapter in *Viral* on blogging and the loss of poetic sensibility. There are many good things about blogs, but great writing is not one of them. Most people think that blogging is great writing, but it is really just amateur journalism.

And that's the problem with social media. The blessing is that everybody is an author and the curse is everybody is an author. I would like everybody to be an author, but we also need to celebrate those who appreciate how a sentence is structured. What is a beautiful sentence? What is a beautiful paragraph? This is often missing in blogs.

I call it bloggerea. Complex thoughts sometimes require complex sentences. So that is one of the curses. But it is the same with books. People are expecting books to be short and accessible. Frank Viola and I wrote a book

“Print culture forced us to do one thing and one thing only. Social media allows us to go off and do all sorts of things at the same time.”



In *Viral*, Sweet argues that social media is creating a huge hunger for personal relationships.

called *Jesus: A Theography* (Thomas Nelson, 2012), which is like 500 pages, telling the story of Jesus from the beginning to the end. But for some people, they can't pick up the book. They can't read the story from beginning to end. It's just too long.

FT: In *Viral* you describe Gutenbergs and Googlers. Gutenbergs are those shaped by the technology of the printing press and Googlers are shaped by the technology of the Internet. This is a clear generation gap. Can you explain?

LS: I see a spectrum. There's still Gutenberg in me. There is a continuum. They are not concrete categories. They are basically metaphors. Google is coming out with Glass, taking our connection to technology to a new level. We are talking about changes happening so quickly. I think the generational divides broke down with Gen X. There are young people who are still Gutenbergs and people in their 70s and 80s who are a part of the TGIF culture. For me, it's more cultural than generational.

FT: Is there a place for give and take between Gutenbergs and Googlers? Or is it an inevitable move from one to the other?

LS: We must revere our ancestors and respect the things they have done. We did not go through things of the past for no reason. We had to learn something. At the same time we are not here to preserve some pure form of Christian culture. There is that mentality out there that our primary purpose is to preserve this church culture. I argue it's not about church culture, but about the gospel being encultured in every culture. So I am not trying to preserve some sort of church culture. I am arguing for baking fresh bread. There is fresh bread every day.

FT: There have been some high-profile cases of abuse aggravated by cyberbullying. What opportunities are there for the

PHOTO: WWW.LEONARDSWEET.COM



Church to speak to such challenges?

LS: This isn't something completely new. I don't think it has changed much. I grew up with slam books. They were composition books. You would open it and at the top would be a person's name and people would write what they thought of that person. It could be nice. It could be nasty. But those words stayed. The only thing worse than opening the book and finding out what they had written about you was not finding your name. If you were not ranked, rated or talked about, you just didn't count. So there has always been this type of thing. It's not something new that has just appeared. In this world of social media there is a levelling, and so everyone has to have an equal voice.

It is not just kids that are being cyberbullied. I have hate sites out there. I have

a lot of them, but some of my friends have some really nasty ones. Some people believe what they read just because it is on the web. I had one of my most savvy students who saw one of these sites come to me and say, "So sorry about what happened to your friend." What, are you kidding me? This is just not true. Some person for some reason just didn't like part of his theology. So there is this other form of cyberbullying. We need to reach out and help people [learn] how to discern what they read. People writ-

ing hateful things is a full-time business. No one gets hated more than Rick Warren.

FT: Leonard, it also seems that social media can lead to some narcissistic behaviour, as people share minute details of what they are doing, assuming that people care. Is this a temporary phase? Or is this natural to social media?

LS: That's a real problem. That sort of flaunting is very common and it is part of our celebrity culture. It comes down to our methodology. We are in the culture, but we are not of it. Would Jesus tweet? Of course He would tweet. The question is what would Jesus tweet? Jesus would tweet, but not as the world tweets.

In my travels, where can I point to what God is up to or what God is doing? Not what are *you* doing, but what is God doing? We use social media not to sell ourselves, but to point to God. Now if I publish a book, I see that as something God *does* do. So I will mention that.

It is a danger. It was John Calvin who said that the mind is the factory of idols. That's something we have always done. Social media allows us to do it faster. The challenge for those who become a part of this celebrity culture is to use their celebrity status not to become an idol, but to become an icon – an icon that points toward Christ. Christian celebrities should work hard at not becoming idols.

FT: Thank you, Leonard. FT

“John Calvin said that the mind is the factory of idols. That's something we have always done. Social media allows us to do it faster.”



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Three Evangelical Lawyers

You may not have heard their names, but these three lawyers are helping shape Canadian law on issues important to Canadian Evangelicals.

By Jeff Dewsbury

What was the last lawyer joke you heard? Or the last time a colleague playfully repeated the famous Jack Nicholson courtroom scream “You can’t handle the truth!” from *A Few Good Men*? The legal profession is prone to stereotypes.

Here are three lawyers who will shatter some of them, whose faith is interwoven with their desire to care for their clients in a way that goes beyond legal arguments. Each has represented The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) in cases that hold up to the light important issues such as the sanctity of human life, abuse, freedom of speech and conscience.

As the popular TV courtroom tag line says: These are their stories.

Polygamy, Prostitution and Alpha

Earlier this year, Vancouver lawyer Georgiale Lang flew to Creston, B.C., to offer her expertise in family law, *pro bono*, to eight fathers. They had been ousted from the Mormon sect known as the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, headed by the now imprisoned, polygamous leader Warren Jeffs.

In a bid to maintain control of his followers, even from behind bars, Jeffs imposed bizarre and restrictive rules on the community. The men Lang represented had been excommunicated and were being denied access to their children – 52 children (yes, 52) in all.

From the outset Lang knew there was a lot on the line for these fathers and their children. After agreeing to act as their counsel, Lang was able to secure joint custody for the fathers, as well as ensuring a parenting schedule so the custody orders could easily be followed.

“I was able to be a witness to those men. Their lives had been fragmented and subjugated by this cult, and they wanted to be free from it,” says Lang. Her involvement in the case is only one example of her passion for family law.

Beyond representing the EFC in an important public policy case – the Bedford case heard by the Supreme Court of Canada this June in which the EFC argued against the legalization of prostitution – Lang views family law as an area where she can offer comfort and grace to people facing life-altering circumstances.

Though Lang currently focuses on arbitration and



PHOTO: WWW.GEORGIALELANG.COM

I Georgiale Lang has a passion for family law.

appeal work, she maintains an interest in reforming Canada’s current family law system, which she once described in a column in the *National Post* as an “adversarial court system [which] pits husband against wife in a dangerous game that all too often spirals out of control, taking whole families down and destroying children’s lives in the process.”

As a lawyer on the front lines, Lang has seen the fallout and experienced the frustration in what can be a needless maelstrom of legal wrangling. She sees it as the perfect place to reflect God’s grace.

and Their Passion for Canada

"I don't think there's a better area for interpersonal interaction than family law," she says. "You're dealing with people in the depths of despair, their marriage is over, for instance, or their child has been abducted. They're very upset – the rulings decide what happens to their kids, how much money they will have to live on, important things like that. One of the first things I ask my clients is if they have seen a counsellor or if they have a pastor."

Lang, a graduate of the University of British Columbia's law school, has been practising law for 24 years. She describes being a Christian practising family law as "an isolating place to be" because so few take up the challenge.

Beyond family law Lang was retained by the EFC to go before the court in an area of public policy she believes will have lasting effects for generations.

In the EFC's current intervention in the *Bedford* prostitution case, where Canada is re-examining its prostitution laws, Lang argued before the courts that legalizing prostitution would "increase incidents of exploitation, commercialization and commodification of human beings, negatively impacting the rights of women and children." She cited evidence that Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands have documented thousands of incidents of human trafficking since legalizing brothels (32,800 for Germany in 2004 alone).

"This is such a frightening prospect," Lang says. "This case will tell us what direction Canada is headed in."

In 2002 Lang became the first lawyer to start an Alpha program among her colleagues. (Alpha is a widely used introduction to Christianity.) What started with a kick-off at a posh Vancouver club and a "soft sell of the program dealing with personal growth and spiritual issues" became a regular lunchtime meeting of 10-15 downtown business women, mostly non-believers at the outset, for the next three years.

Out of those informal meetings came new relationships with Christ and mentoring roles that continue to this day.

At her site www.lawdiva.wordpress.com Lang, who also practices law in Kelowna and Palm Springs, blogs about everything from the real legal arguments presented in celebrity custody disputes to nannies being in the middle of messy divorces.

The motorcycle riding lawyer is also a regular contributor to the online publication *Huffington Post* and believes writing about legal issues in popular media makes her more sensitive to both "mainstream and non-mainstream" views of the issues.

"I'm not a reticent type of person, so I've written things that many lawyers wouldn't," she laughs.

Bringing Something New to Court

The first year of law school is notoriously tough. It's a litmus test for students who, if they proceed in their bid to become lawyers, will burn hundreds of hours in subsequent years in studies as well as articling (legal apprenticeship).

As if the workload was not already heavy enough, Albertos Polizogopoulos remembers spending most of his time that first year on an extra-curricular project that would completely transform him and the type of law he would practise: he became a Christian.

Back then he was also pursuing a young woman from his law class who would later become his wife. Her faith was (and still is) foundational to her. And getting closer to her meant engaging her beliefs.

"That first year was tough," recalls the University of Ottawa graduate. "While everyone else was reading about the law, I was reading the Bible

and studying things like predestination and freewill and trying to understand those issues."

Polizogopoulos, who grew up in Cochrane, Ont., and speaks English, French and Greek, has been practising law for a scant five years. Yet he has represented the EFC before the Supreme Court of Canada in a number of important cases. He is also a partner in an Ottawa law firm with a 100-year heritage of acting for religious communities.

The 31-year-old believes strongly in tithing his time, so he makes room for some of the cases few others want – like representing students in pro-life clubs who face discrimination on university campuses.

"I feel I have an obligation to be involved in these cases. The principle of tithing goes beyond giving ten per



PHOTO: RYAN PARENT PHOTOGRAPHY

Albertos Polizogopoulos has represented the EFC before the Supreme Court of Canada in a number of important cases.

cent of my money,” Polizogopoulos says.

In two of those cases Polizogopoulos represented students at Carleton and Guelph universities where pro-life clubs were refused official status by their respective student associations. He says it takes a lot of soul-searching before clients decide to take legal action in these freedom of speech cases.

“There’s a reason why not many of these cases end up before the courts,” he points out. “Not every student is prepared or ready to put their name on the case. When you’re a 20-something university student, you may be committed to a cause, but things are on the Internet forever. Because of what the expression is, there may be opposition where there otherwise wouldn’t be.

“I don’t seek these cases out,” says Polizogopoulos. “By the time it gets to me, the students have already been through a certain amount of public scrutiny. They come to me because there are only so many lawyers who are prepared to do this kind of work and do it for free.”

Though there are matters of public or national interest at stake, Polizogopoulos notes that as a lawyer, his ultimate responsibility is to the individuals he is representing. He spells out the personal cost to his clients, and will “pray with them when it’s appropriate.”

In most religious tolerance or freedom of speech cases that go before the Supreme Court of Canada, there will be multiple interveners because the judgments will affect their respective constituents. In a 2012 case challenging the mandatory nature of the Government of Quebec’s school curriculum on ethics and religious culture (a case Polizogopoulos worked on for the EFC), there were eight interveners from both sides, including the Christian Legal Fellowship, Canadian Catholic School Trustees, and the Canadian Council of Christian Charities.

With only 10 minutes to present oral arguments and ten pages to make a solid case in writing, “you want to make sure every word you write and every word you say is valuable,” says Polizogopoulos. And, with so many voices in the mix, you don’t want to waste the court’s time with redundancies. Bringing something original to the table is an important element of speaking to the highest legal authority in the country. “You want the Supreme Court to be eager to hear from you because you have something to say,” he explains. “And the EFC has that reputation.”

Polizogopoulos sees how cases built around constitution issues take a personal toll on individuals – as important as the cases may be. “I kind of wish we wouldn’t have to fight these cases,” he laments. “It’s never a happy time when you have to call me.”

Go-to Lawyer for the Pro-Life Movement

When his oldest brother was born, Geoffrey Trotter’s parents moved the family from the big city (the west side of Van-

couver, to be exact), to Courtenay, a small town on Vancouver Island. There his father set up his civil litigation practice inside their home on a rural hobby farm, opting for a little more space and little less pace.

It is not uncommon for an interest in law to be handed down from parents to their children, and that was the case for Trotter, who says his father’s profession came part and parcel with the family dynamic. “I learned to think as a lawyer around the dinner table,” he recalls.

Trotter, now 31, has left his informal training behind and rebounded back to the bustle of Vancouver – first to UBC’s law school, then to a downtown firm. He has been involved in several important public policy cases involving assisted suicide and other pro-life issues.

Currently he is working for the Vancouver and Burnaby crisis pregnancy centres in a defamation case involving an online “research report” distributed by Vancou-

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Geoffrey Trotter recalls, “I learned to think as a lawyer around the dinner table.”

ver's Pro-Choice Action Network. The report claims crisis pregnancy centres give false information to women about the dangers of abortion and that the centres engage in such tactics as false advertising, use of graphic videos, and breaching clients' confidentiality – all untrue, according to the centres.

Trotter says the case challenges what amounts to an *ad hominem* attack (an unfairly personal assault) on the centres. "When a woman googles 'crisis pregnancy centre Vancouver' it pops up right on the front page." In April lawyers for the defendant argued the case should be tossed out because the article in question was not specific to Trotter's clients. Judgment is currently being reserved.

Pro-life cases like this one are likely to remain prominent for Trotter, who has three young children and has practised law for four years. He has already grown accustomed to being a legal advocate for those trying to stem the tide of abortion in Canada. He recently started his own practice, where he makes room for cases that affect public policy in this area.

"The bottom line is that crisis pregnancy centres save lives," he says, referring to this most recent case. "As a lawyer, defending them is one way of ensuring there is a legitimate option to abortion. Ironically, the pro-life movement is now the one presenting alternatives."

But is there a professional cost to taking on these cases? Trotter believes the forum provided by the court is somewhat removed from life in the trenches. "I consider my work to be the easy kind of activism. I'm not picketing and going to jail," he says. "I'm doing this in a professional capacity, and I'm just trying to keep the dialogue going. Lawyers have a strategic role to play in keeping the public debate about what's right and wrong open."

Sanctity of human life is also the central focus in *Carter v. Canada*, an assisted suicide-challenge in the B.C. Court of Appeal, for which Trotter is currently acting as counsel for the EFC.

Amid the complexities of the arguments for and against assisted suicide, Trotter eloquently summed up the EFC's beliefs before the court on March 19: "The challenge before us as a society [is] not to try to make the problem disappear

by making the person disappear, but to respond to the unquestionably difficult realities of both disability and dying by caring for these people to minimize their physical, and psychological, suffering as much as possible, and to help them live full, satisfying, and meaningful lives.

"If one of us feels a loss of dignity, the rest of us, and the state, need to affirm through our words, our actions, and our laws that we see in that person the same inherent dignity as resides in all human beings. We need to help them live."

When Trotter was a student at UBC's law school (where he helped revitalize a flagging Christian Legal Fellowship group), other Christians would share prophetic words telling him he would "be involved in law in the public realm, including issues of religious freedom," he recalls. The words came at a time when the ethos of the school was that non-traditional perspectives, of any kind, were the norm.

Trotter grew up in an "essentials-believing" Anglican church, but is now very active in Church at the Hollywood, a Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada church that meets in the historic Hollywood Theatre on West Broadway in Vancouver.

He describes the church, which hosts a young, significant cohort of students including many from Regent College, as a "vibrant missional place where people care about the arts."

The ability to live, work and worship in the same community is important to Trotter. One of the reasons he decided to trade the relative comfort of an established firm for his own practice was to make space for more mediation work in his community. It's an area of law he's passionate about. "Mediated and settled outcomes can preserve relationships," he says.

"We as Christian lawyers can seek to be wise counsellors in the broadest sense, respecting the other party, treating them well, not seeking revenge. Litigation involves settling disputes. Civil litigators can have a significant role in how the dispute is handled. Instead of pouring gas on the fire, we can help people solve things together." **FT**

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



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What We'll Be Reading

Faith Today asked the leaders of EFC affiliate organizations to share with us some of the books they hope to read this summer. Here's what they had to say:

On my reading list during vacation this summer is *Living Jesus* by John Pritchard (SPCK, 2010); *Retro Christianity* by Michael J. Svigel (Crossway, 2012) and *Ignite Your Life* by David Arrol Macfarlane (Thisway Communications, 2013).

Shawn C. Branch, national director
Threshold Ministries



Nothing like a good summer read! I can't wait to get at *Words for Readers and Writers*, a new book of criticism by Larry Woiwode, a Christian, a friend and my all-time favourite novelist (Crossway, 2013). Woiwode may be the most erudite Christian working today. His novel *Beyond the Bedroom Wall* (Graywolf, 1997 [Farrar Straus & Giroux, 1975]) convinced me that authentic fiction is possible, and from there he's opened up for me a whole world of fiction and language.

Next it's a re-read of *The Scapegoat* by René Girard (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989 [1986]), whose study of the origins and dynamics of violence led him to become a Christian. Girard sees in the Scriptures, and in the story of Jesus, the definitive overcoming of the scapegoat pattern described in all ancient myths – not to mention in contemporary domestic violence.

Then there's *In the Realm of Hungry*



PHOTO: WWW.DESIGNPICS.COM



on the Dock This Summer

Ghosts, Canadian physician Gabor Maté's seminal book on addiction (Vintage, 2009 [Knopf, 2008]). In between, I'll jump in the cold, clear Algonquin lake. What a privilege to take a Sabbath "rest" in exquisite works like these!

Mark Vander Vennen, executive director
Shalem Mental Health Network

Thinking, *Fast and Slow* by Daniel Kahneman (Doubleday, 2011). Brain and mind



research is fascinating and helpful in decision-making, generating ideas and helping people. Kahneman is a Nobel Prize winner in economics. This book is a popularization of his research. It finally came out in paperback and was discounted at Chapters! In addition, I will try to get through the pile of journals and magazines on my desk.

David H. Johnson, president
Providence University College,
Providence Theological Seminary

It all started as a spontaneous decision. I listened intently as an American leader, interviewed about his reading habits, said: "I read a book a week." *A book a week? Impossible*, I thought. Yet, I knew pledging to such a committed reading program would be an adventurous learning experience that would take me into places of thought and human experience which would enrich me. I couldn't resist the urge to commit and I did!

Since January 2010 I have become a happy, devoted bookworm. Currently on my 178th book, I am now hooked! My reading repertoire has included books on leadership, current social and political issues, spiritual inspirational and biographies.

My reads this summer are stacked up and ready. On top of the stack is: *And God Came In* by Lyle Dorsett (Good News, 1991 [Macmillan, 1983]) which tells the extraordinary story of Joy Davidman, wife



of C.S. Lewis. The first line of the fly-leaf blurb, grabbed my attention: "They were an unlikely pair." Other books that will be marked up with my side notes and asterisks will be *Pathway to the Impossible* (Calcutta Mercy Ministries, 2009) by Huldah Buntain, missionary veteran to Calcutta, and a memoir by the man behind *The Message*, Eugene H. Peterson's *The Pastor* (Harper, 2011). Last on my stack of biographies will be *A Heart for Freedom: The Remarkable Journey of a Young Dissident, Her Daring Escape and Her Quest to Free China's Daughters*, by Chai Ling (Tyndale, 2011).

To add some spiritual inspirational reading this summer I will re-read one of my favorites, *Spiritual Rhythm* by Canadian author Mark Buchanan (Zondervan, 2010).

Margaret Gibb,
founder and executive director
Women Together

24/6: *A Prescription for a Healthier, Happier Life* by Matthew Sleeth, M.D., (Tyndale, 2012) on the value of remembering to keep the Sabbath. He also wrote *Serve God, Save the Planet* (Zondervan, 2007) and founded Blessed Earth, a non-profit focused on creation care. In his new book, Dr. Sleeth makes a compelling case that many maladies of our society spring from neglecting God's gift of Sabbath. He will lecture at Kingswood University this fall so our students can better understand and practise God's rest. I recently heard Dr. Sleeth speak and came away with two challenges: (1) "If I could make just one decision and reduce my environmental impact by 14 per cent over my lifetime, would I?" His conclusion is that practicing Sabbath can have that magnitude of impact. (2) "If I could set aside 10 years exclusively to enjoy God and rest in His pres-

ence, would I accept this gift?" Dr. Sleeth observes that, in a lifespan of 70 years, honoring the Sabbath provides those 10 years of renewal.

My second selection is *Deep and Wide* by Andy Stanley (Zondervan, 2012). Stanley leads North Point Community Church, a growing congregation in Atlanta. In this book he unpacks their approach to designing ministry environments that engage the unchurched. He confronts churches that are "wide but shallow" and others that are "deep but narrow." Stanley's book will stimulate discussion for graduate students I'll be teaching this fall in our new master's course "Theology of Pastoral Leadership."

Mark Gorveatte, president
Kingswood University



In the summer I read a lot of novels purely for escape and relaxation. This summer I will be reading a novel by Ian Morgan Cron called *Chasing Francis: A Pilgrim's Tale* (Zondervan, 2013 [NavPress, 2006]) that was recommended by a colleague at Tyndale. It is the story of a young gifted pastor who has lost touch with the faith that grounded him and gave life. After meeting with his Uncle who is a Franciscan priest, he begins a pilgrimage to find the ancient faith of Francis of Assisi.

If it is not novels then it usually is something biographical. I am fascinated by the way our narrative life stories shape the ways in which approach life and even faith. Biographies give insights and clarify. This summer I have put aside two books to read. *Living Countertestimony: Conversations with Walter Brueggemann* by Walter Brueggemann and Carolyn J. Sharp (West-



minster John Knox Press, 2012) and *The Other Face of God* by Mary Jo Leddy (Orbis, 2011). Both of these are autobiographical theological reflections. Brueggeman is always challenging, and the wonderful writings of Canadian theologian Mary Jo Leddy are consistently thoughtful reflections rooted in the praxis of her ministry among refugees in Toronto.

Gary Nelson, president and vice chancellor
Tyndale University College & Seminary



Hot indignation seizes me..." (Psalm 119:53) So begins Eugene Peterson's *Working the Angles: The Shape of Pastoral Integrity* (Eerdmans, 1987). Peterson grabbed me by the neck a while ago with *A Long Obedience in the Same*

Direction: Discipleship in an Instant Society (InterVarsity, 1980). *Working the Angles* has been sitting on my shelf for a while and I am committed to reading it now because I am too busy not to. It is Peterson's call for pastors to return to their posts.

He says on page 1: "What they do with their time under the guise of pastoral ministry hasn't the remotest connection with what the church's pastors have done for most of twenty centuries." His is a plea to attend to God in prayer, Scripture and spiritual direction. The last thing the church needs, according to Peterson, is pastors who conduct a "fairly respectable pastoral ministry without giving much more than ceremonial attention to God."

Peterson's intent is to call attention to the basic practice of the pastor's calling and to insist that pastoral work has no integrity unconnected with prayer, Scripture and spiritual direction – difficult activities that no one knows for sure are being done! Peterson was professor of spiritual theology at Regent College in Vancouver, until retiring in 2006.

Andrew Barron, director
Jews for Jesus Canada

I plan to relax on my deck every now and then and sink my teeth into three books that are on my personal reading list. One is *Creating a Missional Culture* by JR Woodward (IVP Books, 2012) – a reportedly ex-

cellent book with refreshingly new ideas about how to transform church leadership and reach out in more effective ways to our neighbourhoods. Next up is *A Ministry in Symbol and Light*, by my friend John (Jack) MacNeill. This is a history of my church, Queen Street Baptist in St. Catharines, and looks back on various aspects of its 180 years of ministry. Then there is *Picturing Religious Experience: George Herbert, Calvin, and the Scriptures* (University of Delaware, 2011), a scholarly but accessible book about English poet and priest George Herbert and the connections between his writing and well-known Reformer John Calvin. That book is written by my father, Dr.



Daniel Doerksen. Although there is a family connection, I think this book which explores spiritual struggles and enlightenment could be of interest to Christians of various denomina-

tions. So, time to turn off the computer and phone and get into some good reading!

Alan Doerksen, publications editor
Intercede International

This summer I will be reading *Bold as Love: What Can Happen When We See People the Way God Does* by Bob Roberts Jr. (Thomas Nelson, 2012). Roberts is an author and pastor from the Dallas area with a passion for reviving the Church through loving our neighbours, even if they attend a mosque or synagogue. He will be the plenary speaker at this year's Church Planting Canada Congress in November (www.thecongress.com).

Another book high on my "to read" list is *Paul and the Gospel of God* by Mark Clark (Red Maple, 2013). Clark is the pastor of Village Church in Surrey, B.C., and a very gifted communicator. This book addresses the question, "Is Jesus really the only way a person can connect with the God of the universe?"

Third on my list, if my four boys will let me get that far, is *China Hans: From Shanghai to Hitler to Christ* (Trafford, 2009). This is the autobiography of missionary Hans Martin Wilhelm who was raised as a mis-

sionary kid in China and went on to live a fascinating life as a pioneer missionary, starting teams on four different continents. I had the honor of meeting him in Taiwan this year and was inspired by his testimony and humility. He signed my copy of the book with the verse 1 Corinthians 1:8.

Craig Kraft, executive director
Outreach Canada



My wife and I actually do have a dock overlooking a fantastic northern Ontario lake, and it is the place to read for sure. Each year we pack about twenty books to read from the local library as well as those "lonely books" that sit on our shelves at home and office still fresh from the printers. In addition we have packed the cottage shelves with what I call "highly re-readables."

British murder mysteries have their central place ready and willing to open the windows of escape from the real world. Everything by P.D James, Elizabeth George or Ngaio Marsh is a must for us. Agatha Christie never seems to get old for us.

Yet summer would not be summer without feeding our souls as well as our spirits. This summer I will revisit John Pipers' *Desiring God* (Multnomah, 2011 [1987]) and Dallas Willard's *Renovation of the Heart* (NavPress, 2001). These are summer staples for me.

May I recommend also a new book by one of our Associated Gospel Church authors? David S. Payne has just put out *Run! The Amazing Race* (Word Alive, 2012). He writes in an inspiring way to keep us all running well in the race of faith and service.

Ron Mahler has just published *The Necessary Christian* (Word Alive, 2013). He writes well on the pressing need for Canadian Churches to be renewed through radical discipleship.

Our plan this year is to take up the trusted classic devotional writings of Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest* (Dodd, Mead, and Co., 1935). This book has been a part of our family since the begin-



ning. Chambers knows how to get at the heart of God in the heart of the Scriptures. This devotional is not for the faint of heart, as the challenge to think and dig deeply is on every page. Happy reading and may it transform you as well as transport you.

*Willem Fietje, president
Associated Gospel Churches*

This summer I won't be reading at the dock as much as I will be reading amid a sea of boxes. I am relocating from Ontario to Saskatchewan and transitioning from pastor to college president. Here are three key



books I am digesting: The first is Marcus Buckingham's *Stand Out* (Thomas Nelson, 2011). It offers insights for leaders in understanding their own leadership style and the style of their teams. While there is a plethora of assessment tools on bringing out the best in your team, Buckingham provides some fresh and simple observations. One of my objectives as a leader is to help my colleagues become the very best at what God has called them to do.

A second book is *Engaging the Culture, Changing the World* by Philip W. Eaton (IVP Academic, 2011). This book is written for those involved in Christian higher education, and sets out a number of aspirational challenges which are stirring me. I recognize the present generation of young people wants an education that will result in employment, but I also understand students want their work to make a difference. While Canada needs competent professionals, Canada needs professionals who reflect values and who provide value. I take seriously the stewarding of helping the next generation serve their world as Christians who want to leave an imprint for the character and mission of Jesus.

A third book I plan on reading is the classic *Knowledge of the Holy* by A.W. Tozer (Harper, 2009 [1961]). Nothing gives greater perspective in the ongoing recalibration of our lives.

*Michael B. Pawelke, president
Briercrest College and Seminary*

Two of the 12 books I have on my agenda for July and August are: *Discovering Christian*



liam Willimon (2012, Abingdon Press).

I am intrigued by the interest that younger Christians are showing in the subject of Christian holiness. Long a staple of Methodist writing and discussion, the subject is generating interest in other circles not historically connected with Methodism or other holiness traditions. LeClerc appears to address the subject from a theological perspective; Willimon seems to address it from a political (small "p") perspective. Should be fun!

*Clair MacMillan,
district superintendent
Church of the Nazarene Canada*

This summer I'll be finishing up *Poet and Peasant and Through Peasant Eyes* by Kenneth E. Bailey (Eerdmans, 1983). I decided to read this after reading *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes* (InterVarsity Press, 2008) by the same author. Then, I'm on to *Paul Through Mediterranean Eyes: Cultural Studies in 1 Corinthians* (InterVarsity Press, 2011). I absolutely have loved what I've read so far. Some books aren't easy reads but they are valuable reads. Kenneth Bailey brings his forty years of experience living and teaching the New Testament in the Middle East to help us wipe the dust of the ages off of the Gospels so "...that we might hear, ponder and respond as did the first audience." There's a lot of dust built up over those ages too! These books serve to wipe that dust off well.



*Eric Stolte, president
The Navigators of Canada*

I actually will be reading on a dock at Shawnigan Lake, Vancouver Island, this summer. I am part way through two books and am about to crack open two more. The first is Alister McGrath's *C. S. Lewis: A Life* (Tyndale,

Holiness by Diane LeClerc (2010, Beacon Hill Press) and *Bishop: the Art of Questioning Authority by an Authority in Question* by Wil-

2013). It contains an interesting and helpful revisiting of Lewis' conversion experience. Complementing that, I am reading *The Lion's World: A Journey into the Heart of Narnia* by Rowan Williams (Oxford, 2013), which has some very sympathetic, theological and imaginative observations. McGrath quotes Williams with respect.

I have been trying for a couple of years now to get to N.T. Wright's *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church* (Harper, 2008) - this is the summer to do it. Finally, I have on reserve at my local bookstore Edward Rutherford's historical narrative *Paris* (Doubleday, 2013). His work is a great complement to the other books. My reading hobby is biography so this summer is a little different. From my dock to yours, happy reading! May the Holy Spirit fire your imagination.

*Jeremy Bell, executive minister
Canadian Baptists of Western Canada*
**Jeremy Bell sent a video clip
with this article. View it at
www.faithtoday.ca/summer2013page33.**

Whenver I Wind Up: *My Quest for Truth, Authenticity and the Perfect Knuckleball* by R.A. Dickey (Blue Rider, 2012). This book documents his incredible and sometimes agonizing journey through baseball to make the majors. More importantly, it's about his coming to faith and then growing up in his faith. Willing to speak candidly about his regrets as well as his triumphs. It's going to be a great read!

Leonardo and The Last Supper by Ross King (Bond Street, 2012). This is an in-depth look at the life of Leonardo da Vinci as well as the context in which he lived that produced his masterpiece *The Last Supper*. It's a special delight to read the research and point of view on each of the disciples in the painting.

*Dave Toyce, president and CEO
World Vision Canada*
Continued on page 34



Eric Metaxas spoke at the National Parliamentary Prayer Breakfast in Ottawa this month and delivered a delightful, fun and inspirational message encouraging Christians to unabashedly engage in the



public dialogue from our biblical worldview – and in the process we might just become world changers, just as the subject of his latest biography did. So this summer

I will be reading his *Bonhoeffer, Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy* (Thomas Nelson, 2010). And if I find that too daunting, I will start with another of his books, *7 Men and the Secret of Their Greatness* (Nelson, 2013). And if that too seems more than my summer brain can handle, I can always cuddle with my grandson and read some of Metaxas's VeggieTales books. If he writes half as good as he delivers an address, I expect to

have a great time in my summer reading.
*Jan Kupecz, executive director
Canadian National Christian
Foundation*

This summer I'll be reading *Unmuzzle Your Inner Sheep: Liberating Believers to Share Jesus* (Word Alive, 2013). It's about lifestyle evangelism, authored by Rev. Royal Hamel of Light the Darkness Ministries in Guelph, Ont. He says, "Relational evangelism has not been tried and found wanting. It has mostly not been tried. Many 'sheepish sheep' yearn to be unmuzzled so they can naturally share Jesus." Hamel shows how the shy and timid personality, as well as the outgoing, can begin to joyfully speak.



*Brian Magnus, bishop
The United Brethren Church in Canada*

This summer I am excited to begin *John G. Lake: His Life, His Sermons, His Boldness of Faith* (Kenneth Copeland Publications, 1996). It was highly recommended by a friend of mine who could not stop talking about the miracles he encountered in his ministry. I am at a season of preparation in my life where it's time to break free from that false self-preservation spirit of fear, be it fear of disappointments or fear of making a mistake in the eyes of God, and stepping out in His will. John G. Lake was a great missionary and faith healer. He was bold and fearless. He moved forward in faith and wasn't held back by fear. He so believed in His God that through him daily miracles would take place just like it did for Jesus. I want to be like that too.



*Sharon Ganesh, executive director
MissionFest Toronto*

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When God Stood Up

By Jim Cantelon

I remember, early on in the mid-nineties, standing on the shore of the Indian Ocean in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania. I had spent the day meeting with African pastors in that sweltering city and returned to my hotel overwhelmed with what I had heard about the eviscerating impact of HIV and the shocking indifference of the Church to its reality. I had witnessed the devastation AIDS caused, mercilessly taking lives, leaving widows and orphans in its wake. I met a village in which an entire generation had been wiped out. The eldest member of the community and new chief, now just seventeen years old.

As I looked out at the horizon blending with the twilight I prayed: "Lord, this is too big for me. I don't know what I'm doing, nor what I should do. I won't quit, but I need three things from you. Direct me to people you want me to meet, let them be people who don't need to be sold, and give me a billion dollars." I heard the Lord laugh. "Jim, if I give you a billion dollars you'll forget me. Here's the deal: you do a billion dollar job, and I'll pay the bills."

Though colleagues and close friends questioned my sanity, Kathy and I jumped into the deep-end of this mission, following God as blindly and whole-heartedly as we had always done. He called, we listened.

The vision was simple, yet profound. Every church a Mother Theresa. The millions of orphans and widows were cry-



Kathy and Jim Cantelon.
(Click here to play Jim's video)

ing out for a defender. The Church had to respond proactively with faith, hope and love. It was time for the Church to stand up. But would they listen?

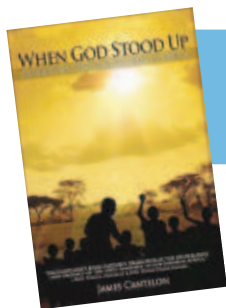
We had no idea what the ensuing years would bring. At times we felt like we were on the back of a bucking bronco. Unexpected blessings and major challenges add to the adventure every day. For reasons only God can be credited, this has become a significant grassroots movement in southern Africa. The Church is being mobilized, and communities transformed.

It's a remarkable journey. Will you sit on the sidelines or join the adventure?

Who will come to their defense?



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Ministry and Missions Profiles

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President Gordon T. Smith observed, “While many students are entering ministry on the basis of a two-year graduate theological degree, others are eager to complete a full Master of Divinity – the three-year program that Ambrose and most theological seminaries offer. We value our two-year programs; but we also recognize and affirm that many candidates for pastoral ministry want the opportunity to study biblical languages in-depth and to take courses that will provide them with a more full foundation for religious leadership. We are so grateful for the donor who has agreed to

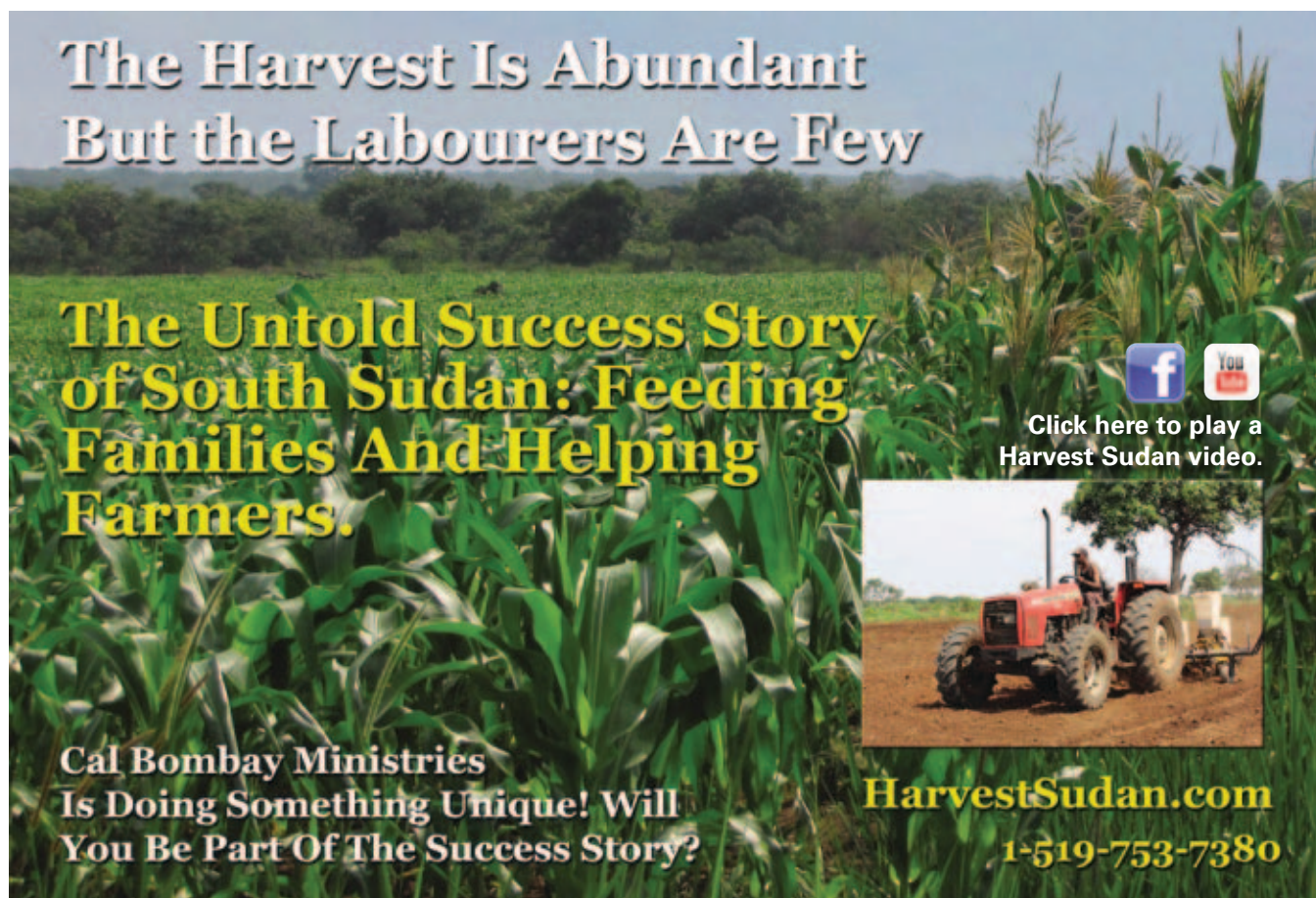
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the south, has been the largest receiver of emergency feeding in the world for many years running. Yet, as a direct result of initiatives led by Cal Bombay, 214 families have already been brought out of poverty to total self-sufficiency with food left over to sell, putting them on the path to prosperity."

That's not the whole story. Some 1,600 other families have seen this success and want the same. The only industrial-sized flour mill is located in fields run by the Savannah Farmers Cooperative and these prospering farmers. There is constant pressure for greater efficiency and more tractors to serve more people.

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Keeping Our Youth in the Faith

By Kai Mark

An Ontario pastor shares how the Hemorrhaging Faith report confirms his understanding of how churches can best minister to youth.

Hemorrhaging Faith, a recent Canadian study on young adults and churches, confirmed what many of us already knew – that many young adults are leaving the Church. Although some have used this study to draw attention to the need for youth ministry, it could also be seen as an indictment to our existing youth ministry. We have given our teens youth programs without genuine spiritual substance. We have put our young people into their own little groups away from the influence of godly adults.

This study challenges us to rethink our strategies in working with our youth. A situation where 60 to 90 per cent of our youth drop out of church is unacceptable.

I have never been a “youth pastor” in the sense of focusing only on youth. However, I have been a pastor for nearly 27 years and have always worked with youth. As a lead pastor and church planter, I have always believed what our churches need is not more youth pastors, but more pastors who have a heart for youth.

We have placed the responsibility of the spirituality of our youth solely on the youth pastor, when it is the responsibility of every adult in the congregation to share.

Hemorrhaging Faith confirms some of my thoughts in ministry over the years. (The study, co-authored by Rick Hiemstra of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, is available at www.hemorrhagingfaith.com.) There are four key points that will help keep youth in the Church. There will still be some youth who drop out, but these four things are sure to help minimize the number.

Understanding the Value of the Gospel. In *Hemorrhaging Faith* the researchers concluded, “One of the most

critical factors determining the engagement of youth and young adults in the Church is their experience of their faith and their walk with God. Specifically, we learn that those in the Wanderers and Rejecters categories report they have never experienced the love of God and answered prayer.”

If our young people do not have a relationship with God, why would we expect them to stay in the Church?

What *will* change our youth is not our structures, programs, or even ourselves, but Jesus Christ Himself through the life-changing message of the gospel.

Our institutionalization of the gospel has not resulted in the conversion of our youth and, therefore, they will naturally leave a church where there is no spiritual reality. We must re-examine whether we are preaching the real gospel or some sugar-coated, feel-good, pop-psychology philosophy that leads our youth to hell just as much as the false teachings of the cults.

It seems that many who grew up in our churches are not confronted by the gospel unless they attend some Christian camp.

Early in my ministry I wrestled with what the gospel really was, and re-examined fundamental questions about the nature of the gospel and its relevance. The result of this lengthy journey was a clearer understanding of the gospel and how to present it.

I have discovered that many church leaders have never wrestled through the message of the gospel. Many Evangelicals are content with a prayer for salvation, when Jesus wants us to repent of our sins, believe in Him and follow Him in His Kingdom.

The Apostle Paul said, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile” (Romans 1:16). We must preach a gospel that has the power to change lives, especially the lives of our youth.

Understanding the Value of Junior Highs. *Hemorrhaging Faith* reveals that:

there are some significant patterns in why and when Canadian young adults are leaving, staying or returning to church, including: we are losing more young people between childhood and adolescence than between adolescence and young adult years. . . . [T]he transition



years to middle school, junior high, and high school are highly stressful – many churches don't expect and plan for supporting kids through these transitions.

The study opened the eyes of many to the significance of junior high ministry.

The junior high years are an awkward time, not fitting neatly either as children or youth. Most churches have nothing for this group, so they get bored, discontented, ignored and eventually leave. When leaders in China wanted to indoctrinate that country with communist philosophy, they chose the junior highs as their focus. Why is it that the most mouldable and impressionable group in our churches is often ignored?

The Lord has laid on my heart a passion for this group, as they are often overlooked. I have formed two junior high fellowships (and worship services) in three different churches. I currently meet with the junior highs in my church every other Friday. The times we have together are important because this is often the age when they decide if they will follow Jesus.

When Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah began in Babylon, they were most likely junior high age, and they stood tall for the Lord. Junior highs have the potential to be sold out for God, but the Church ignores them, and they eventually have other things in this world that capture their hearts.

What I have found about junior highs – or any other ministry – is that relationship is more important than programs. We must spend more time cultivating relationships with them than the programs we produce. When we are there for the junior highs, the fruit will come in time. Not only will we see the fruit of many of them mature in Christ, but some of them will become pastors, missionaries and other leaders.

Understanding the Value of Intergenerational Community. *Hemorrhaging Faith* also concluded that part of the problem is “We have separated children and young people from the adults in the Church. . . . [A]ttempts to guide young adults to think differently about their lifestyles must be grounded in strong relationships – intentional mentoring relationships that cross generations will be especially helpful.”

Sometimes I wonder if it is our youth programs that are suffocating our youth. We have successfully separated our youth from the influence of most adults to be with “their age group.” Let's stop thinking “youth events” mean our adults are not involved.

We need to help the generations in our church interact. As Paul wrote to Timothy, “Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity” (1 Timothy 5:1-2).

Every Sunday in our church, we have testimony time in our service. Our adults, teens and even children are willing to testify to the goodness of God. We are still trying to figure it out, but we know we need to develop an environment in our congregations to appreciate each other and share with one another intergenerationally.

Understanding the Value of the King-

dom. We also find in *Hemorrhaging Faith*: “Young adults are more likely to stay engaged in the church if they are directly involved in the missional activities of the church. . . . [W]e should be equipping youth and young adults for mission, giving some of them opportunities to grow as leaders, as well as a safe place to fail.”

When the church is active in missions, it is active in Kingdom matters. This next generation could care less about church personnel, church policy or church politics. They would rather invest in the Kingdom that impacts eternity.

When Jesus sent the Twelve out to the lost sheep of Israel, He told them, “As you go,

proclaim this message: “The Kingdom of heaven has come near” (Matthew 10:7). The central message was about the Kingdom of God.

Yet many Christians value church matters over Kingdom matters. It's time we repent of valuing our buildings that will one day be rubble. It's time we repent of valuing our programs that will one day be irrelevant. It's time we stop valuing positions, status, and money as the driving force of the Church instead of the Holy Spirit. It's time we value the things that matter in the Kingdom – love, righteousness, humility and faith.

The *Hemorrhaging Faith* study highlights that what we are doing is not working. We need to re-evaluate our ministries to our youth. We also need to re-evaluate what it means to be the Church.

Many times our youth have left the Church because the “religion” they have experienced means nothing to them. I feel for them. There have been times when I wanted to give up my religion so I could follow Jesus. The sad reality is that when our youth give up their religion, many of them are not following anyone. **FT**

KAI MARK is the founder and pastor of Unionville Oasis Community Church in Markham, Ont. He has been working with teenagers for over 30 years, including co-ordinating the Teens' Conference and Saturday Night Live, two outreach events for teens in the Chinese community.

Sometimes I wonder if it is our youth programs that are suffocating our youth.



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**– Monika Donison, artist, mother of four,
Faith Today reader in Ottawa, Ont.**

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The Golden Rule in the Workplace

What a difference there would be if we all practised it.

We all have the need to be accepted, understood and respected as equals among our co-workers. I'm a frontline corporate chaplain working within the multifaceted and multicultural pluralistic workplace. And that need is the common thread in every workplace tapestry I've seen.

Every employee is peculiar – perhaps in certain mannerisms, even weird at times. So it takes an honest, humble, and mature disposition to look beyond the veneer of cultural divergence and ethnicity to recognize the core competencies of our co-workers.

Scripture admonishes us in many places to “love your neighbour as yourself.” Even unreligious people recognize the Golden Rule of “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you,” for example with secular proverbs such as “What goes around comes around.” In the workplace I often call this practising “common courtesy” toward your fellow workers.

Courtesy is needed because where there are people, naturally there are problems. We live in a fallen world. But if the Golden Rule were understood and applied from a personal, individual level, it would drastically curtail interpersonal strife and misunderstandings on the shop floor and beyond.

A workplace is only as successful as its employees. You can have the best products and the best delivery systems, but still fail without a motivated and co-operative workforce.

Any successful workplace also needs a clear vision or mission statement that reflects its reason to exist. Guiding principles help knit every employee into the tapestry and help keep moral and ethical integrity. But sadly within many workplaces there's a chasm between management and employees, and as a result the local workplace tapestry – the “corporate culture” – is suffering.

My experience has taught me people genuinely want to be appreciated for who they are first as individuals

and second for what they contribute as a team player. So how do we close the gap and bring everyone together on the same page? I'd advise some heavy doses of empathy, patience, and respect from management all the way down to the most junior person.

Some key areas to focus on include:

Intentional Listening – For the most part people working in a busy workplace can't fathom the notion of having to slow down. It seems antiproduktive. But being intentional in your interpersonal listening skills brings major improvements. You'd be surprised at how rampant miscommunication is within the workplace. It certainly contributes to having to redo tasks and therefore robs productivity time, causes frustration and depletes morale. So take the time to be intentional with your listening and watch productivity and morale soar.

Intentional Communication – Instructions are often misconstrued and therefore contribute to errors, again leading to lost productivity, frustration and morale. All of us, especially those in management roles, can work at being more clear and concise in our communication. Keep it simple, silly (K.I.S.S.)!

Intentional Respect – Why can't people just get along? Why are there hidden tensions and buried animosity between the workplace cubicles? Amazing how things could change for the better if only people could drop the façades, squish the prejudices, be themselves and appreciate the differences in others. It doesn't mean everyone has to be your best friend, but it will be surprising how others will reciprocate. Just “a little respect,” as Aretha Franklin – a gospel singer who found success in the mainstream marketplace – sang so memorably. **BT**

themselves and appreciate the differences in others. It doesn't mean everyone has to be your best friend, but it will be surprising how others will reciprocate. Just “a little respect,” as Aretha Franklin – a gospel singer who found success in the mainstream marketplace – sang so memorably. **BT**

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MARCO BIANCO is the Ontario regional director for Corporate Chaplains Canada (www.chaplains.ca), which has provided personal employee care for businesses in Alberta, B.C. and Ontario since 2004. Link to him at ca.linkedin.com/in/biancomarco777.



Sex, Drugs, and ... Religion

What comes to mind when you think of the 1960s?

Maybe it's the colourful and chaotic world of the hippie movement, with its tie-dye shirts, long hair and music festivals.

Maybe it's the sense of hope that accompanied Canada's centennial celebrations in 1967 or the grainy TV images of the first moon landing in 1969.

Or maybe it's darker themes of social unrest, drug use and political assassinations. Depending on your age, you may simply think back to what was happening in your own life during those years – a first kiss, a first car, a first child.

For most of us the 1960s conjures up images of change, and for good reason.

The baby boom generation, born in the years after World War II, came of age then with more of them attending high school and university than in any previous generation. Televisions became a standard feature of Canadian living rooms. New hairstyles, clothing and music appeared on the scene, all driven by a burgeoning youth market with disposable income.

More controversially, people began to abandon the Christian sexual ethic as popular culture and the birth control pill made premarital sex a more socially acceptable and (apparently) risk-free option.

This “sexual revolution” had political repercussions, such as a widening of the grounds for divorce and the legalization of abortion under certain circumstances. A rising political star, justice minister – and soon prime minister – Pierre Trudeau ushered in both legislative changes.

Such developments were not limited to Canada, of course. Similar changes took place in the United States, Britain and other Western countries.

Historian Arthur Marwick has rightly argued that these upheavals constituted a “cultural revolution” throughout the Western world. But the 1960s were not just about sex, drugs and rock ‘n’ roll. They were also a time of religious crisis as mainstream religion faltered in Western societies, including Canada.

Before 1960 two pillars dominated Canadian religion – the mainline Protestant churches (primarily Anglican and United) and the Roman Catholic Church. After 1960 both of these pillars began to crack.

The Catholic stronghold of Quebec experienced a “Quiet Revolution” when a new provincial government severed the close relationship between the Catholic Church and the

State by rapidly taking over the administration of schooling and health care, both of which had been run by the Church in previous decades.

These changes coincided with a momentous gathering of Catholic bishops in Rome for the Second Vatican Council, which shook up the Church by replacing the Latin mass with services in vernacular languages, adopting a more positive attitude toward Protestants, and generally displaying openness to the modern world.

While historians are still debating the “how” and “why,” the net effect of these rapid changes was a sharp drop in Church commitment and participation among Canadian Catholics. This drop was especially pronounced in Quebec, which went from being the most religious jurisdiction in North America to the least, at least in terms of church attendance.

Meanwhile, mainline Protestants went through their own period of upheaval.

Prominent journalist Pierre Berton published a scathing book *The Comfortable Pew* (J.B. Lippincott, 1965), which condemned the churches for always lagging a step behind social change. Berton argued that unless the churches got with the times by dropping traditional dogmas and promoting progressive social causes, they were doomed to extinction.

Hardly a facet of church life escaped unchanged as mainline Protestant leaders implemented new Sunday school curricula, revised their positions on moral issues, took up the flag of progressive politics and flirted with radical theological movements such as the so-called “death of God” theology.

But to their disappointment these churches soon found Berton's medicine didn't work. Many conservative members departed for other churches, while radicals found the pace of change too slow and simply left the faith altogether. Many in the middle scratched their heads and decided it would be less confusing just to sleep in on Sunday morning. The result was a catastrophic loss of members and participants that left Canadian mainline Protestantism, like Quebec Catholicism, a shadow of its former self.

However, not all was doom and gloom for Canadian Christianity in the 1960s.

On the fringes there were signs of hope in Canada's smaller evangelical churches. In a future column we'll explore how these Evangelicals successfully navigated the turbulent waters of the 1960s with their faith and churches intact. **FT**

KEVIN FLATT is assistant professor of history at Redeemer University College in Hamilton, Ont. His book *After Evangelicalism: The Sixties and the United Church of Canada* (McGill-Queens University Press, 2013) reaches bookstores this summer.

There's a video clip with this article. View it at www.faithtoday.ca/summer2013page43.



Being Content

God calls us to live within our means and be generous towards others.

Take a moment to imagine the perfect day. Are you sunbathing in the Caribbean? Or spending time with relatives who live far away?

Now, imagine the perfect life. What would it take for you to feel happy, peaceful and content?

We can all imagine how our lives could be more care-free. If we are honest, many of the first answers that come to mind are more materialistic than spiritual.

It's sad how many of us are perpetually discontented with our lives. A generation ago people spoke about keeping up with the Joneses. Now, we are *Keeping Up with the Kardashians*. In our media-infiltrated world, we are bombarded with advertising – both subtle and overt – that seeks to sell us an enhanced identity or lifestyle.

It can be easy to fall into the trap of constantly wanting more. As the CBC's Kevin O'Leary, a self-proclaimed billionaire, is famous for saying, "I have one objective: I want to go to bed richer than when I woke up."

But when will "more" ever be enough? We begrudge the incredible blessings God has already poured out on us. (Check out Ephesians 1 for some of His awesome gifts.) We harbour discontent because we don't have as many possessions or opportunities as our neighbour, sister or the latest tabloid celebrity.

This discontent not only affects our lives, but also our closest relationships. Finances are one of the main sources of conflict for many couples, often fuelled by the stress of debt. Christian finance expert Larry Burkett once said, "Of the couples who end up getting a divorce, every survey shows between 85-90 per cent of them say that the number one problem they were having was finances."

Most couples don't want to admit to trouble in this area, but avoiding poor financial habits doesn't make them go away.

At times discontent is rooted in our desires. Other times, and often the heart of the issue, is rooted in fear. The Bible offers much wisdom – reportedly more than 2,000 verses – about money. We should be stewarding the resources of God and not hoarding wealth out of pride or fear.

A generation ago people spoke about keeping up with the Joneses. Now, we are *Keeping Up with the Kardashians*.

Of course, Christian families just like any other families can struggle financially and find themselves in need, often for long seasons. My mother recalls when her father – a street evangelist and custodian – would pray for God's provision to fill their completely bare cupboards. God provided more than once by prompting unknowing neighbours or church family to leave bags of groceries on their doorstep.

Truly God recognizes our need for food, shelter and clothing – although sometimes we need the eyes of faith to see it.

More often than not, however, our eyes get caught up in the extras, seeing them as things we need and deserve rather than things we merely want.

God calls us to live within our means and to be generous towards others. It's possible to do one without the other, to spend on ourselves while leaving out tithes or gifts to people in need.

1 Timothy 6:17-19 addresses this issue. "Command those who are rich . . . to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for them-

selves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life."

Therefore, as we consider our own needs, let's be quick to look to the needs of others rather than to selfish extravagance.

When we put our trust in money rather than in God, there will never be enough. We will always be striving to make more and build our personal kingdoms. Instead, as Hebrews 13:5 exhorts us, "Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.'"

Everything we have – our money, our possessions, our very breath – is not our own. These are lavish gifts from our Great Provider. For a short while here on Earth, He has entrusted us with them. As women alive in Christ, may we use God's gifts for His glory and not our own. **FT**

MICHELLE ARTHUR is thankful for the spiritual and financial wisdom her parents imparted. One of her mom's best tips is, "If you see something for full price, wait two weeks. You'll find out whether you still like it, and it will probably go on sale!" Find more of these columns by the executive director of Women Alive at www.theEFC.ca/WomenAliveFT.



■ The Snack Program provides children with a healthy afterschool snack.

PHOTO: TANYA BALETA

St. Paul's Bloor Street, Toronto, Ont.

Over the last few decades, when St. Paul's Bloor Street's community was changing in Toronto's city core, the congregation felt forced to transform or flee the neighbourhood. They chose to ask a challenging question: "Lord, what shall we transform into?"

The Rev. Canon Dr. Barry Parker arrived 15 years ago from Edmonton to be rector of this Anglican parish. From the front door of the church's 170-year-old neo-gothic building, he can see residences of the wealthy, the most densely populated immigrant community in the city, two universities, Toronto's growing gay village, expensive retail stores and many new condo developments.

The diverse parish has no shortage of opportunities to live out Parker's belief that "a transformative community links the gospel and social justice."

Helping Parker lead the parish is David Kirk McCleary, a Tyndale Seminary graduate with a Baptist background who "intentionally came to St. Paul's as an outreach intern to learn how to be a follower of Christ in a different tradition." Over the last two years there, McCleary has found that "God confronted all

of my biases, including those I never knew I had."

McCleary loves the fact St. Paul's has a long and storied history of showing love for God and others. St. Paul's parishioners remind each other that every follower of Jesus is on mission with God – at home, work, even in the supermarket.

Parker describes this approach as a "mixed economy – both attractational and missional. We are brought in to be sent out."

Intentional Ministry

One of the church's attractational-missional initiatives is a weekly after-school snack program for children in Grades 2 to 6, in partnership with the Toronto City Mission. Twenty parish volunteers, including retirees and young adults, rotate on teams, affording a platform for faith to be heard while providing a healthy snack and a safe place to play.

As volunteers get to know the children, the feeding program becomes incidental and building relationships becomes the focus. Healthy snacks are prepared together and kids comment on the taste of *real* cheddar cheese.



Students at ESL Café learn English with the help of Bibles.

PHOTO: TANYA BALETA

“It’s a way to expand their palates and change their food culture by offering something as simple as fruit, juice and milk,” says McCleary.

In the fall, a retiree was unsure if she was a good fit for the snack ministry because the children were so loud and boisterous. But by March she was making comments such as, “Weren’t the kids wonderful this week? It will be strange not to see *our* kids next week during spring break.”

Volunteers are starting to attend the Toronto City Mission quarterly potluck for parents so they too can get to know the families of the kids they spend time with each week. The next step is to help kids gain respect for God’s creation by teaching them how to grow their own food in box gardens on the balconies of their high-rise apartments.

Another program, the ESL Café, has seen even more explosive growth. Six years ago one parishioner reached out to five new Canadians, to help them learn English as a second language (ESL). Now 30 volunteers connect with 220 students each week. Classes divide into three ability

levels where students sit at round tables with a facilitator.

Participants say they feel welcomed, they love the personal table conversations (rather than teaching) –and it’s free! Some stay only a few months. Others become Canadian citizens.

Volunteers are drawn into students’ lives as good neighbours helping them navigate their new city, assisting with immigration issues and piloting accessibility to health services. Students receive freely and they want to give back. ESL students volunteered to fold several thousand Holy Week leaflets. Many attend church just to figure out why people would give so much.

A man from Iran attended the ESL program while completing his PhD studies. After three weeks he questioned the connection between the “free” program and its “Christian” background.

A volunteer explained, “God loves us and we love you.”

After nine weeks the Iranian man said, “Tell me about Christ,” so the volunteer provided an easy-to-read Bible. Each week

he asked probing questions until the end of the year when he returned to Iran. Now, the dialogue continues by email.

“We never know where people are on their faith journey,” says McCleary. “We allow them to lead the conversation.”

Or, as Parker says, “Belonging comes before believing,” highlighting the relationship-building power of the round tables.

Transformative Community

For some neighbours the church’s Divorce Care program is their first touch point with the church. One woman who completed the 13 sessions said, “I just want to thank you for all the different things that Nancy [a parish nurse] is doing for this community. I came first as a stranger and now I come because you love me.”

Dealing with Depression classes, a six-week study on the parables of Christ, began on Mental Health Day a year ago. Biblically focused groups meet with the parish nurse to face cultural stigmas. Sometimes community participants continue in a church small group.

“We are committed to creating a sanctuary in the midst of the downtown noise,” says Parker. The electronic sign outside reads “Come in and pray,” welcoming constant foot traffic into the chapel across from the administration office. Business and community groups rent functional space and catering services for business meetings, conferences and receptions. The congregation is known for its welcoming atmosphere and community focus.

Parker describes the character of the St. Paul’s community. “We’re an incubator of intentional quality ministries to equip and transform the community.” Parishioners serve the community both inside and outside the walls of the church as they express their love for God and their neighbour.

“Every program has a shelf life – the gospel doesn’t,” says Parker. **FT**

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CHARLENE DE HAAN, a freelance writer in Toronto, is also the executive director of Camino Global (Canada) and founder of StepUp Transitions Consulting. Find more of these columns at www.theEFC.ca/aChurchYouShouldKnow. *Faith Today* is grateful for the writing she has done in this series, which will now be turned over to new associate editor Stephen Bedard.



Family Matters More Than Work

Many men prefer the workplace to home – and feel bad about it.

Frank used to spend Thursday and Friday evenings with his friends from work. As soon as he clocked out he would head down to the watering hole and spend a couple of hours kibitzing. Frank is missing those times. These days he goes straight home because his wife needs relief from the demands of looking after two pre-school children.

Something about Frank makes him believe going home is the right thing to do. But he envies his buddies and is beginning to resent the expectations of his family. He feels he's been snagged like a trout on a fishhook, dragged away from fun and plunged into work without a paycheque.

Even if he couldn't hang out with his pals, he could have put in a couple of extra hours. They could use the extra money too.

Steve's kids are older and he works in mid-management for a major corporation. The 45-minute commute is driving him nuts. He wonders if he'll be home in time for a quick bite before he needs to be at the soccer field. Or is it baseball today? Piano lessons? He can hardly keep it straight.

Meanwhile, they've been cutting back in his department. His workload is growing and he's beginning to be concerned his job might be on the chopping block. There's so much to be done. It's hard to do it well. He needs to produce more. And yet he finds himself running kids around in a minivan and discussing the weather with soccer parents. There has to be a better use of time.

Common Problem

Frank and Steve are typical Canadian men. For some reason they believe their relationships matter more than their occupations. But their feelings belie the belief. Both are torn between their longing to be at work and domestic duties. Even when their bodies are at home, their minds are preoccupied with workplace issues.

Let's face it. Children are inconvenient and demanding. They're even likely to interfere with a man's relationship with their mother. It's hard to keep loving. Work is more predictable. Work can seem more satisfying. Frank and Steve are feeling bad that they'd rather be busy with their jobs than hanging out with their families.

But neither shuts off his BlackBerry.

Promise Keepers Canada president Kirk Giles says this tension is not unusual. "One of the most common prayer requests I hear from men is that God would help them turn off their work when they are at home with family," he says.

Is this all-too-common discomfort the product of good guilt, the well-applied pressure of a healthy conscience? Can God help men like Frank and Steve get their actions more in line with their beliefs? Can they learn to be properly present with their loved ones instead of longing to distance themselves from household demands?

Presence Matters

The men who ask for prayer are on the right track, and church isn't the only place that tells them fathers make important contributions to their children's cognitive and behavioural functioning.

Sociological evidence shows a father's ability to set appropriate limits and structure children's behaviour positively influences problem solving and decreased emotional problems, such as sadness, social withdrawal and anxiety. In other words, active fathering makes for better-adjusted kids.

Being there matters. No man on his deathbed regrets that he spent too much time with his family and not enough at work.

But how do we turn what we know to be healthy into something we truly desire? Acknowledging a problem and seeking help are excellent first steps. Learning to depend on a higher power is an important move towards overcoming any addiction, including workaholism. Prayer can help.

Perhaps those men who ask for prayer to help them bridge the divide between work and home should be the first to practise that kind of prayer – alone and with friends.

Begin alone. If you have a commute, use the time to ask God to help you switch off work and turn your heart towards home. Pray for your spouse and children by name. Speak to God about their issues. Look for ways in which you could be helpfully involved. Nurture the desire to be present to home and family.

And if you have friends with similar concerns, try praying aloud with them. The encouragement of "brothers" will strengthen your ability to cultivate enduring relationships. Duty can become desire. The satisfaction of spouse and children is a greater reward than workplace success. **FT**

DOUG KOOP of Winnipeg is a freelance writer and spiritual care provider. Find more of these columns at www.theEFC.ca/BlessedIsTheMan.

There's a video clip with this article. View it at www.faithtoday.ca/summer2013page47.



Thailand: A Church in the Hands of Its Own People

In a recent visit to Thailand, one question kept surfacing to my mind: Why is it that after over 183 years of evangelical missionary work, an investment of thousands of lives and millions upon millions of dollars, there are only 370,000 evangelical Christians out of a total population of 65 million? That is only one half of one percent.

I wanted to hear from Thai Evangelicals about their optimism and hope for discipleship and church growth.

In 2004 the Arthur S. DeMoss Foundation organized a campaign which asked the Thai people if they found the words Jesus and God offensive. They then invited people to call in to receive a book, believing

around 200,000 people might respond. The organizers were surprised when some 2.9 million did.

Rev. Dr. Wirachai Kowae, founder of the Assemblies of God and chairman of the Evangelical Fellowship of

Thailand (sister organization of the EFC in that country), identified a key reason for optimism in the evangelical church there. Today, he noted, the Thai church is not run by foreigners. This vision for the church was defined back in 1951 by the teaching of a Chinese Christian leader (part of the Three Self Patriotic Movement), which included three mandates – self-governance, self-propagation and self-funding.

Other factors are at work as well. As more Thais move from rural to urban settings, the old ways made rigid by

a lack of education and loyalty to their religion are shaken. Minds are opened to other views and sets of values, including religious.

Wirachai explained that when David Yonggi Cho, pastor of Yoido Full Gospel Church in South Korea, spoke to pastors in the 1980s, the pastors realized how much they were limiting what God could do. Dr. Cho, raised in poverty, had built the largest church in the world. Hearing Dr. Cho speak was a seminal moment for the Thai evangelical Church, because they had before them an example of someone who had built from nothing, as they must do. This was a wake-up call to the Thai pastors who did not include parking lots in their building plans because they never thought they would have members with cars.

Within the broader culture, the Thai government grew to see its need for Christian support. Killings in three southern provinces by Islamists moved the government to be more supportive of Christians, no longer seeing them as a threat to the nation. While the government's new view of Christians did not directly contribute to evangelism, the new, more positive view within a majority Buddhist country did help.

The current optimism of evangelical leaders is rooted in their reliance on indigenous leadership. Thai people are leading national churches, colleges, seminaries and mission initiatives.

Enoch Yattasak Sirikul is an example. A former student communist agitator who was almost killed in the 1977 coup,



he came to faith and today leads a national movement that links churches, agencies and missions with a vision to train volunteers to disciple others.

Thailand is a country to watch. Overshadowed by a culture that assumes being Thai and Buddhist are one and the same, how will this current vision and energy of Thai Evangelicals break through the barriers which has so bridled the gospel in the past?

After so many years of mission, the vision is now in the hands of its own people, where it belongs. The vision is wielded in faith by men and women who will not be fooled by cultural missteps but will be wise in grace and truth. They pray that the Spirit will destroy strongholds.

The Thai evangelical church is led by its own people. It has a plan. We will be watching and praying. **FT**

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

On Our Knees

For basic facts about Thailand and suggestions to incorporate in your prayers, visit www.operationworld.org and www.persecution.net.

Canadian Connections

- DRIME, a ministry of Power to Change, is a street drama and equipping ministry (Disciples Ready in Mobile Evangelism) which uses choreographed drama set to music to share the gospel on city streets. www.powertochange.com/drime/thailand
- OMF works in partnership with the emerging church so that it becomes self-propagating. Other priorities are leadership training, evangelism, church planting and discipleship. www.omf.ca/thailand

For more about how EFC affiliates are working in Thailand, visit www.theEFC.ca/globalvillage



The Book

Three concrete reasons to have the Bible as our spiritual authority.

The Sunday school chorus goes like this: “The B-I-B-L-E, yes, that’s the book for me. I stand alone on the Word of God, the B-I-B-L-E.” In a more sophisticated way, Martin Luther told Catholic authorities in 1521: “I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted, and my conscience is captive to the Word of God.”

The Bible is the sole authority for many Protestants, the main authority for most other Protestants, and equal authority with tradition in official Roman Catholic theology. Another sign of the Bible’s influence is that it also shapes many offshoots of the main channels of Protestantism (Jehovah’s Witnesses and Mormonism, for example) and is significant in the development of Islam.

If we go by numbers, the Bible is the most influential book in world history. Of course numbers do not ensure truth, so let’s consider three concrete reasons to have the Bible as our spiritual authority.

First, the Bible is anchored in history. No, we cannot prove every historical claim, but a ton of historical data fits with known events, other sources and the general contours of the Middle Eastern world.

Consider an opposite example. Mormonism is currently hurting big-time because of obvious evidence that the *Book of Mormon* is an invention of Joseph Smith, the Mormon founder. The *Book of Mormon* claims to be the record of two Jewish groups who came to the Americas and set up major civilizations over two thousand years ago. Looking for Zarahemla (a city in the *Book of Mormon*) is not like looking for Jerusalem. Smith stated in another Mormon scripture that the Garden of Eden was in Missouri. Needless to say, *only* Mormons defend that claim.

The Bible’s historical witness to Jesus outdoes the parallel cases for Krishna, the Hindu god, or Gautama, the Buddha for our age, or Guru Nanak. On the former, Krishna did not exist. Gautama is a historical figure, but the earliest documents about him are four hundred years after he lived. Nanak, the Sikh founder, really lived, but the sources about him are late and mythological.

My views here are not just out of my Christian conviction. Anyone can read the British historian A.L. Basham on Krishna, the Buddhist scholar Donald Lopez on the Buddha, and Hew MacLeod, the superb historian of Sikhism. Basham, Lopez and MacLeod have no Christian axe to grind. For a positive look at the historical case for Jesus, we also have

John Warwick Montgomery’s magnificent work *History and Christianity* (InterVarsity Press, 1971, expanded in 2003 as *History, Law and Christianity*). If you have wondered about the textual reliability of the New Testament, consult the work of Daniel Wallace, an expert professor at Dallas Seminary.

Second, the Bible’s core teachings match human reality and make viable solutions for humanity’s problems. The writers of Scripture did not live in a fantasy land about what humans are like. The Bible knows both human triumph – because we are made in the image of God – and human ill – because we are fallen creatures.

Imagine how hard it is to follow a religious path where reality collides with the obvious. An Australian guru named Jasmuheen advocates learning to live without food or fluids. Yes, people die following that principle.

Many of the foibles and evil documented in our daily newspapers could be solved by implementation of the ideals of Scripture. The same applies to the messes that erupt in church life and in our personal lives.

This is not to say that Scriptural solutions are always easy. Turning the other cheek and going the second mile for an enemy is sometimes harder than climbing physical mountains.

A third strength of the Bible is by far the most important. The Bible points to Jesus. When I was a young Christian I spent too much time telling people facts about archaeological or historical support for Scripture. Thankfully, I learned quite quickly that nothing speaks more clearly about the greatness of the Bible than its core message about the life, teachings, death and resurrection of Jesus.

If people cannot see Jesus and His wonder, beauty, love, courage, grace, humility, wisdom and power, there is little left to say. Thinking of Jesus as the Bible’s central and greatest element also helps in facing the difficult parts of Scripture. When I study those tough passages or issues, in the end I choose to balance them with the tremendous and clear truths that Jesus brings to humanity.

Karl Barth, the great Christian theologian, was asked on a North American tour what summed up his theology. Given that Barth wrote thousands of pages of theology, that was a significant question. Barth, who risked his life defending the gospel against Nazism, answered that his life work was summed up in this way: “Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so.” **FT**

JAMES A. BEVERLEY is professor of Christian thought and ethics at Tyndale Seminary in Toronto. He recommends www.bible.org for further study. Find more of these columns at www.theEFC.ca/ReligionWatch.

There are two video clips with this article. View them at www.faithtoday.ca/summer2013page49a and ...49b.

Christian Writers Awarded

Writers from a wide range of Canadian churches won awards from The Word Guild, a national writers' association, in June. The annual Word Awards drew more than 285 entries published last year across 31 categories. Winners were presented with cash prizes at a gala event in Mississauga, Ont., on June 12.

This year's \$5,000 Grace Irwin book award went to Sheila Wray Gregoire of Belleville, Ont., for *The Good Girl's Guide to Great Sex* (published by Zondervan, reviewed in the Jan/Feb 2013 issue of *Faith Today*).

Faith Today articles among the winners included Karen Stiller's "Hemorrhaging Faith: Why They're Leaving" (long feature category), "Canadian Women are International Leaders" co-written by *Faith Today* senior editors Karen Stiller and Bill Fledderus (short feature), and "The Life of Peter Penner (1929-2011)" by Richard Erlendson (profile/human interest).

Several authors were multiple winners.

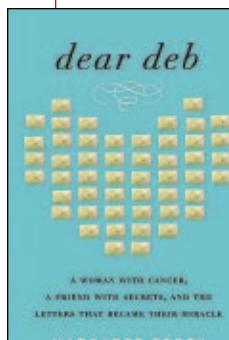
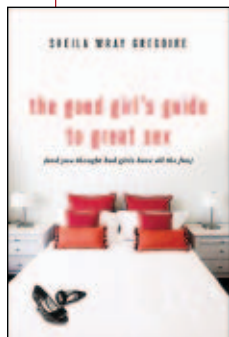
Lawrence Brice of Port Rowan, Ont., took home the top prize in the instructional book and apologetics/evangelism categories for *Confident Faith: In a World That Wants to Believe* (Deep River Books).

Margaret Terry of Burlington, Ont., won for *Dear Deb: A Woman With Cancer, A Friend With Secrets and the Letters That Became Their Miracle* (Thomas Nelson, reviewed in the May/June 2013 issue of *Faith Today*) in both the general market and life stories categories, and was

also awarded for an article she wrote.

A complete list of winners is available at www.thewordguild.com.

Afterward 200 writers, editors, agents and publishers met in Guelph, Ont., for three days for Canada's largest Christian writers' conference, also held by The Word Guild.



Larry Brice

PHOTO: WWW.BRINGINGTOCOMMUNICATIONS.COM

—Bill Fledderus

a conversational style, "with the sincere wish that by sharing the lessons I have learned, you will find your journey a bit easier." Yet the book is decidedly professional, both in format and content. It will add purpose and motivation to any career, whether you are changing direction or not.

3D Success is chock full of real-life challenges and practical suggestions. It portrays a strong work ethic and promotes positive attitude and integrity, also stressing the importance of maintaining mental, physical, emotional and spiritual health to be successful.

If I were to describe it in one word, I would choose "encouraging." I recommend it to anyone who needs a career boost, whether in transition or not.

—Janice L. Dick

Green Shoots Out of Dry Ground: Growing a New Future for the Church in Canada

Editor: John P. Bowen Wipf and Stock, 2013. 304 pages. \$35

Don't waste your breath by trying to convince John Bowen, a professor at Toronto's Wycliffe College, that the church in Canada has no future. Far from being near death, it has a well-defined mission in the present century.

The 16 essays in this collection represent the length and breadth of the country including, I might add, my most easterly province of Newfoundland and Labrador. The 20 authors write from different denominations and traditions, including Anglican, independent, United Church and Mennonite. They

3D Success: Changing Careers in Mid Life

Author: Linda Wegner Word Alive Press, 2012. 130 pages. \$14

From cover to cover this book is a success, offering positive insights and suggestions to people between the ages of 45 and 64 who are considering creating their own businesses or recreating their careers.

The author writes from per-

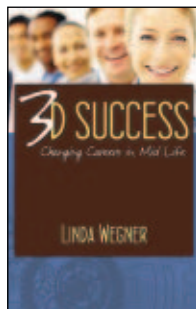
sonal experience. When life demanded, she used hobbies and skills she possessed, as well as help from mentors, to launch a business she calls Words of Worth.

This book is effectively organized into three parts: Discovering Your Passion, Developing Your Plan, and Defending Your Priorities.

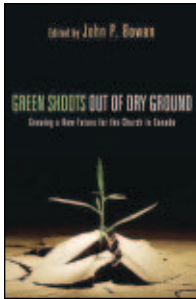
Each part broadens into chapters beginning with wise

quotes from various sources and closing with Lessons I've Learned ("Nothing worth having comes easy") and Something to Think About ("How do I want to be remembered when my life is ended?").

Wegner is a Christian writer and editor who works from Powell River, B.C., and has also lived many years in Saskatchewan. She writes in



address issues that take on a distinctive shape in Canada, including urban and rural areas, what aboriginal Christians can



teach about missions, and where youth are in relation to faith and the church.

The title *Green Shoots* reflects Jesus' imagery of natural growth. Amid

what feels like a dry spell for many churches, green shoots are springing to life in unexpected ways and places.

The essayists trace this engaging imagery in three sections. "The Lay of the Land" offers a theology of mission and an overview of Canadian cultures today. "Nursery Gardens" samples the growth in the various "fields" of Canadian mission. "A Garden That Will Last" suggests what is needed for mission to bring about sustained and lasting change.

No ivory tower theorists, the authors write from their personal experiences as practi-

tioners of mission. Ten stories of innovative ministries, creative church plants and fresh expressions of church, from Vancouver to St. John's, are sprinkled throughout the book.

Bishop Colin Johnson suggests the Good News "is worth pushing out of our comfort zone, trying something new, investing in some creative opportunities, and taking some leaps of faith for the sake of the Gospel."

Dipping into these essays is a good place to start growing a new future for the church in Canada. *—Burton K. Janes*

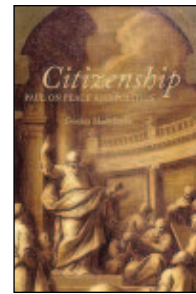
Citizenship: Paul on Peace and Politics

Author:
Gordon Mark Zerbe
CMU Press, 2012.
276 pp. \$26

The separation between Church and State is a cherished value in North American culture. From the outset, Zerbe points out that Paul the Apostle did

not live in a culture with such a value. To start with, religion was inextricably woven with politics in the Roman imperial cult. The Jews also hoped for a Messiah who would re-establish Jerusalem as the political centre of the world.

The subtitle reads "Paul on Peace and Politics." Those who pick up this book hoping for a biblical basis for involvement in contemporary politics will be disappointed. Instead, Zerbe gives us 12 articles of biblical study on Paul's views on living as citizens worthy of the gospel of Christ



(see Philippians 1:27 and 3:20). Using Paul's letters, Zerbe illustrates Paul's advice to 1st-century Christians who stood between their Jewish faith ancestors and the greater polytheistic Greco-Roman world.

He points out that we have privatized the Greek word *pistis*, usually translated as "faith." We have reduced it to mean cognitive intellectual be-

lief. Zerbe reminds us that for Paul, *pistis* meant an unwavering trust in God and a loyal identification with a new class of people belonging to the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth.

He divides the book into three sections – loyalty (Paul on faith and worship), mutuality (Paul's corporate convictions) and security (Paul's use of military metaphors leading his understanding of peace).

This book is published by the peace-oriented Canadian Mennonite University. So it's natural that Zerbe takes some time at the

end to examine Paul's perspectives in relation to the Anabaptist peace orientation.

This book can be demanding for readers not normally engaged in academic dialogue. That said, it does give a refreshing account of 1st-century Paul. It also shows us how 21st-century Christians have deviated from his ideas.

—Pye Chew



Fighter
Artist: Manafest
Bec/Fontana North, 2012.
\$21

Fighter is the fifth album by Manafest, a.k.a. Chris Greenwood, a Christian rapper and rock artist from

Pickering, Ont. Produced by Adam Messinger (Justin Bieber) and Seth Mosley (Newsboys), this album showcases Manafest less as a rapper and more as a singer.

The opening thrash metal/fuzz guitar riffs in the title track are characteristic of the sound throughout almost the entire album. This gives the songs a dark, heavy atmosphere that unfortunately also creates too much sameness between the tracks. And while there is a band playing behind the vocals (no samples over drum loops here), it's strange the musicians aren't credited on the album materi-

als I have seen. Too bad – their contributions are certainly noteworthy. Manafest's website mentions a long-time association with Thousand Foot Krutch, but doesn't actually identify the group as playing on the album.

Given his strong Beastie Boys, P.O.D. and Linkin Park influences, it's not surprising how Manafest sounds when he raps. At the same time, he avoids the profanity and egocentricity of most other rappers. He's also quite open and forthright about himself in his lyrics. In "Human" he says, "Cause I wear my heart on my sleeve/If you cut me I'll bleed." (But why is it that this genre always seems to be more about the artist performing it than about any other subject?)

"Never Let You Go" is the first single, and there are two versions of it on the album – the original and the Joel Bruyere acoustic remix, the final track. With its toned-down instrumentation, the remix is actually much stronger and is easily the best track on the album. A refreshing end that shows Manafest's softer, more spiritually reflective side.

—Terry Burman

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The New Evangelical Way of (Not) Arguing

Ignoring the Scriptures in favour of the maximum individual freedom to be happy.

When we Evangelicals have argued with each other – over gender, divine foreknowledge, hell or whatever – we used to argue primarily over the Scriptures. We might also have had recourse to the sciences, history, tradition, ecclesiastical authorities, personal intuition or even common sense, but the deciding factor was always the Bible – at least in the way we have debated the issue, whatever else was really going on in terms of personal preferences and power politics.

Not now. The debates over homosexuality make that clear. And the implications of *how* we are debating loom far more important than even the crucial issues about sex, sexuality, gender, marriage and family.

Evangelicals are increasingly endorsing same-sex relationships – here in Canada, in America, in Britain and beyond. But the endorsements do not come with extensively worked-out scriptural rationales. Quite the contrary. They come merely appealing to the chief value of our post-1960s culture: personal liberty.

To be sure, most Christians don't argue explicitly on the basis of freedom, but on the basis of justice and compassion. But the justice seen to be denied to homosexuals is the supposed right to marry – to be free to enjoy a same-sex union without condemnation and, indeed, with the full affirmation of church, society and state. And what compassionate person wants to withhold all that from them?

This kind of thinking reflects the core moral concern held by the Baby Boomer generation – and now taken for granted by their progeny – namely, the maximum individual freedom to be happy.

I haven't heard anyone arguing same-sex marriages can increase anyone's *holiness*, to select a different value to appeal to. Such an argument is theoretically possible, but no one is making it.

And who is arguing same-sex marriages will further the proclamation of the gospel? Yes, some suggest welcoming same-sex couples will make Christianity more acceptable, perhaps even opening a wider way for such couples to follow Christ and grow into Christian maturity. But such a claim cannot yet be proven by experience and certainly not by the Scriptures.

Ah, the Scriptures. I continue to be convinced that no

substantial case can, in fact, be made for same-sex marriage on the basis of the Scriptures. But I am becoming convinced that question doesn't even matter to many Evangelicals anymore.

Postmodernism properly taught us to be skeptical about final claims to absolute truth proclaimed by authorities who in fact sought to keep the rest of us under control. But this attitude has been fuzzified into a license to believe whatever you like, without feeling any obligation to conform your views to what is actually the case.

So if someone – say, the Church – claims the Bible restricts sex and marriage to a man and a woman, well, that's just one way of looking at it among others – who can say for sure? – and so I'll resolve the matter on the basis of what I do take to be obvious and fundamental, namely the right of every person to be happy as he or she sees fit so long as no one else is hurt in the process. And I certainly don't want to look like those Bible-thumping fanatics from Westboro Baptist Church.

This vulgar liberalism is all there is now, even in the minds of otherwise sophisticated Christians, when a moral push really comes to shove. We've seen people on opposing sides of various issues appeal to the Bible, and who knows, really, what the Bible says? So we turn instead to what we *think* we know. Personal freedom to pursue happiness is paramount, and justice must be served in a compassionate way.

This cultural tide has met little resistance in churches who spend their time moaning repetitive mumbles to Jesus and hearing entertaining "sermons" relying entirely on the sway of personalities. Neither songwriter nor preacher has felt obliged to articulate what the Bible actually says, much less to argue that this scriptural message ought to have binding authority on the congregation. So the ground of moral reasoning must lie elsewhere – in what "everybody knows."

I might sound angry about this, but I'm actually just afraid. Once we give up on serious Bible study and resort instead to "the basic thrust" of the Bible, or "the main message of the gospel," or some other convenient generalization, we have no place to stand against that tide, and nothing to offer our society that our society is not already saying to itself.

Yes, that's right. We've become liberals, and that story does not have a happy ending. For anyone. **FT**

JOHN STACKHOUSE is the Sangwoo Youtong Chee professor of theology and culture at Regent College. His most recent book is *Making the Best of It: Following Christ in the Real World* (Oxford, 2008). Find more of these columns at www.theEFC.ca/ChristAndCulture.

There's a video clip with this article. View it at www.faithtoday.ca/summer2013page54.

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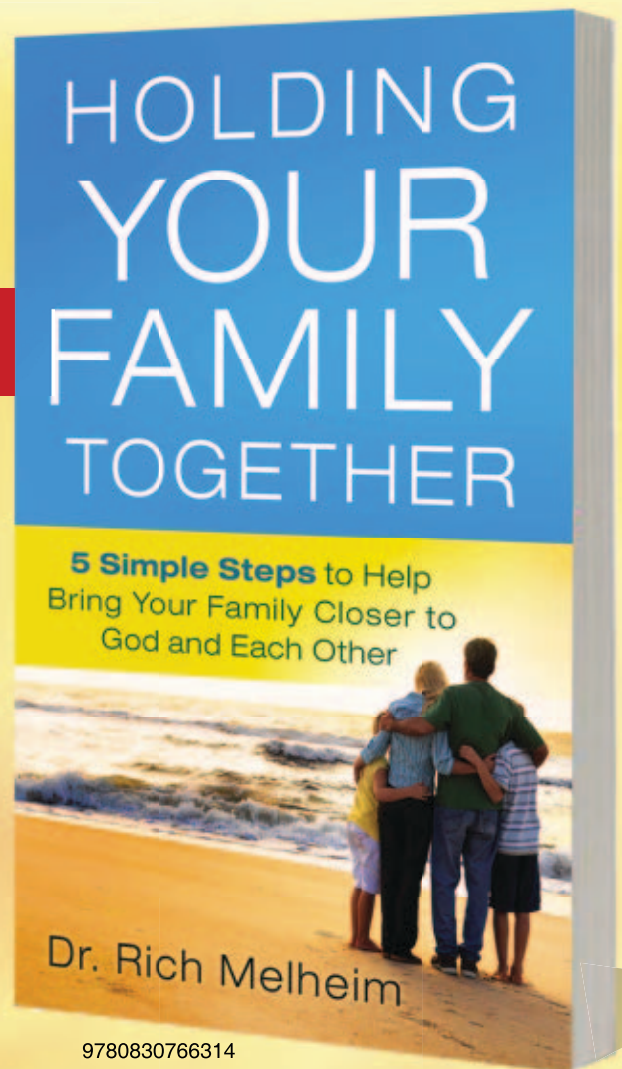
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