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SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2013



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September / October 2013

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Clearly Relevant

In a summer of disasters, Canadian churches have made remarkable public contributions.

When Calgary flooded, the Church responded providing shelter, food, clothing and comfort. When the terrible train crash devastated the town and people of Lac-Mégantic, the Church provided solace. It became the place where people gathered to mourn together, ask impossible questions and begin to heal.

In both of those difficult, unpredictable disasters that made this a Canadian summer like few others in recent memory, the Church catapulted into relevancy: providing practical and spiritual help when people needed it the most.

In case you ever thought otherwise, the Church still matters in Canada.

This issue of *Faith Today* will help your church prepare to be light in the darkness of a community emergency.

It will also get you talking, we imagine, especially around the *Faith Today* Interview with Dawn McDonald, a minister who knows better than most the struggle same-sex attracted Christ-followers encounter in their own lives and in the Church.

A good interview will probably make everyone a little bit uncomfortable. This is a good one.


When a story crossed our desks about Christians apologizing at Gay Pride events, we had a choice: we could cover it as a news story or we could go much deeper.

We dove deep.

You will find the facts, but also three different opinions about whether it is a good idea for Christians to say, "I'm sorry" to the LGBTQ community.

What does "I'm sorry" mean in that context?

Even with three viewpoints present, we suspect we are scratching the surface of this issue. Why don't you join us at our *Faith Today* Facebook page to carry on the conversation?

If you haven't "liked" us for a while, check us out. With our new, expanded editorial team, there's more to like there – and here in print – than ever before. 

BILL FLEDDERUS of Hamilton, Ont., and **KAREN STILLER** of Port Perry, Ont., are senior editors at *Faith Today*. **STEPHEN BEDARD** of Cambridge, Ont., is associate editor (L in above photo). Feel like talking? Discuss these articles at www.facebook.com/FaithToday.

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Apologetics Essential

Re: Keeping Our Youth in the Faith (Jul/Aug 2013)

The discussion about the exodus of young people from church has been missing the point. The real issue is not whether they stay in church, but whether they have actually come to saving faith or not, yet this has been overlooked. Kai Mark, at least, does mention “the conversion of our youth,” but his proposed relational solutions are off the mark.

The fact is that young people must believe the gospel and that Jesus is who He claimed to be in order to be saved, and all we know about Jesus and the gospel comes from the Bible. The crux of the matter, then, is the credibility of the Bible.

In schools and the media today, this credibility is under severe attack from the claims

of Darwinism, historical criticism and other worldviews, all telling young people that the Bible is an outdated, superstitious and intolerant book that is simply not true.

In the absence of solid answers to such challenges, is it any wonder that so many walk away from Christianity?

What is needed, then, is top-quality apologetics that gives rock-solid answers to these attacks – even if young people do not realize this is what they need. In my years of ministry I have found that it is this and only this that makes any real difference, yet apologetics is not mentioned at all in the handwringing by the “experts.” Without top-quality apologetics, nothing else will work.

John Tors
Toronto, Ont.

Kudos to Stackhouse

Re: Christ & Culture in Canada (Jul/Aug 2013)

Thank you for all you have done to make the Jul/Aug issue such an excellent read. It’s right up there with [the American magazine] *Christianity Today*. I especially enjoyed John Stackhouse’s article this month.

Janet Gibson
Port Perry, Ont.

As a pastor I deeply appreciated your article on [ignoring Scripture when debating] same-sex marriage. It carried some serious weight, concern and prophetic insight. You set your mouth to the trumpet of warning and carried out your task well.



Thank you for helping wake up the church. Please don’t quit. We’re in very serious trouble!

Glenn Loewen
Portage La Prairie, Man.

Printed Summer Issue

Re: Ending the practice of circulating the Jul/Aug issue only in digital format

LOL! I am one of the complainers who wanted the [summer issue of the] magazine in print form rather than digital. Thank you! Just got it today. I read your magazine as part of my devotional time and I just don’t want to be sitting in front of a computer. I want it in my hand and able to take with me

Milestones

APPOINTED

James Arthur Ford as president of Great Lakes Bible College in Waterloo, Ont. The school, founded by the Churches of Christ, has about a dozen students and grants BRE and BTh degrees as well as certificates and diplomas in biblical studies. Ford served as president from 1996-2006 and was recently serving as acting president while also pastoring in Hamilton. He has taught at Great Lakes Christian High School (a sister institution in Beamsville, Ont.) and served more than a decade in Papua New Guinea.

John Fletcher, archdeacon of the Anglican Military Ordinariate of the Canadian Forces, as chaplain general, a two-year position managing chaplains and advising top military leaders about the spiritual well-being of military personnel and their families. Fletcher succeeds brig.-gen. Karl McLean, another Anglican padre, who will retire in September.

Dion Oxford as mission strategist for the five inner-city shelters operated in Toronto by The Salvation Army. Dion

is the founding director of one of those five, a men’s shelter called Gateway, and has helped lead StreetLevel, a national roundtable on poverty and homelessness originally facilitated by The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.

Wendy Helleman as acting executive director of Christian Studies International, which helps sponsor several dozen professors to teach at universities overseas, exposing students to a Christian worldview and equipping them for leadership. She succeeds Harro van Brummelen who



William Brackney

was forced to resign for health reasons and was feted at a special evening June 1 in Burnaby, B.C.

ELECTED

William Brackney as chairman of the board of governors of the Canadian Bible

Society. He succeeds Fr. Alain Faucher, who remains on the board, now representing the Quebec district. Brackney,

a historian and Baptist pastor, teaches at Acadia University and Acadia Divinity College, and previously served at McMaster Divinity College and McMaster University. The Canadian Bible Society has promoted Bible translation, publication, distribution and engagement for more than a hundred years.

LAUNCHED

A school of graduate studies at **Vanguard College**, Edmonton, Alta., under the direction of Ron Powell. Beginning August 2014, Vanguard will offer certificates at the master’s level in three areas: church planting; social justice and community development; and youth and young adult ministry. All courses will be offered as five, one-week intensives allowing students to balance their studies with work and life. The certificates can be transferred to MA or MDiv programs elsewhere. Vanguard is a district theological college of The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada with more than 160 students.

A daily TV show, *You Are Loved*, featuring Canadian Christian leader **Peter**

wherever I want to go when I go to pray and read.

Wayne Flonders
London, Ont.

EDITORS' NOTE: Thank you to Wayne Flonders, Peter Kadak of Qualicum Beach, B.C., and others who encouraged us to reconsider our summer issue digital-only experiment after two years. We have been listening! *Faith Today* returned to six printed issues per year as of July 2013, supplemented by free digital issues at www.faithtoday.ca/digital and via our mobile apps (free to download at www.faithtoday.ca.)

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.

Youngren, across the United States through the Florida-based Christian Television Network. Youngren founded World Impact Ministries in 1980 and is known as an evangelist in Asia and Africa, as CEO of Grace TV, a Canadian network that can reach most Canadian households with 24/7 Christian television, and as a leader at Toronto International Celebration Church. The show is available at gracetelevision.net and also broadcast in Canada on Grace TV, Vision TV and Hope TV.

PASSED

A charter from the Government of British Columbia now allows **Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary Canada** (MBBS) to issue its own theological degrees. MBBS operates as part of the ACTS consortium at Trinity Western University in Langley, B.C., as well as with a Winnipeg affiliate Canadian Mennonite University. MBBS had been part of a bi-national institution connected to Fresno Pacific University in California since 1976, but that was restructured in 2011.

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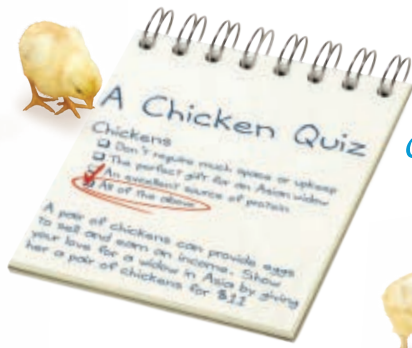
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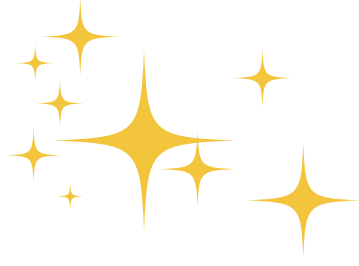
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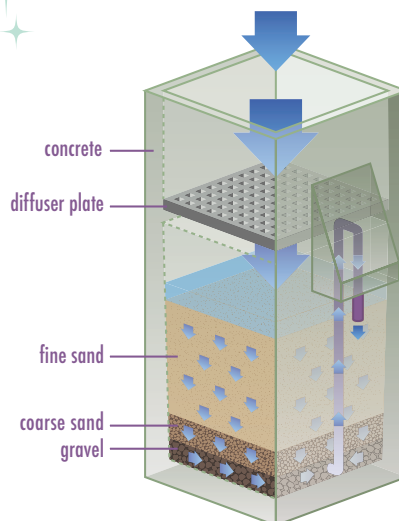
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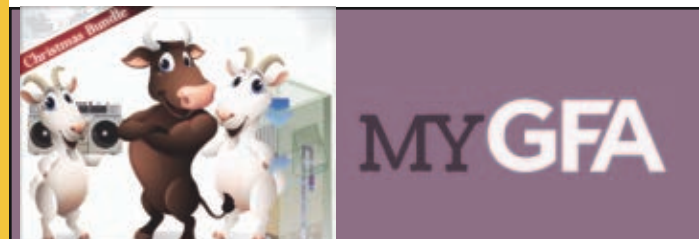
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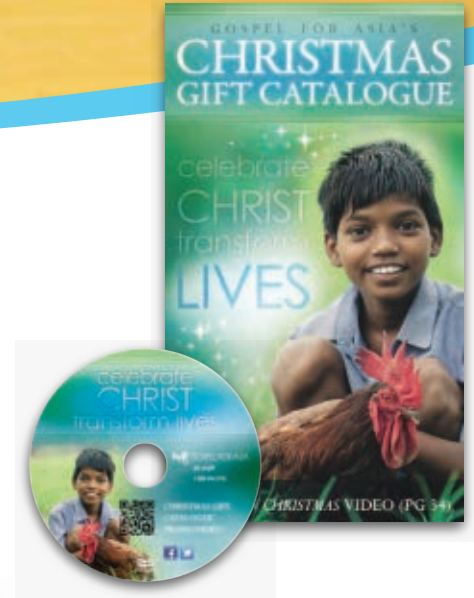
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Faith Matters to Canadian Singing Sensation



PHOTO: WWW.TENORMUSIC.COM

The Tenors – Fraser Walters, Victor Micallef, Remigio Pereira and Clifton Murray – all share a Christian worldview. “Everyone has their own way of expressing their faith.”

Victor Micallef, a member of the world famous Canadian quartet The Tenors (www.tenorsmusic.com), credits his upbringing in the Church, his family and his faith as sources of strength and inspiration.

The Tenors (formerly The Canadian Tenors) have been hailed as Canada’s national treasure. Performing a unique blend of musical genres covering artists such as Rita MacNeil, Bob Dylan and Leonard Cohen, as well as classical opera pieces such as “Nessun Dorma,” The Tenors have defined

themselves in the crowded tenors space by writing and recording original pieces as well.

Among many other achievements the group has performed for Her Majesty the Queen, during the Vancouver Olympics, on *The Oprah Winfrey Show* (with Céline Dion), and recently at the 2013 Juno Awards where they won Adult Contemporary Album of the Year for their latest CD *Lead With Your Heart* (Universal Music, 2012).

Toronto’s Micallef regularly attended church with his family growing up. Micallef says church provided a safe musical

platform for him. With lots of encouragement and support behind him, Micallef lent his voice to church services, weddings and funerals. An introverted child Micallef credits his father with the initial push to sing in front of people. When Micallef was nine his father volunteered him to sing in front of a congregation of 500 – *a cappella*. He laughs at the memory now. “I was terrified to sing in front of anyone.”

When Micallef was 16 his father, who he considered to be his best friend and mentor, died. With his siblings out on their own and his mother working the night shift, Micallef had to grow up almost overnight. The heartache of losing a parent caused him to wrestle with his faith, and that struggle manifested itself as debilitating nightmares.

When he finally confronted his fear of being alone – and recognized his father’s continuing legacy in his life – the nightmares ceased. “That was a huge turning point for me and my faith,” Micallef says. “To see my faith in a different light, not something that was spoon fed to me, was extremely meaningful to me and changed my life.”

Micallef, who with The Tenors can perform more than 300 dates a year around the world, keeps his faith strong through regular personal prayer and meditation. “For me, it’s those moments being by myself in silence, that’s when I get to talk to God and reflect. Clear out the distractions, He’s there.”

A Tenor’s schedule is packed and finding time every day to silently reflect and give thanks is crucial. “I try my best on Sundays to find a local church and I head

London Men Fight Human Trafficking

“Men cause the problem of human sexual trafficking, so they should be part of the solution,” says Stan Burditt, founder of Men Against Sexual Trafficking (M.A.S.T.) in London, Ont.

Until four years ago all Burditt knew was that sex trafficking was a huge issue in countries like Cambodia or Thailand. He had no idea girls as young as 12 were being recruited out of Canadian schools to be used by men for their own pleasure.

“People who are doing the trafficking know how to find people who are vulnerable,” says Burditt, adding that they troll high schools, prey on women

or girls who have been in foster care or a group home, finding those with low self-esteem who can be easily exploited.

The more Burditt learned about the domestic sexual trafficking problem, the more he was convinced it was a men’s issue. “I saw that my calling was to raise awareness among men.”

Burditt first responded to that call by taking the M.A.S.T. (www.mast-canada.com) message to a Promise Keepers Canada one-day conference in March 2011. Since then he’s spoken at churches, before men’s groups and at service clubs.

In April 2012 M.A.S.T. hosted a rally in London, and this June Burditt walked from London to Toronto to raise funds and awareness, while urging the Ontario government to increase funding to groups working to get rid of human sexual trafficking.

This past April M.A.S.T. helped host a Freedom Tour of five events in Northern Ontario communities (Barrie, North



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Stan Burditt

over. That hour is nice to get me back to thinking about God.”

Having the other members of The Tenors share his Christian worldview is also a blessing (different members of the foursome come from Catholic, Baptist and other Protestant traditions). “Everyone has their own way of expressing their faith. We all have different ideas, but when we come together in a circle and prepare for a show, there’s a mutual respect for what everyone believes because we have respect for each other’s faith. We all have the same kind of goals,” says Micallef. “We believe it’s important to give back. We all love to perform, but we try to help different situations at home and abroad.”

The Tenors are not a “Christian” band though, in the sense that they don’t consider Christians their main or only audience. “We as a group try not to categorize ourselves. If we land on Christian charts, or country charts, or pop charts, that’s all good as long as people are taking away the positive [messages] in our music.”

The Tenors have raised \$2 million for the Christ-centred Bulembu ministries, an innovative community-run orphanage initiative in Swaziland. The group has worked in Toronto with Free The Children, and they’ve teamed up with the American Horatio Alger Association to offer scholarships and mentorships to disadvantaged youth.

“We’re four regular guys,” says Micallef. “We love our families and we feel very close to our audience.” **FT**

—Lisa Hall-Wilson

Bay, Sudbury, Sault Ste. Marie and Thunder Bay). Working alongside fellow organizations – London Anti-Human Trafficking Committee, Rising Angels and Break the Silence campaign – M.A.S.T. brought attention to the risk Aboriginal women and girls face.

“People are amazed to learn it’s happening,” says Burditt. But once Canadians learn the facts about human sexual trafficking in Canada, they often respond by starting their own local anti-trafficking groups. Most, he says, work on educating others and advocating for those both in the industry and those helping those trapped in trafficking. **FT** —Robert White

Canadian Backing – Including The Tenors – Empowers Swaziland Ministry



PHOTO: VICTOR MICALLEF

I The Tenors visit Bulembu. “We were so incredibly changed by that experience, that’s when we started developing concerts.”

The Tenors, Juno-winning Canadian musicians, will play a benefit concert in Edmonton in late September for Bulembu (www.bulembu.org), a ministry addressing the HIV epidemic in Swaziland.

“We took a trip down there and were so incredibly changed by that experience, that’s when we started developing concerts,” says The Tenors’ Victor Micallef. “The first time we went the connection with the kids was amazing. Three years later you saw the change in the adults. They realized they were being empowered.”

Canadian financial support and leadership has been crucial for the success of the Bulembu initiative, a Swazi-led project to address an HIV epidemic that has devastated the small African nation.

All funds are poured into small business initiatives and community infrastructure in Bulembu. Locals are hired and trained to operate businesses which employ approximately 500 people. Profits from those small businesses (including a bakery, dairy and saw mill) are funnelled into the community orphanage with the goal of self-sustaining 2,000 orphaned children by 2020. The orphanage provides schooling, extracurricular activities, health care (including dental and vision care), a church community and a home environment to thrive in.

Peter Wall, an Edmonton businessman, is one of three Canadian directors for the ministry. “Small business is the backbone of the economy. The idea was starting up small businesses, not just giving to a charity, but sustaining a community so the community starts looking after their widows and homeless. The businesses will continue thriving long after we’re gone.”

Neal Rijkenberg, co-founder and director of Bulembu, corresponded from Swaziland. “Canadian individuals, organizations, businesses and families have been integral to the Bulembu story. Since inception we have enjoyed, and been blessed by, input at board and strategic level and been the recipient of Canadian generosity, ingenuity and commitment.”

The Tenors for Bulembu concert will take place at The Winspear Centre in Edmonton on September 30 with special guests the Bulembu Children’s Choir. Rijkenberg says they hope to raise \$1 million and sign up a thousand child sponsors on the Canadian visit. **FT** —Lisa Hall-Wilson

The premiere issue of *The Love in Action* magazine (LIA) will premiere in the digital Nov/Dec *Faith Today*. LIA is a new Canadian publication for youth, empowering youth to live out their faith through a deeper understanding of love, Bible style. *Faith Today* is happy to be on board. LIA is published by the Love Movement (www.lovemovement.org).



Winnipeg Man Offers Bibles With Candy at Halloween

When William Rempel, a member of Gideons International Canada for 30 years, was no longer able to distribute Bibles in Winnipeg-area schools as the Gideons had for years, he began to distribute free Bibles from his Winnipeg home at Halloween instead. The idea has swept the city.

Rempel helped distribute Bibles in schools to Grade 5 students – which the Gideons were well known for in Canada – until recent decisions by school boards across Canada made it nearly impossible to get approvals. “It’s been my mandate to work with the youth, and to have the doors closed was disappointing,” says Rempel. “But the Lord has opened a much bigger door.”

In 2006 Rempel gave away 40 Bibles on Halloween night – along with candy of course – to youth who showed up at his front door. Rempel was inspired to offer the opportunity to nearby congregations.

Last year 29 Winnipeg churches got on board. Nine hundred Winnipeggers volunteered to hand out 9,000 New Testaments to kids old enough to read independently and who said they didn’t already have a Bible at home. Most of the Bibles included an invitation to visit a local church tucked inside. Rempel expects an even bigger response this year.

One teen accepted a Bible from a volunteer and held it up high. “I am 17 years old and I have never held a Bible before. I will read this.” Many volunteers were shocked by the number of youth who reported they did not know what a Bible was. One area pastor recently baptized a woman who received a New Testament last year while accompanying her child on their Halloween route.

Many volunteers eagerly got involved and shared how they’d received a New Testament in Grade 5 many years ago. Rempel says distributing Bibles to those who want them at Halloween is an opportunity for those who may be a little shy about sharing their faith to get involved and grow. The majority of volunteers reported positive responses to the offer of a Bible along with Halloween candy.

If you’re interested in distributing Bibles on Halloween night, Rempel suggests contacting an office of the Gideons International in Canada (www.gideons.ca) for help and support. **ET** –Lisa Hall-Wilson

Alpha Reboot in Alberta



PHOTOS: ALPHA CANADA

Alberta 2013 is a bold new campaign launched by Alpha Canada. Inset: Shaila Visser, national director of Alpha Canada.



It’s not about my church or your church, it’s about Kingdom advancement.” This is how Gary Taitinger describes Alberta 2013, a bold new campaign that invites Albertans “to give Christianity a fresh listen” by taking an Alpha course this fall.

Taitinger, senior pastor at Mill Woods Pentecostal Assembly in Edmonton, is the driving force behind Alberta 2013. For over two years he has been travelling the province, working with churches across many different denominations to develop the ambitious evangelistic outreach initiative.

“The most important thing facing the Church,” says the Alberta pastor, “is to give Canadians the opportunity of a clear presentation of the facts about Jesus Christ.”

This conviction is based on research conducted by sociologist Reginald Bibby of the University of Lethbridge which indicates that 65 per cent of Albertans might be open to greater religious involvement if they thought it would be worthwhile.

Shaila Visser, national director of Alpha Canada, is thrilled with the collaboration of local churches in the Alberta 2013 cam-

Aboriginal Prayer Breakfast Stresses Forgiveness

When honorary chief Kenny Blacksmith launched the first National Aboriginal Prayer Breakfast in Ottawa June 21, he shared a vision of a future Canada where all people and cultures will come together as “one people under God.”

The breakfast was also designed to highlight the positive in the face of growing tension between government and Aboriginal groups, according to an invitation to the event.

“We want to catch a glimpse of what lies beyond an exchange of forgiveness,” Blacksmith told the several hundred people – Aboriginal leaders, religious leaders and politicians – who packed a

ballroom at the historic Château Laurier Hotel for the first such annual breakfast on the 17th annual National Aboriginal Day, a day to celebrate the diverse cultural contributions of Canada’s Native peoples.

The co-founder and director of Gathering Nations International (GNI), a Christian ministry of healing and reconciliation, said he hoped the breakfast would build on progress in relations between governments and Canada’s First Nations, Inuit and Métis since Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s historic 2008 apology in the House of Commons for the suffering caused by the Indian Residential Schools policy.

“We heard that apology across this na-

Noteworthy

Research on Tweeting Shows Christians Happier, Less Analytical



A computer analysis of nearly two million text messages (tweets) on the online social network Twitter has found Christians had more positive and less negative content than tweets by atheists. Christians also used social words more frequently. Researchers caution the results are correlational, and this does not mean atheists are unhappy overall.

Canada's Ambassador for Religious Freedom Begins Travels

Andrew Bennett, Canada's new ambassador for religious freedom, has begun travelling to countries with religious freedom violations. He is also travelling from Ottawa to the U.S., the only other major diplomatic-level office fighting religious



PHOTO: THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

Andrew Bennett

office has a \$5 million annual budget.

Report Details Canada's Changing Religious Landscape

A new Pew Research Center analysis of Canadian census and survey data finds more Canadians belong to minority faiths than ever before. In addition attendance at religious services has been dropping. The analysis also finds the number of Canadians who do not identify with any religion has been rising rapidly in recent decades, going from 4% in 1971 to nearly a quarter (24%) in 2011.

freedom violations around the world. The Canadian office has spoken out on violations such as the persecution of Coptic Christians in Egypt and the arrest of a Muslim leader in Sri Lanka. The

Average Canadian Makes \$39,100, Donates \$260 to Charity

According to *The Globe and Mail*, the average Canadian makes \$39,100, saves \$2,830 in an RRSP, and donates \$260 to charity each year. The average Canadian has \$26,935 in consumer debt, commutes 7.6 km to work and sleeps 6.9 hours a night.

Study Considers Effects of Religion on Animals

A new research project at Oxford University will explore whether religious traditions are animal friendly. Inspired by Baptist preacher Charles Spurgeon's claim that a person cannot be a true Christian if his dog or cat is not the better off for it, the centre will address whether religious people and religious institutions benefit animals, and whether religious people are more or less likely to be respectful to animals. **FT**



WWW.DESIGNPICS.COM

paign. "People are looking for churches to get along," she says, adding that having Alpha offered across denominations allows people to take a course "in a place that is really comfortable for them."

The opportunity to ask challenging questions in a safe and caring environment lies at the core of the Alpha program, which originated in the Church of England and has been used by a variety of denominations to reach over 19 million people in tens of thousands of churches, cafés, workplaces and pubs around the world.

The Alberta 2013 campaign is building on this theme of exploration and discovery, encouraging Albertans to "Question Everything" by asking the basic question, "Why?" "Why is the world the way it is?" "Why so much pain?" "Why so much beauty?" "What can it all mean?"

A province-wide media campaign, including print ads and billboards, invites Albertans to sign up for an Alpha Course by visiting the Alberta 2013 website at www.questioneverythingab.com to find the course nearest them, offered by the

church of their choice this fall.

While the course content is consistent across denominations (addressing such basics as "Who is Jesus?" and "Why and how do I pray?"), the format of Alpha varies according to the church hosting it and the needs of the people invited to attend. There are different versions of Alpha for seniors, students, prisoners, for workplaces, and even a brand new youth film series which will launch this fall. **FT** -*Mary Lou Harrison*

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

tion," Blacksmith said. But more than that, Harper asked for forgiveness, Blacksmith stressed. That request prompted GNI to make a "journey of freedom," visiting Native communities across the country to explain how powerful forgiveness would be and inviting them to "release" it.

The journey culminated in the June 2012 National Forgiven Summit in Ottawa that saw 5,000 First Nations, Métis and Inuit leaders and religious leaders who were able to officially respond to Harper's request for forgiveness, among them the late Elijah Harper. Though the prime minister could not attend, he sent a recorded video message to the summit.

At the three-day summit, Aboriginal leaders presented then Aboriginal Affairs minister Chuck Strahl with the Charter of

Freedom and Forgiveness that Blacksmith said responded "word for word" to the apology.

"That Charter hangs with the leaders of our land," Blacksmith said. "That Charter lives within our hopes and dreams, that one day we will not just have a glimpse of freedom beyond the horizon. One day we will actually step into that freedom that will forever change our people and our nation."

Strahl, who has since retired from politics, joined Blacksmith and co-hosts Member of Parliament James Lunney and Senator Don Meredith at the inaugural breakfast's head table, wearing a full feather headdress presented to him at the summit.

"The Western world has trouble

understanding forgiveness," Strahl told the gathering. "We spend a lot of time scrubbing spiritual terms and concepts out of the conversation." Talk about rights and interests comes easily, but not talking about values and spiritual truth, he said, noting the need for reconciliation is a tenet of his Christian faith, but words like forgiveness "cannot be codified in legislation.

"It's not just forgiveness. It's the same thing for words like truth, covenant, honour and relationships. How can you put in legislation that I am going to force you to be a friend?" he asked. Yet Aboriginal peoples have continued to stress the importance of the spiritual and "have not allowed spiritual truth to be removed from the public domain." **FT**

-*Deborah Gyapong*



What Does Your Church Look Like?

Is it also a community centre and disaster response partner?

Ask average Canadians what a church looks like, and many will describe a white rectangular building with a steeple. You can indeed find such buildings across rural Canada, although most will be at least a half-century old. In our towns and cities, there are also many venerable churches that look like stone fortresses.

But if your congregation is building today, it won't mimic these churches of old. Expectations have changed. Those who attend church regularly – about 17 per cent of Canada's population – understand this well. But I'm not sure other Canadians do.

Historian John Webster Grant once wrote, "Canada grew under the tutelage of its church and the church exerted its influence in pulpit, school and press, serving as the keepers of the moral and spiritual foundations of nationhood and the conscience of the state."

Until the 1960s there was a "pan-Christian consensus" that guided the country. Many Canadian institutional leaders could be found regularly in the pews.

But things changed quickly. As Grant says, in 1967 Christianity was "established." By 1987 it was already a "memory." The decline was amazing.

The changing context resulted in rethinking the role of local congregations, and thus their physical structure. Newer church buildings look more like community centres. And the desire to be more than a congregation of believers, and be a community for others, is still increasing.

These newer facilities still have a sanctuary (or multi-purpose "auditorium"), but the large gathering place doesn't dominate as it once did. Smaller meetings rooms are no longer hidden in the basement or in a belatedly added education wing. They are centrally located and often used daily, along with a large foyer to encourage people

to loiter, and even to host events like in a town square.

The preaching of the Word is still the cornerstone of the worship service on Sunday morning (or Saturday night), but the service of worship in a larger sense now extends beyond a weekend gathering, even beyond a midweek meeting and occasional breakfast.

Activities intended not only for members but for neighbours as well take place throughout the week. Child care, moms and tots, divorce care, English as a Second Language classes, clothing and food distribution, addiction recovery, grief groups – the list has grown and continues to grow.

Community focus now outranks denominational branding. Churches are less likely to be named First Baptist, let alone Baptist. More likely: ThisTown Community Church, or perhaps something like Portico, Bridge or Harvest.

Much of this goes unrecognized by average Canadians – at least until they or someone they know personally benefits.

I recall being in the mayor's office in Kelowna talking to senior city officials about a nearby forest fire. Not only do city staff know where churches are located, but they know details – who has gyms, large kitchens, and childcare capacity with caregivers who have been police checked and trained.

Newer facilities are useful but not necessary to this expanding vision. The increasing desire and approaches among congregations to benefit their surrounding neighbourhoods is good news.

Congregations have capacities that should not be taken for granted: effective phone trees to transmit prayer requests and other information. Experience in organizing events. Volunteers wanting to help. Congregations know how to feed large groups of people and mobilize into work details.

It is wise advice for churches to contact the emergency co-ordinator of their town or city, explain what they have to offer and indicate their willingness to be part of any emergency response.

Of course, our primary purpose as Christians is not to build facilities but to be the Church. We undertake our service of worship by demonstrating God's love for all, in word and deed. And in doing so we have established structures and habits animated by generosity and a desire to care for others.

It's a critical part of Christian witness to comfort, protect and care for those who need the embrace of a community of grace. **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.

National Fight Against Human Trafficking

In June 2012 the Government of Canada launched a National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking. This summer groups including the EFC, World Vision, International Justice Mission and the Salvation Army highlighted the ongoing need to implement this blueprint guiding 18 federal departments in their fight against human trafficking. The concerned organizations are calling for an annual report of actions and results. Read the media release at www.theEFC.ca/NAP2013.

The Case Against Legalized Prostitution

Georgiale Lang is a lawyer who presented the EFC's arguments before the Supreme Court of Canada in a case challenging Canada's prostitution laws (*Attorney General of Canada v. Bedford*). Have you read her June 24 blog post on the subject at www.theEFC.ca/activateCFPL? At press time the court had not yet released its decision in the case.

October Vigils Expose Corruption

The World Evangelical Alliance, the Salvation Army, Micah Challenge and other groups have formed a coalition challenging the global Church, business and governments to highlight the impact of corruption on the poorest of the poor. The Exposed 2013 coalition is working towards a week of action and prayer Oct. 14-20, 2013. It hopes hundreds of thousands of Christians will gather for special church services and other activities to shine a light on corruption. Visit www.exposed2013.com for a free kit to organize a vigil or register a vigil event.

Call for Transparency on Ontario Abortion Data

Faye Sonier, the EFC's legal counsel, objects to the Ontario government's suppression of general abortion data and statistics from taxpayers. She explains her objections in a July 18 post at www.theEFC.ca/activateCFPL, commenting on the announcement that a pro-life blogger is taking the government to court on the issue.

Prayer Alerts for Egypt and China

The EFC's Religious Liberty Commission issued prayer alerts recently entitled "Egypt's Christians Under Attack" and "China's Economic Boom Is Revival's Hidden Treasure." Read the latest alerts at www.theEFC.ca/alerts. You can also sign up there to receive alerts by email.

EFC President on Public Expressions of Faith

A six-minute video of EFC president Bruce J. Clemenger at McGill University, as he delivers a thoughtful presentation on public dialogue about religion, is now available online. Other video recordings from this summer's Bridging the Secular Divide conference (featuring Janet Epp Buckingham, Lorna Dueck, Margaret Somerville and others) can also be found at www.theEFC.ca/bridging2013.

Canada Watch Newsletter

The latest issues of the EFC's four-page newsletter for donors and affiliate leaders are available at www.theEFC.ca/CanadaWatch. Read "Parliament Stops. The EFC Keeps Going," which explains how the government's summer break is a crucial time for EFC staff to research and write materials for upcoming court cases and legislation – and how your ongoing support is important. Or read "How I Spent My Summer Vacation," an article by an EFC intern about how his time in Ottawa at the EFC's Centre for Faith and Public Life has restored his faith in the place of Christians in public life. Plus lots more!

How Welcome are Refugees?

On World Refugee Day in June, the World Evangelical Alliance encouraged churches and agencies to embrace a series of affirmations developed with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The affirmations confirm that the call to welcome "strangers" and "aliens" and seek their welfare is deeply rooted in all major religions, including Christianity. Details at www.theEFC.ca/WRD2013.

Remember the MDG

The Millennium Development Goals (MDG) are a series of targets agreed to by world leaders in 2000, focused on reducing extreme poverty by 2015. The ultimate goal is to raise half the people living in extreme poverty to better circumstances. (In 2000 there were 1.4 billion living on less than \$1.25 a day.) Micah Challenge, a Christian coalition including the EFC and the World Evangelical Alliance, recently pointed to a United Nations progress report on the MDG, available at www.bit.ly/19TB01f.


The Sanctity of Life

"We must affirm the rights of the unborn, convince others of the sanctity of life, and seek in every way to eliminate the tragedy of abortion." These words come from a statement by the EFC's Social Action Commission published in 1987. This document, the basis for EFC engagement for 25 years, is available under "Helpful Links" at www.theEFC.ca/abortion.

Invite an EFC Speaker

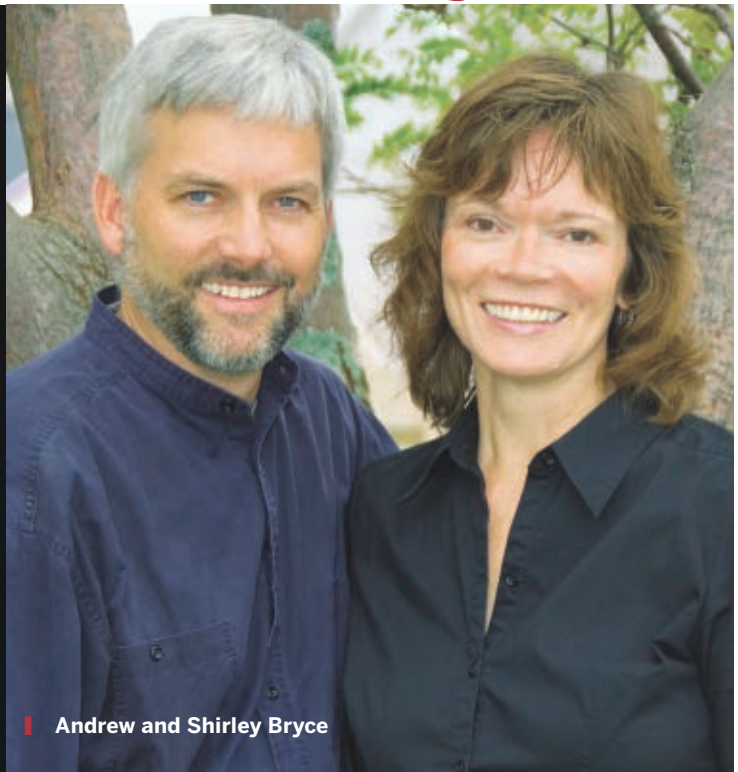
EFC leaders are available to come to your church or gathering to speak. Choose from a variety of topics and issues at www.theEFC.ca/speakers.

Adoption Awareness in Your Church

Increase awareness in your congregation about the tens of thousands of children and youth in Canada, many in foster care, who are ready to be taken in and adopted. There are free resources, including a video appropriate for a church service, at the EFC website www.adoptionsunday.com. 

Q & A With Andrew Bryce

Andrew Bryce has been in ministry in Summerside, P.E.I., for the past 28 years, currently leading the Summerside Community Church. Together with his wife Shirley (who is entering her final year of nursing at the University of Prince Edward Island) they have four adult children ages 19 to 31 and three grandchildren. They helped plant the Charlottetown Community Church in 2002.



Andrew and Shirley Bryce

PHOTO: CHRISTINE REID PHOTOGRAPHY

What has been your greatest joy in ministry?

Seeing new people discover how much they are loved by Jesus. Last Sunday our church community shared the joy of celebrating five baptisms in the Atlantic Ocean. One eight-year-old boy with his mouth full of food, dancing on the beach, said to his dad, "You didn't tell us you were taking us to a party!" *Unless we become like little children ...*

What has been your greatest struggle?

Contending with the evil twins of the Church – entitlement and legalism. Entitlement affects all of us. It is the antithesis of our suffering Messiah and is no respecter of persons. Legalism has done as much damage and created more pain in the Church than anything else. The world is hungry for grace. When the Church is known more for what it is *for* rather than what it is *against*, we will move forward with much more velocity.

What Bible passage inspires you the most right now?

Hebrews 4:11. *Strive after rest!* I often define myself by activity rather than the restful presence of Jesus. Rest inspires me. Will I trust the leading and rest of the Holy Spirit? Or walk in my personal agenda? I confess this has been an ongoing battle my entire life.

What book has influenced you the most in the last year?

Who Is This Man? The Unpredictable Impact of the Inescapable Jesus by John Ortberg (Zondervan Books, 2012). An ongoing first runner-up would be a book by Mike Mason entitled *The Mystery of Marriage: Meditations on the Miracle* (Multnomah Books, 2001).

What do you think are the greatest opportunities available to the Canadian evangelical church in the next few years?

Walking in the wineskin of Kingdom thinking and Kingdom function. Networks of prayer movements, city collectives, resource centres, house church/local church/parachurches walking together! The Lord doesn't want to see us huddled in church buildings. Rather, He commanded the expansion of a 24/7 Kingdom movement deployed to the streets, from a place of rest. Churches matter and mission matters. The National House of Prayer in Ottawa (www.nhop.ca) is one of many examples of an opportunity we have in Canada to work together and send teams from our churches to Ottawa to pray for all government in a practical way.

What would you like the rest of Canada to know about the Church and culture of P.E.I.?

A group of 10 pastors meets every Tuesday morning to share hearts, tell stories from our past weeks, laugh, cry, embellish, eat, tease and basically have lots of fun together. This translates into monthly gatherings across the Island at various venues where we put up the "East Coast sails." We worship and pray with no agenda other than seeking the pleasure and presence of God. We continually invite other churches to join us, and the remnant is growing. We are currently planning a Festival of the Father next August to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the beginnings of our nation. The waters on P.E.I. are stirring! **FT**

Is Murder Reason Enough?

By Don Hutchinson

Is murder reason enough to challenge Quebec's euthanasia law?

On June 12 the Government of Quebec introduced Bill 52, intending to legalize physician-administered lethal injection as medical treatment under the euphemism "medical aid in dying." The bill implicitly authorizes physician-assisted suicide as well. This is a direct challenge by the Government of Quebec to the Constitution and longstanding laws of Canada.

Given that health care is a provincial jurisdiction under the Constitution, Quebec has decided to see if designating euthanasia (murder) and assisted suicide (helping someone kill themselves) as health care will overcome the *Criminal Code* prohibitions in place against both actions.

To be clear, euthanasia is the act of ending another's life which is "homicide" under section 229 of Canada's *Criminal Code*. Assisting another to commit suicide, even if the assistant is a physician, is prohibited under section 241 of the *Criminal Code*.

The bill is couched in the language of compassion, end-of-life medical treatment and the rights and dignity of patients. Killing the patient is referred to as "terminal palliative sedation." This is distinct from a patient's right to refuse treatment, which has long been established in Canadian law. Bill 52 intends to authorize the killing of one person (the patient) by another person (the doctor or a qualified nurse) under the guise of medical treatment.

The bill also directs that every health and social service institution designated under the legislation, including religious institutions, must have a policy for end-of-life care that complies with the regulations referenced in Bill 52 – including the

administering and reporting of "terminal palliative sedation" and the provision of "medical aid in dying." This "service" may also be offered in private health facilities or in the patient's home.

The patient's right is stated in Orwellian, Ministry of Death (instead of Health), language:

Before giving consent to terminal palliative sedation, a patient who wishes to receive such sedation or, where applicable, the individual authorized to consent to care on behalf of the patient, must among other things be informed of the prognosis, the irreversible and terminal nature of the sedation, and the anticipated duration of the sedation.

The prognosis referred to is the outcome of the lethal injection. In short, doctors and nurses would be empowered to step outside the *Criminal Code* prohibition on murder to kill patients, after deciding the patient's life is not worth living.

At best this is a grievously misdirected compassion that suggests killing as the remedy to what is hard about dying, or a short-sighted cure to what is hard about life.

Intentional killing is completely opposite to the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*

value of the sanctity of life and the related *Charter* value of human dignity. Those values have been clearly described by the Supreme Court in both the *Rodriguez* and *Latimer* decisions (the first addresses assisted suicide, the second concludes murder for compassionate reasons is still murder).



PHOTO: FRED CHARTRAND

Don Hutchinson

Intentional killing also stands contrary to the societal condemnation expressed in the *Criminal Code*. There is no legal recognition of the concept of consensual murder.

Because conflict sometimes arises between the federal and provincial

powers, the Supreme Court of Canada has developed the constitutional interpretation doctrine of "paramountcy." Under the paramountcy doctrine, inconsistency between federal and provincial legislation is reconciled by having the federal law prevail if it has been properly enacted.

As recently as 2010 the Parliament of Canada voted to maintain prohibition on assisted suicide. Prohibition on murder has remained absolute since the *Criminal Code* was first enacted in 1892. The Supreme Court has endorsed these prohibitions as the legitimate constitutional jurisdiction of the Government of Canada. Simply stated, in this case the validly enacted prohibitions of the *Criminal Code* would have paramountcy over health care legislation.

However, application of the paramountcy doctrine is conditional on the Federal Government challenging the provincial legislation. That would pit Canada's government against Quebec's, with all the political implications that entails.

Some might consider Federal Government legal action to be political suicide, setting nationalists against sovereignists, perhaps even perceived as Canada vs. Quebec. And this begs the question as to the potential for a political decision being pitted against a constitutional one. I pray steps will be taken to make the right decision.

It is literally a matter of life and death. **FT**

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.

To be clear,
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Lessons From Calgary's Flood

When Calgary flooded, many churches responded. Here's what they learned. *By Doris Fleck*

As Canadians watched the devastating floods hit southern Alberta this past June, what they didn't see was the unprecedented response from the Christian community. Many churches, ministries and Christian organizations in Calgary were prepared and positioned to play a crucial role in the disaster relief and recovery process.

Have a disaster plan in place

Centre Street, Calgary's largest church, received a call from the Calgary Emergency Management Agency (CEMA) at 4 p.m. on June 20, asking them to activate

their emergency response plan. They were one of the city's official response centres where evacuees could find supplies and refuge.

Miriam Möllering, a Centre Street pastor, was the designated incident commander or point person for the church's emergency response. She immediately rallied staff and volunteers. With the church now open 24/7, security personnel were called in as well. Key staff members and kitchen volunteers quickly prepared hundreds of meals. Although evacuees would not be sleeping at Centre Street overnight, food, water, blankets and essential information were distributed to them from the church.

Möllering had all her volunteers in place when



PHOTO: GORD ERICKSON / CENTRE STREET CHURCH

Centre Street Church volunteers clean up after the floods hit downtown Calgary.

CEMA and partnering organizations like the Red Cross arrived a few hours after their initial call. She says when a disaster of this magnitude happens, time is of the essence. People need help immediately. “It’s making those decisions quickly. This is not the time to go through bureaucratic decision making and have a committee who will meet in two weeks and let you know. We had that in place.”

Be trained. Build relationships

Many of Centre Street’s staff and volunteers had participated in the city’s risk management protocol and emergency response training just 18 months earlier. “This training was a huge asset when the floods of 2013 struck,”

Möllering says. “The magnitude of this flood was such that no one person or agency could do it.”

If churches want to be prepared in an emergency, she says, churches need to build relationships with their community, neighbourhood association and city council now, not during a disaster. “Know your community. Get involved.”

With over 800 church members in five campuses offering to help, Centre Street was turning volunteers away. They used their extra people power to mobilize teams of 10 and 20 to work with Samaritan’s Purse cleanup crews.

Samaritan’s Purse, well known for their Christmas Shoebox Campaign, provides “hit-the-ground-running” disaster relief across the globe. With their Canadian

With their Canadian headquarters in Calgary, the response to the floods by Samaritan's Purse was immediate. "The scale of this disaster has required us to have a Canadian disaster response unlike anything we have ever done."



PHOTO: SAMARITAN'S PURSE CANADA

headquarters in Calgary, their response to the floods was immediate, but not without challenges.

"The scale of this disaster has required us to have a Canadian disaster response unlike anything we have ever done," says Frank King, Samaritan's Purse communications manager.

With specially equipped tractor trailer disaster relief units, Samaritan's Purse can carry supplies for volunteers, a working office and communication system, all operated by a base manager. Normally Samaritan's Purse brings in one of these large units for each disaster, but the sheer number of communities severely affected by flooding created an unprecedented need. Another disaster relief unit was quickly driven in from Ontario, and the USA office also provided a unit.

Samaritan's Purse set up a toll-free line on their website for homeowners who needed their houses assessed and gutted, as well as for volunteers who wanted to help with the cleanup. "We turned our building upside down. People were drafted from other departments who did nothing but disaster relief," says King.

With resources stretched to the limit, when the deadly train crash happened in Lac-Mégantic, Samaritan's Purse could not respond. One of the lessons they learned, King

says, is that even a large-size disaster and relief organization can't be everywhere at once.

Don't underestimate spiritual comfort

During the Calgary relief effort, volunteer chaplains from the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) known as the Rapid Response Team (RRT) provided comfort, prayer and a listening ear to distraught homeowners.

Chaplains prayed and sang hymns with people dealing with life-threatening illnesses in the midst of the flood and even led people to Christ. One chaplain had an RCMP officer kneel by her car door window asking for prayer.

"The BGEA offers weekend training sessions across the country for anyone who would like to become a chaplain or be able to help others in time of devastation and grief," says Melanie Neufeld, RRT manager.

"We're all going to face a crisis or trauma of some form," Neufeld explains. "So many of us feel ill-equipped to know how to respond. It takes a lot of pressure off of us to know God will give us the words, God's presence will come through and touch these folks."

"Samaritan's Purse and the BGEA seek to bring unity among churches in communities in non-disaster times by providing opportunities for churches to work together

on large-scale events, like Rock the River and My Hope With Billy Graham,” explains King. The organization believes churches will be better prepared to collaborate when a disaster occurs if they have worked together in good times.

Work with other churches

Marg Pollon is known as Calgary’s modern-day Noah – and that was before the flood. Pollon is the founding director of Bridges of Love Ministry, encouraging churches to connect with each other and their community to be prepared for emergencies. Pollon has spent the last seven years in Calgary teaching churches how to do just that.

“I have been called Noah for so long that I doubted myself,” says Pollon. “This has shown that what I said came true. And because of the times we are in, this won’t be a one-time incident. We have to take it seriously.”

Pollon has been working to create a co-ordinated approach to emergency preparedness among the churches by linking them with each other, their community and the public sector. Although many churches have been following her lead, with at least nine of them going through

the City of Calgary assessment to become official reception centres for those in need, Pollon says some churches simply weren’t prepared enough this time to respond.

Check policies and procedures

When Pollon was searching for a church facility that could house disaster relief workers coming in from out of province, one church leader told Pollon they had to have a committee meeting before they could reply. Another church’s point person was gone for that weekend. That church later apologized, acknowledging they should have had a backup person in place.

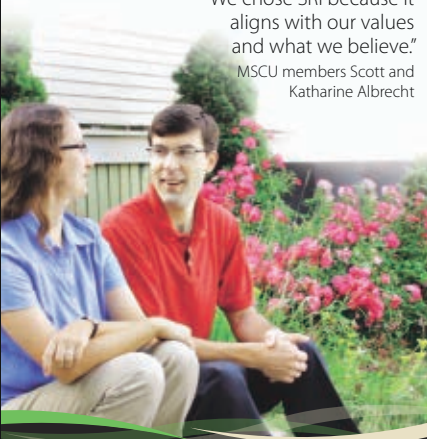
In the process Pollon learned many churches are not insured to have people stay overnight. She encourages all churches to check their insurance policies to see if this can be amended.

Though many churches in Calgary opened their doors, provided volunteers and one large congregation, Rock-Pointe Church, even cancelled its weekend services to allow members to help flood victims in the city, Pollon plans to step up her emergency preparedness training so when the next disaster happens, the churches will be even better prepared.

“This won’t be a one-time incident. We have to take it seriously.”

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Pollon jokes that she acted as the “eHarmony matchmaker for emergency preparedness” by helping connect groups who wanted to donate essential items and those who needed those supplies.

Disasters – an opportunity to love

Without a large facility to store items, Pollon relied on NeighbourLink, a local nonprofit that works with churches and other organizations to supply essential items to clients living below the poverty line. NeighbourLink’s 10,000-square-foot warehouse was already used to distribute goods on a daily basis, so they were well positioned to ramp up distribution, providing large quantities of water, food, clothes, beds, linens and hygiene products to thousands of evacuees.

“I don’t see this as a disaster,” said Walter Twiddy, NeighbourLink Calgary’s CEO and president. The opportunities for Christians in the challenging situation were the greatest God has given “in a hundred years,” he says.

With multiple connections to city churches, ministries, agencies and the business sector, social media became very important in filling NeighbourLink’s warehouse. Within an hour of sending out a request on Twitter, supplies poured in.

Twiddy recommends every city start a NeighbourLink chapter or develop an organization like it. This positions them to meet people’s basic needs early on in a disaster. “If you parachute in a week later, you’ve missed it,” Twiddy says.

With a constant flow of supplies coming in, their volunteers were able to send cube vans out daily, distributing life-giving materials to the hardest hit areas.

King sums up the most important factor for any Christian organization wanting to be prepared for an emergency. “If you’re in the community already, the community will come to you.” **FT**

DORIS FLECK is a freelance writer near Calgary.

How to Help

From flood waters sweeping through Calgary to the devastation and heartbreak of Lac-Mégantic, Canada experienced a rough summer. The time for churches to prepare to help their communities is before disaster strikes. Here’s how to get started:

- Build relationships of trust with your community. Know the vulnerable who might need a helping hand.
- Initiate a Faith Emergency Preparedness Initiative (FEPI) in each city or community. Contact and resource assessment forms, for example, are invaluable in emergencies to know at a glance the resources each church in a community offers. Visit www.bridgesoflove.net for more information.
- Establish a committed church emergency committee with a point person who can make decisions quickly.
- Keep your group current and meet regularly.
- Document an emergency preparedness plan for your church and family. Visit www.disasterpreparer.com.
- Review your church’s insurance policies to ensure liabilities are covered in support of your action plan.
- Build relationships of trust with the municipal emergency agencies and community associations.
- Know what piece of the community your church will care for and start building relationships with that sector before a disaster strikes.
- Create a 24-hour emergency number on the answering machine for when your church is closed. Remember, members may know who to contact, but those outside the church would not.
- Offer your church facility as a reception centre site to your municipal emergency management agency. This demonstrates the church is a willing participant in the emergency plan, and it’s a good start to building relationships with the municipality. **FT**



The New Missionaries to Canada

Canada is not only sending missionaries – we are a mission field for other countries.

By Patricia Paddey

PHOTOS: WWW.DESIGNPICS.COM

Canada is smack in the middle of a global religious revolution. And you may not even know it – yet.

Philip Jenkins, author of *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford University Press, 2011), estimates that by 2050, 72 per cent of the world's Christians will live in the Global South – Africa, Asia and Latin America.

And some of those Christians – from all over the world – are committed to helping to bring the Church of the West back to life. We are grateful.

Faith Today brings you the stories of five missionaries to Canada.

A Citizen of Two Worlds

Jane Muema-Ngui is a citizen of two countries – Kenya, her birthplace, and Canada, her adopted homeland. She describes herself as “a missionary to Canada.” But she has found her mission field in reaching out to Canada's newest arrivals – from Africa.

Working under the umbrella of Power to Change's Intercultural Network since 2007, Muema-Ngui connects primarily with female African immigrants. Many of them come to this country in search of a better life, but find that dream elusive.

“There is a sizeable number of African immigrants who are doing well,” she says. But many are not. “I've seen a lot of dreams die. I've seen apathy creep into the community. I've seen [people struggling with] loneliness, depression and a sense of failure. They've come here with the hope of a better life, and in some cases end up worse off than they were back home.”

Muema-Ngui tells of African professionals with PhDs working in Canada as cab drivers or custodians because their credentials are not recognized here. Church leaders come to plant churches, only to find less-than-fertile ground.

“The hardest part is when you realize many of the people who come are the cream

of African society,” she says. “It's a major brain drain on Africa.” Some never adapt to the culture and choose to return home.

Muema-Ngui had experience with that kind of culture shock before arriving in Canada in 2001. She and her husband attended graduate school in the U.S. in the '90s, but returned to Kenya to raise their family. A professional two-career couple with good jobs, good incomes and the prestige that go with both, they “were on a certain track” when they began to question whether the political situation in Kenya meant their children faced an uncertain future.

“We began to pray for our children's future, and we began the process of looking around to see where we might go,” she recalls. Having lived in North America for four years, she had no interest in returning. Muema-Ngui knew the culture – of materialism, waste and individualism – and preferred familiar African ways. But the idea of North America kept resurfa-

cing. "I dug my heels in a bit," she admits. "The thought of going back wasn't easy. I asked God to give me a clear sign to really know that it was Him and not us."

God answered her prayer. And in what she describes as a "God moment," she sensed God clearly saying, "I'm sending you to Canada. But I'm sending you to Canada for Africa."

She sees her work as being about more than simply sharing the gospel with African women. It's well known that Christianity is growing rapidly in Africa. But Muema-Ngui describes the Christian faith there as an institutional one, "a mile wide but only an inch deep." Many people profess to be Christians, she says, but they don't lead transformed lives.

She sees her task here as helping to identify, disciple and raise up future leaders, knowing that whether the women she works with ultimately stay in Canada or return to Africa, they will do so equipped to strengthen the Church, and God's Kingdom.

Slow and Steady Wins This Race

When Asa Tabuavou was a little boy growing up in Fiji, his favourite movies featured cowboys and Indians. He loved the action and adventure. He loved the cowboys, but most of all he loved the Indians. "I thought, *One day I want to see these people*," he chuckles, adding, "I didn't know then that they had different tribes."

He knows now. As a Youth With a Mission (YWAM) missionary, Tabuavou has worked with Canada's First Nations people since 2005. Currently living on the Ahousaht First Nation community in B.C. with his wife and two young children, he says there are six different tribes represented in that one community of 1,200 people.

Tabuavou feels accepted there. Having brown skin helped. "They haven't seen a lot of brown-skinned missionaries, so they're learning that God is for everybody, not just the white-skinned," he says. With bitter memories and the consequences of residential school abuses still very present, Tabuavou says it's an important lesson. But he also believes acceptance came because his own Fijian culture holds much in common with the culture of the First Nations people, and he knew instinctively how to operate respectfully within it.

"Honouring the elders [is important],"



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■ Clockwise from top left: Jane Muema-Ngui, Hillary Bergshoeff, and Asa Tabuavou and his wife and two young children. "God is for everybody, not just the white-skinned."

he says. "Back home in Fiji the elders are a source of wisdom. I've found here they have the same value."

Tabuavou feels at home in the community. The only culture shock he experienced in coming to Canada was during the first six months after he arrived when he lived in Kelowna, B.C. He was stunned at the wealth of the city, and to see "how people work for money. Money is everything." But when he arrived in the First Nation community, "There was no culture shock. Everything was slow and laid back ... and money doesn't rule the land."

His First Nations neighbours recognize that Tabuavou and his family haven't just come to "dump the gospel and leave." They are in it for the long haul. "People are not projects," he says. The long haul is starting to produce change.

Until recently Tabuavou didn't dare carry a Bible. It was too threatening a symbol, one that would hinder rather than help relationships. Even in cell group meetings and Bible studies, Asa would read scripture from a USB stick plugged into a TV. But slowly, "Their pain is being removed," he says.

In January of 2012 Tabuavou reopened the community church, a significant and symbolic milestone as the church had not functioned as a church in 20 years. Every Sunday he and his wife prepare a pancake breakfast for the community, and then hold a worship service followed by Sunday school. "It's really growing," he says. "In March we did the first communion."

Ask him what's next and Tabuavou is quick to answer. "We're just gonna walk alongside the people," he says. "I'm not

doing this to walk away from the job. I'm just doing what God wants me to do. We are just thankful that the Lord allows us to be part of His work here."

A Life-Long Dream to Come to Canada

At 28 Hillary Bergshoeff speaks with youthful energy as she recounts the decision eight years ago that would start her on the path to becoming a missionary to Canada. Living in New Zealand at the time, born to a Chinese mother and Maori father, Bergshoeff arrived at a spiritual crossroads and prayed asking God for a fresh start, one that might allow her to serve half a world away.

Rushing her sentences together almost breathlessly, she draws out individual words for emphasis. "My *whole* life I had always wanted to move to Canada," she says. Bergshoeff remembers, at ten, a Sunday school teacher asked her what she wanted to do when she grew up. "Move to Canada," was her answer. All she knew of Canada at that time was maple syrup, hockey and the TV show *Due South*. "That's it." It may not have been much, but it was enough.

"I felt God say, 'I'm already there [in Canada]," Bergshoeff remembers.

Three months later in May 2005, she was on a plane to Vancouver where she entered YWAM's discipleship training school.

As part of her training program she spent time in North Africa and Scotland, but those experiences only confirmed her sense that Canada was where she was meant to be.

Bergshoeff has been on staff with YWAM ever since. She's worked with the discipleship training schools – helping students pursue an awareness of God's plan for their lives that often results in their leaving for far-off missions destinations. Currently she does administrative work at YWAM, and volunteers as a birth doula with the local health board's youth parenting and pregnancy outreach program.

"As a YWAM-er we're also missionaries here in the city," Bergshoeff explains. "We're encouraged to be engaged in the things that we're passionate about, the

things God's called us to. I'm passionate about family development and children."

As a doula she conducts prenatal and postnatal education and support, and acts as a labour coach for at-risk young women, ages 14 to 22, who hail from diverse cultural backgrounds.

"When you do missions here in Canada, you do missions to the world," she says with wonder in her voice.

"[Canada] doesn't always look like a traditional mission field. I'm living in one of the most livable and loved cities in the world," she concedes. "But missions is primarily about obedience.

When God calls you to missions, He's calling you to do exactly what He's asking. No more, no less. And right now for me, that means Vancouver."

When Horrible Cars Help

When Changsub Kim was preparing for a life of full-time ministry, he came to Canada from his home in South Korea to study at Briercrest College in Caronport, Sask. One weekend he and his young family vis-

ited a friend who was ministering in nearby Fort Qu'Appelle.

An elderly First Nations woman in the tiny community held Kim's infant son that day. Gazing intently at the baby's face, she remarked he looked just like her grandson.

It was a turning point in Kim's life.

Then a friend said to him, "Changsub, you should become a missionary to the First Nations. You can connect with the Native people better than me," remembers Kim.

The seed took root in his heart and grew. After finishing his MDiv in 2005, he returned home to pastor a church. But four years later he was back in Saskatchewan working as a missionary sent by SIM South Korea.

He says he connects with the First Nations communities he feels called to serve – in Regina's inner city and in a nearby community – in more ways than through



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Changsub Kim connects well with Canada's First Nations communities.

his physical features. "I'm a visible minority in Canada," he says. "But I also have a language barrier, a financial barrier. I'm

treated like an immigrant in need here."

His lower socioeconomic status and the struggles and hardships that attend it mean the poor, homeless and addicted people to whom he reaches out feel quickly at ease.

"I live in government housing. But when I meet people and have a Bible study with them, they say, 'Pastor Kim, you know why we like this Bible study? Because you're like us. You have no money. Your car is

horrible. Through your ministry we feel at home.'

"I've come to realize that when I am weak, He is strong. That's become the theme song of our Bible study: 'When I am weak, then He is strong.' I believe God gave us this situation – to be poor, humble people – for ministry."

The majority of his financial support comes from South Korea. Raising support was not easy. Some people, thinking of Canada as a good Christian country, questioned the need for him to go. But through Kim's prayer letters and daily Facebook updates, "Now they know why Canada needs more missionaries."

During the months of preparation before he came to Canada, Kim visited a missionary cemetery in Seoul. Looking at the grave markers he was struck by the number of missionaries from Canada. "Whole families died," he says. "I thought, *Wow! They devoted their whole lives to Korea.*"

Now he and his family see themselves as repaying that gift. "My salvation is because of the efforts of so many missionaries who came to Korea," Kim says. "I want the Canadian Church to see revival again and to grow."

The American Experience

In January 2001 Gary Smith was living a "comfortable life" in Omaha, Nebraska. Working as an associate pastor at a church plant there, he and his wife had just built a new home and were anticipating the ar-

“People work for money. Money is everything.”



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rival of their third child within months.

Out of the blue two friends in Montreal contacted Smith to ask him to pray about coming to that city to lead a church plant there. Sensing God behind the request, the Smiths began to pray. Then they started to pack.

"When we learned of Montreal, and of the overwhelming need there, we felt incredibly compelled to go and be part of helping to plant a church and reach people for Christ," Smith remembers. By April they had moved north, sent by the North American Mission Board (the mission arm of the Southern Baptist Convention), to a whole new life.

"It was to be the first English-speaking church plant in Montreal to partner with the Canadian National Baptist Convention, with the vision to begin planting French churches," Smith says.

The culture shock was immediate. "We went from one very different culture to a *very* different culture," he explains, offering that there's far more "remembered" Christian heritage in Omaha than in Montreal, and that the values and belief systems of citizens in the two communities are worlds apart.

He and his wife quickly realized they would need to learn not only French, but also Québécois culture. Motivated by the "vast lostness" they saw around them, they were excited and determined to do so.

The church plant thrived. Within three years he and his wife were fully funded missionaries, and he went on to become involved in planting "quite a few" other congregations throughout Quebec and Eastern Canada.

By 2009, in the role of senior church-starting catalyst for for the Canadian National Baptist Convention, he moved his family to Winnipeg to plant churches across the Prairies and Northern Ontario, then to the Greater Toronto Area in 2011 to pick up the work of church planting there.

He and his family thought they would be in Canada for the rest of their lives. "You have to know we weren't planning



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Gary and Sue Smith quickly realized they needed to learn French and Québécois culture in order to minister in Montreal.

on leaving," he says. "We were in the midst of the immigration process, so it was quite disappointing when we realized our time was up."

But just as quickly as God brought the Smiths to Canada, He took them back to the U.S. to lead a church in Topeka, Kansas. They are still settling in. It's clear Smith has left a piece of his heart behind.

"We're taking a mission team to Canada this summer from our church," he says, his voice enthusiastic. "We're gonna go to Saskatoon, to serve at [Henry Blackaby's] Faith Baptist Church and to serve the Canadian National Baptist Convention at their annual gathering." The team plans to run a vacation Bible school, work with teenagers and do community service projects.

"The harvest is still plentiful in Canada," Smith says. "I had many people tell me that Canada is just not open to the gospel. But that's a lie from hell. The problem is not with the gospel. It's not with Jesus. And it's not with the Holy Spirit.

"The problem is in the heart of the person who says Canadians are not open." **FT**

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

Should Christians Apologize at Gay Pride Events?

Evangelicals hold a range of opinions about “I’m Sorry the Church Hurt You” signs at Gay Pride events. Here three Canadians leaders explain their views. Join the discussion at www.facebook.com/FaithToday.



PHOTO: JOHANNA PETKAU / CANADIAN MENNONITE

Pastor Jamie Arpin-Ricci (left) and other members from Little Flowers Church participate in the I’m Sorry campaign at this past summer’s Gay Pride Parade in Winnipeg.

Saying Sorry to LGBTQ Canadians

By **Jamie Arpin-Ricci**

At this year’s Winnipeg Pride Parade more than 10,000 people came out to participate in the LGBTQ celebration (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and queer). Amid the thousands our small group of Christians on the sidelines could well have been missed if it were not for our signs, which read, “We’re Sorry We Used the Bible As a Weapon,” “I’m Sorry the Church Hurt You,” and “Free Hugs.”

As thousands of eyes turned our way, we didn’t fully know what to expect.

Over the last two years our church, Little Flowers Community, a Mennonite congregation in Winnipeg, has taken the lead to organize the local expression of the international I’m Sorry campaign (www.themarinfoundation.org).

The campaign was started in 2010 by Andrew Marin, author of *Love Is an Orientation: Elevating the Conversation With the Gay Community* (InterVarsity Press, 2009)

and founder of the Marin Foundation, as “an effort to apologize to the LGBT community for the ways Christians have caused harm and to show our commitment to making things better in tangible ways.”

It is not about being affirming or rejecting, but about taking responsibility and asking for forgiveness. We want Christians to be known for our commitment to try to understand others before we demand to be understood, known for listening to the stories of those hurt or alienated in the name of Jesus.

Sadly, the most vocal and visible Christian public responses to the LGBTQ community have

been negative. Without question, there are many complexities in holding to our religious beliefs in a culture of moral and political pluralism. However all too often Christians use language and behaviour that, rather than embodying the radical grace and love of Christ, communicates disgust, disdain and rejection. Our hope has been to provide an alternative public witness to this frequent misrepresentation.

Wrestling with the tensions and challenges, we know the I’m Sorry campaign is far from perfect. What if our public expressions of apology are misunderstood as affirmation? Acknowledging this possibility we decided such an apology required no qualification. The importance of taking full responsibility for our failings as Christians outweighs the possibility of misunderstanding. This fact was stated publicly prior to the event on our website, to the press and even to Pride organizers. In the end this event, both in Winnipeg and abroad, has always produced greater relationship and conversation with LGBTQ friends and neighbours.

We were also concerned our public apology might

be seen as a co-opting of the Pride celebration. At several points leading up to the event we almost cancelled, not wanting to make the day about us. While there were certainly those who expressed such concerns, we were overwhelmed by the number of people who encouraged us to run the campaign, including the organizers of Pride Winnipeg. The response since then has also been encouraging, resulting in many conversations, new friendships, and greater understanding and respect across typically uncrossable religious and political divides.

However we also know saying sorry is not enough. We can't apologize for our failings, then simply continue as though the slate has been cleared. Repentance requires so much more than just an apology – it requires a turning, a change of action and direction, and even reparation when possible and appropriate. We are under no illusion that participating in the I'm Sorry campaign is an end. It is in fact just one small step in the right direction.

The beauty is this – a demonstrated commitment to acknowledge, repent of and change from our brokenness is a far greater witness to a watching world than

what has been largely the focus of the wider evangelical community thus far. And it is living through this process of repentance that allows us to appropriately and humbly support others in their journey to wholeness in Christ. Further, we must be committed to give more time and energy to genuinely ask the difficult questions about what we believe, why we believe it and how that belief is expressed and

embodied. All three dynamics are critical.

In the end the impact of the I'm Sorry campaign continues to be profound, both for us and those we encounter in the parade. We have met with many tearful and astonished expressions of joy, exclamations of forgiveness and more hugs than we can keep track of. We have also met real people with real stories of abuse, rejection, and fear that they experienced at the hands of Christians and in the name of Jesus.

We continue to receive letters from people who saw us at the event. Hearts are being healed. Relationships are being built. The event is not without fault or weakness, but the beauty of what has come from it has far outweighed the negatives. **FT**

JAMIE ARPIN-RICCI is a writer and churchplanter in Winnipeg. Outside his Franciscan-Anabaptist congregation he also works with Forge Canada, YWAM Urban Ministries Winnipeg and Chiara House. He blogs at *The Huffington Post* and www.missional.ca and has authored *The Cost of Community: Jesus, St. Francis and Life in the Kingdom* (InterVarsity Press, 2011).

An Apology Can Be Misunderstood

By Larry Brice

Many Christians in Canada can agree with the sentiments expressed in the signs held by the I'm Sorry campaign churchgoers that say, "I'm Sorry the Church Hurt You" and "We Are All Beautiful in God's Eyes." But these demonstrations can also send the wrong message to the gay community, and to the media and general public.

The secular media, when seeing Christians express heartfelt regret for having hurt LGBTQ Canadians, have already misunderstood this apology as saying we were wrong about the Bible's expressed limitations on sexual expression and God's plan for Christian marriage.

Take for example the recent closing of the Exodus International ministry in the United States. Peter Mansbridge of the CBC's *The National* reported this on June 19: "Exodus International, a Christian ministry to help change the sexual orientation of homosexuals, has closed its doors and has apologized to the gay community for hurting them and wrongly misleading them, saying they acted 'ignorantly.'"

Yes, Exodus International did apologize and say sorry for having been so politically antagonistic with the gay community, and for telling gays and lesbians they could eliminate their same-sex sexual attraction by simply becoming Christians. What Mansbridge missed mentioning was the report from the board of Exodus that said they were not "negating the ways God used Exodus to positively affect thousands of people."

I attended an Exodus International conference to research my book *The Uncomfortable Church: Can Gays Be Reconciled to the Body of Christ?* (Deep River Books, 2013). I listened as many formerly gay and lesbian people testified to the changes God brought to their unwanted sexual desires through counselling and the empowerment of God's Holy Spirit.

The media's report on Exodus' apology ignored the thousands of successful, positive welcome ministrations to gays and lesbians they had over the years. The apology was misunderstood and the full statement of apology underreported by the media.

There's something else Exodus International did not apologize for – something Christians can't apologize for – that will always remain our hurt with parts of the



PHOTO: WWW.BRINGITONCOMMUNICATIONS.COM

Lawrence Brice says that the secular media has already misunderstood this apology.

The campaign is not about being affirming or rejecting, but about taking responsibility and asking for forgiveness.

gay community. We cannot apologize for the Bible and the Christian view of marriage. This will likely remain an open wound with our brothers and sisters who are homosexual, including those who are strong believers in Jesus Christ.

The Exodus website apology by Alan Chambers, its executive director, says it clearly. "I cannot apologize for my deeply held biblical beliefs about the boundaries I see in scripture surrounding sex" and "I cannot apologize for my beliefs about marriage" (see www.exodusinternational.org/2013/06/i-am-sorry).

As long as Christians hold to biblically orthodox teachings about sex and marriage, we will never be able to completely apologize to the LGBTQ community in the way some would like.

Yes, like Exodus International, we may confess we have criticized and marginalized the LGBTQ community. Many of us have simplified a complex and difficult condition that isn't overcome just by psyching up faith and willpower. And many of our ancestors in the Church for centuries rejected and vilified homosexuals, failing to accept gays and lesbians to be as much a creation of God as heterosexuals.

We will always need to confess our sins, and to do so publicly to God in church. But to do so on public placards during Gay Pride parades is too easily misunderstood.

Was Exodus International right to apologize? Should

more Canadian churches apologize? Can gays and lesbians change anything regarding their sexuality?

This discussion is put in proper light by a Christian leader who himself has same-sex attraction, Christopher Yuan. In an interview published in *The Christian Post*, he says, "Heterosexuality should not be the goal. Holiness is our standard, and we are called to be holy, whether we have heterosexual or homosexual feelings." Yuan defines holiness as faithfulness in heterosexual marriage or abstinence in singleness.

If holiness is the goal, then every Christian congregation in Canada can help the LGBTQ community, not by risking a misunderstandable public demonstration to say sorry, but by faithfully and humbly proclaiming God's way to holiness. **FT**

As long as Christians hold to biblically orthodox teachings about sex and marriage, we will never be able to completely apologize to the LGBTQ community ...

DR. LAWRENCE BRICE is an Ontario Presbyterian pastor, writer, TV host and evangelist. His latest book is *The Uncomfortable Church: Can Gays Be Reconciled to the Body of Christ?* (Deep River Books, 2013). He's also founder of www.ReachOutMinistries.net.

Apologizing: A Good Start But Not Enough

By Wendy Gritter

What does it mean to say sorry? Canadians have something of a reputation as apologetic people. Not wanting to offend or get into conflict, many of us are quick to offer an "Oh, sorry" deflection. For people like us, what does an apology really mean?

The I'm Sorry campaign has been represented at a lot of Pride events. This campaign is in response to a pervasive perception that LGBTQ people have felt alienated and hurt by churches. In the campaign Christians hold signs, wear T-shirts, and interact with Pride participants with the intent to apologize for painful experiences and express a desire to extend hospitality.

LGBTQ people have different responses to these efforts. For some this is a very welcome sign of Christians humbling themselves and wanting to chart a new course. It is a sign of hope that churches may be moving towards a more inclusive posture.

For others however this campaign actually entrenches their cynicism. Saying sorry doesn't mean much unless there is follow-up action. Some LGBTQ folks wonder if this is just a publicity stunt on the part of Christians. Others feel holding a sign is a shallow effort compared



PHOTO: NATHAN GRITTER

Wendy Gritter: LGBTQ people have different responses to these apologies.

to the deep wounds from rejection by church and family. In the past I helped rally Christian volunteers to be at Pride Toronto. We worked with Pride's volunteer co-ordinators and were assigned to clean up garbage. We quietly went about our service, incarnationally present behind the scenes. One year I approached some LGBTQ friends and asked if it would be a good idea to lead an I'm Sorry campaign. After all, at New Direction (the national ministry I lead) we have often been involved in expressing apologies, following up with conversations over coffee, making amends and being ambassadors of reconciliation. We've done so publicly through guest editorials, our own blog and other events.

What I found interesting is that my LGBTQ friends advised me to continue with quiet service instead.

They explained Pride events were an opportunity for LGBTQ folks to have fun and celebrate the progress made in dismantling discrimination and prejudice. To insert an apology into this atmosphere was akin to shutting down the music at a dance. My friends thought a public apology would throw attention on the people offering the apology and their guilt, and away from the people who were trying to celebrate. Whether all LGBTQ people would feel that way or not, their words stuck with me and have given me a lot of food for thought.

Recently Alan Chambers of the ex-gay ministry Exodus International offered an honest and vulnerable apology with no excuses. He acknowledged efforts to change someone's sexual orientation had proven to be largely ineffective – and also

harmful and traumatic to many people.

This apology came, as have the apologies at New Direction over the years, from listening deeply to the stories of gay people with intense and intimate personal experience. These apologies matter because they have been generated through personal connection and entering the experience of another.

The reaction to all of this – Chambers also announced Exodus would be shutting down – has been mixed partly be-

cause apologies need follow-up. Apologies need to be lived out through a change in how we do things. And so a lot of people are responding to Chambers' apology in a "wait and see" mode.

Saying sorry is important. But it is even more important to demonstrate a living apology by going out of our way to listen

Saying sorry is important. But it is even more important to demonstrate a living apology by going out of our way to listen.

and count the cost for the Church to truly be a place of radical hospitality.

I am working for the day when an I'm Sorry campaign is unnecessary because the Body of Jesus Christ has recognized that if any voices are missing, we are impoverished.

I am working for the day when churches throw wide their doors and truly welcome anyone who is seeking an encounter with a loving and gracious God.

I am working for the day when we, as the children of God, experience the journey of faith as mutual pilgrims – regardless of our differences.

For when that day comes, we will all be able to celebrate together. **FT**

WENDY GRITTER of Toronto has served as executive director of New Direction Ministries since 2002 (www.newdirection.ca). New Direction nurtures safe and spacious places for sexual minority persons to explore and grow in faith in Jesus Christ.

Her book *Generous Spaciousness: Responding to Gay Christians in the Church* is forthcoming from Brazos Press.

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mother of four, *Faith Today*
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Holding Course in Troubled Times

The cultural changes of the '60s, that time of tie-dye, TVs and Trudeaumania, turned our religious landscape upside down by weakening our country's two largest religious groups.

Canadian Catholics reeled under the combined impact of a loss of political and cultural influence in Quebec on the one hand, and the disorienting effects of the Second Vatican Council on the other. Catholic Quebec evolved from being the most churchgoing jurisdiction in North America to the least.

Mainline Protestants, especially the United and Anglican churches, followed Pierre Berton's disastrous advice that they should get with the times by casting aside their "out of date" beliefs and moral convictions. This led them into a numerical tailspin from which they never recovered. The United Church of Canada of today, for example, has only half as many members as the United Church of 1965.

While all this was going on, a very different story played out in Canada's evangelical churches. On the one hand, evangelical denominations that had formerly been isolated from each other by tradition and theological convictions (and in some cases language and ethnicity) began to notice the things they had in common. The changes taking place in society and in other churches contributed to this growing recognition of evangelical unity.

While Baptists and Pentecostals might disagree about speaking in tongues, for example, they did agree on the much more important point that the Bible was authoritative and reliable – a belief that was coming under attack in the mainline Protestant churches. Likewise, even though the Christian Reformed Church and the Missionary Church of Canada might have different views about the particulars of Sabbath observance and whether Christians were allowed to smoke, they shared the view that sex belonged only in marriage – a conviction directly contrary to the "sexual revolution" sweeping Canada.

Canadian Evangelicals started working together more seriously across denominational lines. Most notably efforts by Harry Faught and other Toronto-area evangelical pastors led to the formation of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada in

1964. Eventually the EFC helped bring about a greater sense of unity and co-operation among Canadian Evangelicals.

The other major development for Evangelicals in the 1960s was numerical growth. This growth defied the expectation of Berton and his sympathizers that the only churches to survive in the modern era would be those that gave up "old-fashioned" doctrinal beliefs and instead focused on championing "progressive" social and political causes.

Instead of trying to keep in step with the times as they had been advised to do, Evangelicals continued to proclaim a gospel they believed had eternal relevance. While mainline leaders flirted with "Death of God" theology and other radical movements, Evangelicals continued to share the message that God was real and that He had entered human history to die for our sins. While those who were wise in the eyes of the world trumpeted the virtues of the sexual revolution, Evangelicals stuck to the ancient wisdom that the good gift of sexuality could become terribly destructive outside its rightful channels.

This countercultural message did not lead evangelical churches into irrelevance and decline. In the 1950s Canada's evangelical churches had been small marginal groups. By the 1980s they had become what historian Bob Burkinshaw calls the "worshipping majority" in Canadian Protestantism. More people were worshipping at evangelical churches than mainline Protestant churches on a typical Sunday. Groups like the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches, and the Mennonite Brethren more than doubled in size between 1965 and the end of the century.

Canada's Evangelicals survived and thrived through the turbulence of the '60s, not by chasing relevance or accommodating themselves to the world's expectations, but by sticking to their fundamental, biblically rooted convictions. The mainline churches that followed Berton's advice lost not only much of their faith heritage, but most of their people as well.

Today's Evangelicals, listening to the siren song of today's Bertons – sometimes even within their own denominations – will do well to remember the example of their forefathers. True relevance comes not from imitating the world, but from working together to share a gospel of truth and love that is the same yesterday, today and forever. **FT**

Evangelical denominations began to notice the things they had in common.

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

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Briercrest Forges

With a new president and increasing mainstream recognition, Briercrest College and Seminary is gearing for a new era of growth. *By Doug Koop*

An optimistic spirit is rising on the prairie landscape like an illuminated church spire in the middle of the night. Earlier this year the province of Saskatchewan announced it would begin to authorize some of the BA degree programs offered by Briercrest. The event coincided with the introduction of Michael Pawelke as the sixth president of the schools.

It was a fitting transition point for outgoing president Dwayne Uglem, who spearheaded the lengthy and demanding process of having programs at the Bible-oriented school recognized and accredited by the mainstream academy (for details, skip ahead to “Briercrest Degrees Gain Top Recognition”).

“This brings us to a new chapter,” says Briercrest board chair Glen Werner. “This is the direction we want to go. With Michael joining us, we’re excited.”

For his part, Pawelke is more than pleased to pick up the mantle, confident he’s in the right place at the right time. “My calling in life is to love, lead, feed and seed. This role has tremendous alignment and congruency with my personal call,” he says.

“Briercrest is deeply committed to preparing men and women for various contexts within the church and the broader marketplace – to producing students who have a strong ability to view the world through a biblical lens. We feel we’re offering the best of both worlds.”

Connecting Pulpit and Podium

The move to Briercrest is a big step for Pawelke, who has served in a variety of pastoral roles for 30 years. Since 1994 he has been senior pastor at Brant/Compass Point Bible Church in Burlington, Ont., where he led the team which orchestrated a strategic merger between two historic churches and led multiple congregations in a multi-site model.

Along the way he continued to upgrade his education (culminating in 2002 with a DMin from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary) and did some sessional teaching at McMaster Divinity College as well as at Briercrest.

“The decision to come here is the most significant one



Michael Pawelke, the sixth president of the schools.

I’ve made in 20 years. I have a deep love for the church, and the specific one I served most recently. Now, at this season of my life, I want to focus on the next generation of leaders and the church more broadly.”

Pawelke’s connection to Briercrest spans many years.

“I came to Briercrest in 1978 as a student because of my early call to Christian ministry. Here I developed a solid biblical foundation that was pivotal in my personal life. This school provided a holistic environment in which I thrived, growing in confidence, leadership ability and sense of call.”

He sees the “intense community experience” of Briercrest as a key strength of the school. His own positive experience as a student has kept him coming back. For the past ten years he’s been serving on the Briercrest board and is unreservedly in step with its mission.

“We have a very clear and meaningful mission,” he says, and spontaneously recites the formal statement: “Briercrest College and Seminary is a community of rigorous learning that calls students to seek the Kingdom of God, to be shaped profoundly by the Scriptures, and to be formed spiritually and intellectually for lives of service.”

“Those are not just words,” he insists. “We really seek to live those out.”

Deep and Wide

In recent years, says Pawelke, Briercrest has been busy developing the strong curriculum that enabled its current degree-granting status. “There’s been an emphasis on going deep,” he says. And now is an opportune time for a shift. “My mandate is to promote the school so we go broad. I’m hoping to see us strengthen our national presence.”

Pawelke’s vision for Briercrest embraces both church and society. “While the value of higher education is a good value to embrace, our hope is that the church broadly will see the unique value of Christian higher education,” he says.

“I want to reaffirm our deep accountability to a biblical worldview, and recalibrate to the world we find ourselves

Briercrest photos by: Fiona Graham, Viktor Karklins and Rob Schellenberg.



Hopeful Future

in, which is constantly changing. We want to produce graduates able to interpret their world and connect meaningfully and effectively with it. We want to connect with the world, yet remain anchored in our roots.”

Pawelke explains that academic institutions “are grappling with how to produce graduates who bring value, integrity and transformation to the world, with values-based students.” And then he gets excited.

“God is already using us to produce those students, and now we are seeking God’s blessings and purposes to do more,” he says. “Christian higher education produces great citizens, pastors and business people. We are thankful to God for how He is at work – and excited that we have a role. Schools like Briercrest have a significant, pivotal role. We hope it is valued, appreciated and supported.”

Celebration

Briercrest is planning a series of special events September 27-29 to bring the schools’ students, supporters, alumni and general community together. The new president’s formal installation is only a small part of the weekend that is expected to involve more than 2,000 people.

“It’s turned into a community celebration event rather than a formal academic event,” says organizer June Clark, vice president of enrolment. The schools’ annual mission conference is being held that weekend, athletic teams are competing and current and former board members will be reconnecting.

It’s a “fitting way” to connect Briercrest’s past with its emerging future, adds board chair Glen Werner. “We started as a Bible institute but we have grown, changed and adapted to needs of the public. Our roots are solid. We’re not going to give up our heritage, but we’ll be relevant to today’s world, and be relevant to the needs of the world going forward.

“We respect our heritage. We’ve built upon it and adapted. We are going forward in an effective way. This delights me,” he says. ■

This We Believe

Briercrest declares what matters most.

Serving the God of the Bible is the reason why Briercrest exists, and Scripture is the bedrock on which it builds all its programs and activities.

The school’s Statement of Faith webpage explains further: “We share the ideals of movements such as the Lausanne Covenant (1974) regarding the authority of Scripture, the priority of evangelism, the need for Christian social responsibility and personal holiness, the costliness and urgency of world mission, and the importance of theological education.”

Briercrest embraces “the revelation of God in the Christian Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments” and affirms the beliefs summarized in the Apostles’ and Nicene creeds. The school’s statement of faith, basically identical to statements held by The World Evangelical Alliance and The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, highlights doctrines considered “essential to the understanding and proclamation of the Gospel and to Christian life and practice.”

Briercrest affirms the following on its Statement of Faith webpage:

- The Holy Scriptures as originally given by God, divinely inspired, infallible, entirely trustworthy, and the supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.
- One God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- Our Lord Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, His virgin birth, His sinless human life, His divine miracles, His vicarious and atoning death, His bodily resurrection, His ascension, His mediatorial work, and His personal return in power and glory.
- The Salvation of lost and sinful humanity possible only through the merits of the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ received by faith apart from works, and as characterized by regeneration by the Holy Spirit.
- The Holy Spirit, by whose indwelling the believer is enabled to live a holy life, to witness and work for the Lord Jesus Christ.
- The Unity of the Spirit of all true believers, the Church, the Body of Christ.
- The Resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life, they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.

—Doug Koop





Emphasizing the Bible

By Bob Bettson

Encouraging students to seek the Kingdom of God and to be shaped profoundly by the Scriptures is part of the mission and vision statement of Briercrest College and Seminary.

So the Bible remains at the heart of life at Briercrest.

David Cole, vice president of student development, says the biblical core permeates the entire experience of learning at Briercrest and sets the school apart from others.

Students participate with staff and faculty in chapels, residential life and student government. There are four chapels a week at the college level, two for high school students and one at the seminary.

Biblical studies are also an important part of academic life – not only for the seminarians.

Vice president academic Wes Olmstead says the college offers familiar liberal arts programs, but students are also required to study Scripture in courses that help with spiritual formation and challenge students intellectually.

Students are encouraged to take electives based on interest, with subjects such as the Gospel of John, the Book of Isaiah and social justice issues in Scripture.

Ten Bible Courses Required

The minimum requirement for all Briercrest bachelors programs, including business and psychology, is five semestered courses on the Bible, four on application, and one on the history of Christianity.

“We hope students will leave Briercrest for a diversity of callings, a love of God’s Word and God’s world,” says Olmstead.

Students Keen for Bible Study

Having taught in both the college and seminary, Olmstead finds young people “are as keen for serious study of Scripture as I can remember.”

What is studied in class is reflected throughout student life, adds Cole. “At all public gatherings Scripture is read and students are involved. We often have breakout sessions for small-group Bible study,” he says.

Briercrest operates Caronport High School where high school students take Christian ethics courses which combine Scripture study and life applications. Senior high school students can take introductory gospel, Old Testament, theology and spiritual formation courses at the college so they can get a head start on their degrees.

College students help lead small-group sessions for high school students. Trained residence assistants help the 80 per cent of Briercrest students who are living at the main campus to include Scriptures in dormitory meetings and chapel.

The remaining 20 per cent of students live in Caronport or commute from nearby Moose Jaw. All are included in programs

to make sure they are connected to the worship and Bible study life of the Briercrest student body.

Dan Gabor, recently appointed chaplain, is a Briercrest graduate who has returned to the campus and assists with worship and spiritual formation.

At the college level all students attend daily chapel Monday to Thursday and take part in worship teams to plan worship and music. Regular speakers include president Michael Pawelke, Gabor and members of the faculty.

Students also take a turn in speaking, sometimes giving testimonials, and leading special days of prayer.

Bible study groups meet weekly in residences, and breakout groups allow the intimacy of small groups with as few as five students joining together.

As well as worship and Bible study on campus, Gabor says there is a strong connection with local churches. “It’s not enough for students to have a great experience at Briercrest. It is important to get involved in the church.”

Students have connections with several local churches, both in Caronport and Moose Jaw.

Life at Briercrest is satisfying, says Gabor, who served as a residence director before becoming chaplain. “It is a joy to walk with students, even when it is a struggle.”

One of the ways the Bible can impact students is through a thematic approach. Last year a theme of “enslaved by grace” from Paul’s letter to the Romans helped students explore how grace operates in their daily lives. Days of prayer also focused on the theme.

Staff helped to facilitate students as they learn leadership skills.

Spiritual Development Gets High Ratings

Alumni surveys show how successful Briercrest’s programs are. “Spiritual development and dormitory life consistently get high ratings,” says Cole, the vice president of student development. “There is a high level of satisfaction.”

The spiritual component of the college’s life is absolutely critical, he says. “There is strong mentoring, spiritual development and character formation.” And students are required to do service learning in a variety of venues including church programs and soup kitchens.

The end result is Briercrest students are well equipped to serve Christ wherever they go – in paid ministry or as volunteers while working on secular occupations.

The college and high school programs complement the seminary by offering a chance for seminary students to get practical experience as mentors.

“I’ve worked in a number of institutions,” says Cole. “Briercrest is a place where students are very serious about Scripture, and have high expectations.” ■

Amazing Alumni

By Faith Today staff

What impact does a Briercrest education have? In a recent survey, the most common gifts alumni said Briercrest has given them are: an education linked to their career (43 per cent), knowledge of the Bible (40 per cent), an educational foundation for life and ministry (31 per cent), a chance to be on a music team (28 per cent), equipping to be a lifelong learner (28 per cent) and deep relational and spiritual growth (22 per cent).

Visit the webpages below to read how Briercrest alumni have gone on to be used by God at home and around the world.



Terra Lorenz receives the Queen Elizabeth diamond jubilee medal on Yorkton MLA Greg Ottenbreit. She helps children in Uganda.
www.briercrest.ca/tlorenz



Nancy Heppner, MLA for Martensville, Sask.
www.briercrest.ca/nheppner



Kevin and Cristy Thiessen – Inspiring their church in Victoria to impact its community.
www.briercrest.ca/kthiessen



Eric and Carla Ackermann – working with former street kids in Ecuador.
www.briercrest.ca/ecackermann



Andrew Johnson – training medical residents and working in the treatment of infectious disease.
www.briercrest.ca/ajohnson

Hannah Driscoll, loving teens at summer camp and in Saskatoon.
www.briercrest.ca/hdriscoll



Spurgeon Root (centre) uses canoe-building to reach at-risk youth in Regina.
www.briercrest.ca/sroot

Briercrest Degrees Gain Top Recognition

Formalized mainstream approval took years to acquire.

By Doug Koop

The value of a Briercrest education is growing by degrees.

Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall came to the Caronport campus last April to announce Briercrest College and Seminary is authorized to provide a Bachelor of Arts in humanities. And the number of recognized degree programs is expected to grow to include English, history and more.

It was a satisfying moment for Briercrest's former president, Dwayne Uglen. "This approval tells us that another vital external witness has found us to be offering high quality education that is worthy of being called a bachelor's degree in Canada," he said.

Why is this a big deal? It matters to students. Vice president academic Wes Olmstead explains a lot of students choose Briercrest for the formal Bible study that is part and parcel of the school's curriculum, but many of these students are not preparing for church and ministry vocations.

"Often that meant they would spend three or four years here and then move on to another education program. They basically had to start over. We wanted this recognition so our students don't have that disadvantage." It also makes it much easier for students to advance into some mainstream graduate and secondary schools.

Long Time Coming

This is not a new concern. Indeed, Briercrest began pursuing academic recognition about 20 years ago. But until this summer only two schools in Saskatchewan had the authority to grant degrees other than theological degrees. Uglen, Olmstead and associate vice president academic Brian Gobbett were key players in Briercrest's long qualifying process that prompted a major revamp of the province's secondary education sector.

Now a system is in place to ensure that higher education throughout the province meets strict standards, and Briercrest is eager to comply in order to serve a larger

number of students in a greater variety of ways.

Board chair Glen Werner sees the development as "a new chapter" as the school moves to include a Christian university status as part of its identity. "Hopefully in a few years we'll be able to use the word 'university' formally. That is where we want to go. This isn't intended to compete with other universities in the province, but to complement and augment what they're doing."

Briercrest's new president, Michael Pawelke, is celebrating and promoting the increased recognition. "We want students to know our degrees are increasingly accepted in the mainstream," he says.

And academic recognition is a boon for enrolment vice president June Clark. "In order to be relevant in our world we need to provide education that gives our students marketplace competency that is properly recognized," she says.

Olmstead agrees.

"As we look to the future we see ourselves as preparing students for engagement with a breadth of opportunities in our world," explains Olmstead. "We want to offer programs of study that help them prepare to be engaging in service in every imaginable place in our country and around the world.

"It's important that our government recognize what we do outside theology and formal preparation for ministry."

Linked to Mission

According to Olmstead, "This desire to have recognition for our students has always been closely linked to our mission." While it's been possible to take Bible courses by correspondence or in modules, a valuable part of the Briercrest education is the intensive community experience.

"The transformation we hope for our students doesn't happen in just a few months. We wanted them to be able

Skilled Language Teachers Travel Far

The tiny village of Caronport, Sask., may be an unlikely location for comprehensive training in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). However, Briercrest is home to what David Catterick describes as "the most extensive TESOL program in North America."

Catterick is passionate about his work,

explaining that TESOL offers an interesting mix of career and ministry opportunity that is a natural fit for the mission of the Briercrest schools. "From its earliest days Briercrest prepared people for work all around the world," he explains.

And these days, demand for qualified English language instructors is a burgeoning

industry. English is the *lingua franca*, the language of international trade, business, finance, science and education. TESOL opens doors to work in every part of the world, including restricted-access countries.

"Where you need an educated populace, you need English. You need people who are well-qualified to train teachers and key seg-



Michael Pawelke chats with Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall. Briercrest's degrees are increasingly accepted in the mainstream.

to invest three or four years on our campus working with our professors, studying the Scriptures rigorously, and we never want to stop with academic questions.

"We want them to ask what these texts were designed to do, to interact with Scripture in ways to integrate it into life. We want teaching that is intellectually transforming and spiritually and personally transforming. We want students to have full benefit."

Those benefits include a rich academic experience, as demonstrated in a recent National Survey of Student Engagement, which published its results in *Maclean's* magazine last February. Briercrest ranked near the top in a variety of categories including: "enriching educational experience," "level of academic challenge" and

"supportive campus environment."

Results like these make it all the more gratifying when the academic degrees are formally recognized and honoured as well. Briercrest intends to put all its liberal arts programs through the provincial recognition process and hopes to have them all authorized by 2016. (Ministry-focused programs are accredited through the Association for Biblical Higher Education and the Association of Theological Schools.)

Olmstead and his colleagues are keen to keep focused on the big picture. "Our goal in all this is to help position Briercrest and our students for strategic service to church and society in Canada and around the world. It's driven by missional concerns." ■

ments of the population," says Catterick.

He highlights the professionalism of Briercrest's TESOL programs, a four-year BA in applied linguistics and a two-year "after degree," both accredited at highest levels for undergraduate degrees. "We are not doing TESOL on the side," he says.

"To give the best type of training, you need to be fully trained. We're training people to be the very best teachers possible. And

that's what people want. It's about having the requisite skills, passion, classroom management – and the heart to see people come to a living knowledge of Christ – put together in one package."

The Christian emphasis is not clandestine. "We are completely open about everything we are," says Catterick. "People in other countries aren't dumb. They do background checks on people who are coming in. When they weigh

their need for good English teachers against their concerns about Christians working in their country, the balance tips in favour of the skills we bring."

It's a fit for Briercrest. "We need to be involved in this. This is one significant way our students can be extremely strategic in a variety of contexts. They can be who they are, people who live out their lives in Christ just about anywhere in the world." ■ –Doug Koop

Fine Arts in God's Service

Briercrest's worship arts department brings a biblical and theological understanding to this powerful medium, so that they can use their gifts for God's glory. Clockwise from top left: Cinderella's mean stepsisters in Rossini's opera *La Cenerentola*; a scene from *Anne of Green Gables*; "No Matter What" from *Beauty and the Beast*; selections from *Les Miserables*; and Ebenezer Scrooge is confronted by Jacob Marley in *A Christmas Carol*.



Faith and Science Are Not at Odds

New psychology program launched last year.

By Lisa Hall-Wilson

Briercrest College and Seminary, known for requiring an extensive biblical core in all its BA degrees, launched a psychology program in 2012. Studying the popular academic discipline in a Christian learning environment gives it a special flavour.

Charles Hackney is an associate professor of psychology at Briercrest and was a key player in the program's development. Briercrest's psychology program has almost identical course requirements as secular universities, but in addition offers courses to help Christians apply their faith to their profession. Hackney says some students have the idea that in the field of psychology their faith is at odds with science.

"We address all the issues but within the context of a biblically formed understanding of what life is," says Hackney. "Psychology is one of the most secular of the academic fields. Some students might find it useful or comfortable to receive training knowing they do it in a spiritually supportive rather than combative environment."

This has been a long process for Hackney, who joined Briercrest in January 2010. "Briercrest has been recruiting an impressive collection of scholars. We have people who are published researchers, active practitioners, specialists in many different areas, all of whom are passionate and enthusiastic about psychology and Jesus, and are committed to carrying out their careers in a way that honours both of them – psychology and the Lord."

The program's aim is to equip students to serve, either in full-time ministry or in a professional field. Applying one's faith to a professional setting is an integral part of that training. Hackney points to a class he teaches on the psychology of religion as an example which covers the scientific study of religion. In addition to looking at the science in the class, he says, "We look beyond academic interest towards an understanding of the psychological understandings of religion and how we use that in our own lives."

A degree in psychology is useful in a number of different career choices including speech therapy, social work, communications, health care, advertising, the military and sports. In all these fields Christians are needed to provide services and be a witness in the workplace.

Part of the program's appeal for students is a credit transfer agreement between Briercrest and North Dakota's Minot State University. Students earn a Bachelor



of Arts in psychology at Briercrest and then continue on to Minot State where they can choose to take a Bachelor of Science in addictions studies, communications disorders or social work. From there, students enter the workforce or continue on to graduate school.

"Our credit transfer agreement allows students to get two bachelor degrees in five years," says Hackney. "Having the two degrees can increase a student's employability and increase their attractiveness to graduate schools."

Briercrest should soon be able to apply for full accreditation parity with other Saskatchewan universities. "Unlike other provinces, in Saskatchewan only the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan were authorized to offer university degrees. So the major hurdle has been getting the legislation changed, and we've been a big part of that process," says Hackney.

Briercrest's psychology degree is already approved by the Association of Biblical Higher Education, and the school looks forward to also being able to soon apply for recognition from the Saskatchewan Higher Education Quality Assurance Board. ■

Three Schools Under One Roof

Mentoring experiences are woven through high school, college and seminary.

By Lisa Hall-Wilson

Students are always looking for an edge when it comes to higher education, whether it's extra-curricular experience as a volunteer or athlete, or co-curricular opportunities such as student government and co-op placements. Briercrest offers ample opportunities to students by combining three schools in one: a distinct college, seminary and high school.

The benefits to high school students include residences, use of the college gymnasium and library, and the opportunity to participate in campus drama presentations and choir concerts with older students.

"Part of our commitment to the high school students is to surround them with positive influences," says David Cole, vice president of student development. "High school students get to be around older people who treat them with respect and care about them as people. In secular settings that would be less likely."

Intentional mentoring is something Briercrest actively plans for high school students and fosters in the residences. College students help out with high school chapel and worship times, and advise student government. Similarly, the seminary students lend their support to the college students. College students are recruited to serve as residence assistants who lead worship times and Bible studies in the dorms. In any healthy mentoring relationship, the mentee learns as much as the mentor.

Karl Wilson attended Briercrest from 2001 through 2005 to earn a BA in outdoor adventure and administration, and is now a constable with the Ontario Provincial Police. He served as a residence assistant in his third year. "There were 17-year-olds in the same dorm as 25-year-olds. I had the responsibility to enforce curfew, be a men-

Briercrest dorm life: older dorm members mentor and help out the younger dorm members.



tor to some, and help out the younger dorm members," Wilson explained through email.

"There were many boys in the dorm I respected a lot; there were [also] people in the dorm who really annoyed me. It was beneficial to learn how to live with someone you just don't like. Learning how to move past that dislike to love them and still be available to them if they need it is quite a lesson."

High school and college students also have the opportunity to take courses from either the college or seminary. There are 21 class options available to high school students, and they may fit up to three college classes in their schedule. "To be able to take those university-level classes in high school, to be able to work with ACAC-level [Alberta Colleges Athletic Conference] athletes while in high school, and to live alongside college students in the dorms, all leads to a more well-rounded preparation for the next step of life, and advances the adolescent development that is at work in all students," says AJ Cocker, chaplain for Caronport High School.

But along with this blending of the ages comes parental concerns for younger students. Cole would assure parents that protecting the younger students is given a high priority at Briercrest. "We have policies to protect younger students in age-appropriate situations. For instance, no college student is permitted to have a [romantic] relationship with a high school student younger than Grade 12. Safeguarding is a high priority for us."

Briercrest is dedicated to providing a safe quality growing experience for high school, college and seminary students. Cole encourages parents and students to call or email dcole@briercrest.ca if they have questions. ■

Coming Events 2013-2014

For details and updates please visit www.briercrest.ca/events.

- 2819 Mission Conference, Sept. 23-27, 2013
- Alumni Homecoming (including presidential installation), Sept. 27-29, 2013
- Day of Prayer, Oct. 8, 2013
- Experience Briercrest, Nov. 27-30, 2013 and Feb. 12-14, 2014
- Christmas at Caronport Nov. 29-Dec 1, 2013
- Job Fair, January 15, 2014
- Youth Quake youth retreat and concerts weekend, Feb. 14-16, 2014. www.briercrest.ca/yq
- Volleyball Nationals (Canadian Colleges Athletic Association), Mar. 5-8, 2014

Seminary Develops Leadership

Learn to counsel, pastor and study the Bible, plus get advanced training in management and leadership development.

By Bob Bettson

Briercrest Seminary trains leaders in several areas, including counselling and theological studies. But perhaps its most popular program is an MA in leadership and management aimed at people already active in Christian ministry.

This MA meets a clear need.

“We’re even getting senior pastors,” says Paul Magnus, a leadership expert and former Briercrest president who helped develop the program. “It used to be they thought all they needed to do is preach.” Now they are learning the latest in leadership development and best practices in management.

In all its programs Briercrest Seminary focuses on praxis, putting biblical and spiritual learning in a practical life context.

And to meet the practical needs of potential students, the seminary offers modular courses, with one week face-to-face time at Briercrest and the rest of the course time devoted to private reading, study and course work. This allows students to maintain other major commitments in ministry, para-church or secular work.

Magnus also teaches two-day modular courses in Toronto, Saskatoon, Edmonton, Calgary and even nearby Regina.

These modular options means Briercrest is more accessible to students who can’t travel or move to Saskatchewan, and complement the seminary’s online offerings.

Magnus and the programs he helped develop have influenced many leaders, including incoming seminary dean George Boyd. Boyd has a bachelor’s and a master’s degree from Briercrest, and now hopes to continue to connect the seminary to the church community, to build for the future.

That future looks bright, thanks in part to remarkable financial health at a time when seminaries are facing challenging times. Briercrest’s debt is negligible, and enrolment is holding up well thanks to the modular system, says president Michael Pawelke. And Briercrest offers a distinctive set of programs that appeal to a wide spectrum of churches and denominations.

Outgoing dean Dustin Resch notes that besides the MA in management and leadership, the largest seminary program, many students choose the MA in marriage and family counselling, which leads to accredited positions with Christian counselling and para-church ministries.

There’s also a smaller Master of Divinity program that leads to the pastorate, and an MA program in theological studies.

“We have a highly developed student community,” says Resch. “Students taking our modular courses find a week here is



a week away. It’s a time for study, but also worship and prayer.” Resch himself is a graduate of the college and seminary who did doctoral work at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ont.

Briercrest Seminary is one of the best in Canada, he says, and one of the few non-denominational seminaries fully accredited by the Association of Theological Schools, a North American body which rigorously evaluates all member schools for quality of theological education. ■

Briercrest Seminary Grad Heads SIM International

“We hold a special place for Briercrest in our hearts,” says Joshua Bogunjoko, the new international director of SIM, an organization that includes 2,000 missionaries in 65 countries.

“They taught me how to learn. Briercrest helped me to be a student of the Word and a student of leadership. I learned that I would never know everything, but to be open to continuing to learn.”

Bogunjoko, a Nigerian medical doctor, studied for a master’s degree in organizational leadership at Briercrest Seminary after friends encouraged him to apply.

He went on to learn French at Laval University, returned to West Africa and has now become the first African director of SIM International. —BB

Briercrest Seminary Grad Reaches Out in Winnipeg

Kelly Dvorak is part of the Flatlanders Inn, an intentional Christian community that provides transitional housing for people at risk in Winnipeg’s North End.

Although the Briercrest Seminary graduate has done inner-city work since 1999, she and her family decided in 2009 to live in the community where her work is.

Dvorak is a family therapist at Pregnancy and Family Support Services, an organization that offers counselling and other supports to the community.

Many of her clients are First Nations people, and Dvorak’s focus is on reconciliation, a theme of her studies at Briercrest.

“I see that reconciliation is not only possible. It’s happening.”

She finds narrative therapy, a tool she picked up at Briercrest, especially helpful with her clientele. —Julie Cole

One Year Can Make a Difference

Study creative arts in Ontario or leadership in B.C.

By Bob Bettson

After completing high school many students take a year off, a gap year before university. Briercrest offers eight-month programs that fit right in. They offer not only fun and adventure, but also enrichment and course credit towards degree programs.

Imprint, a program launched this fall in Ontario at Muskoka Woods Resort, allows students to explore the creative arts including photography and painting and their relationship to faith development. Field trips go to art galleries and other arts institutions.

The Kaléo program continues in its 12th year at Camp Qwanoes on Vancouver Island, with a focus on leadership development and outdoor activities including rock climbing, surfing, caving and a four-day schooner trip.

Both programs have an academic core to introduce the type of courses students would take if they continue at Briercrest.

And both offer opportunities for learning and personal development in a unique setting.

Kaléo and Imprint are limited to 28 students each, explains co-ordinator Tyler Evans. Tuition and board is about the same as for Briercrest students on the main campus. (Trips cost extra: Imprint offers an optional trip to Europe while Kaléo offers a missions trip.)

One of the objectives of the offsite programs is character development, and being part of a small student community is important to that, says Evans. In the Kaléo program, camp ministry, local church involvement and mission work also contribute.

Briercrest also offers a one-year biblical studies certificate on campus in Saskatchewan. It gives an overview of biblical and theological perspectives, and credits that can be applied to future degree programs. ■




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“ We enthusiastically support the Kaléo program! Our daughter developed confidence, leadership skills and a love for the Word while participating in out-trips, community life and ministry opportunities. We don't know anywhere else where she could have matured in such a profound way.” -Gord and Cathy Balch

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Extra-curricular: From Concerts to Drama to Missions Expos

By Lisa Hall-Wilson

Briercrest is intentional about campus life and community, to ensure learning happens both inside and outside the classroom. At special events from Youth Quake to Alumni Homecoming, students discern their place and contribution to society and God's Kingdom.

At least twice a year Briercrest hosts career missionaries and mission organizations so that students can ask questions in person, see what options are available and begin thinking about next steps. One of these events is called World Awareness Day, the other called "2819" after Matthew 28:19: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

Youth Quake sees popular bands brought in for a concert that has students talking all year.

Alumni Homecoming always takes place the last weekend in September. This is an opportunity for former students to return

and have a look around, to see what's changed and what's stayed the same.

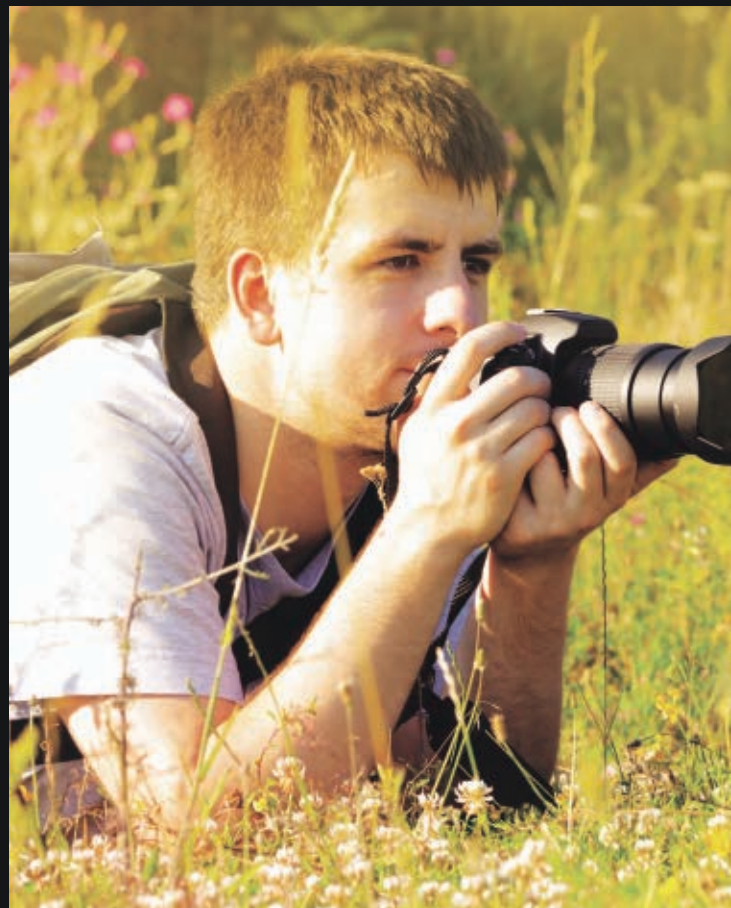
The Christmas Celebration is one of the highlights of the year. This is a top-quality dramatic production that sees close to 90 per cent student attendance over the four performance days, says June Clark, vice president of enrolment.

This year the performance will tell the Christmas story from the perspective of 84-year-old Anna the Prophetess (Luke 2:36-37).

The drama involves students onstage and backstage in props, makeup, music, production, marketing – every aspect. Every contribution, big and small, is required to pull this production off.


"The students learn to give their very best effort in their work and ministry for Christ," says Clark.

And it's always a great opportunity to invite supporters, neighbours, family and friends to see a presentation of the gospel. ■



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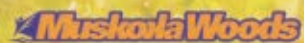
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Competition With a Kingdom Perspective

Briercrest athletics are different.

By David F. Dawes

Society has put athletes on a pedestal. We want to use that pedestal to glorify God.” So says the mission statement of the Briercrest Athletics program.

Nigel Mullan, athletic director and coach of the men’s volleyball program, explains: “We believe there has to be an urgency in how we live out our days, understanding that our Lord has given us all abilities and talents – and that we should use them to their fullest.”

Merrill Dyck, vice president of finance and operations, agrees: “Athleticism is a gift of God. Winning, for us, is simply a motivator – to honour that gift.”

Briercrest’s athletics program is well established, encompassing volleyball, hockey and basketball. In addition to cultivating and motivating award-winning teams, the program has gained Briercrest national credibility. In 2014 the college will host the Canadian Colleges Athletic Association men’s volleyball championship.

“The athletics program is an outgrowing of our mission,” says Dyck, who oversees athletics. “We expect our students to have a Kingdom perspective, with inner Christian values. We are preparing them to serve both the church and the world.”

Physically striving for excellence is an integral part of this process, says Mullan. “There is such an opportunity for our athletes to focus on perfecting their craft while attending Briercrest. The support and time they get from their coaches and staff allow them to really take their game to the next level. The atmosphere at Briercrest is one that our players love to be a part of because there is awesome support for our teams.”

Faith is cultivated through a variety of means, from community service and “using language based on biblical principles” to praying before practices – and sometimes praying with opponents after games.

Faith, Mullan adds, is also crucial to guiding students away from the abuse of performance-enhancing drugs, a trend that has long plagued the sports world. “There’s always the chance of this happening” at Briercrest, he cautions, but “we are able to snuff out this temptation more often than not.” One major reason is that, in a Christian institution, “there is less peer pressure to participate in these things.”

“We can’t prevent them from being tempted,” Dyck concurs, but adds: “Our athletes live and work together in a kind of support group. There are stringent community standards they commit to, which govern their inner behavior. Living right is actually affirmed here. They hold each other accountable.” Student athletes, he observes, “know that when they don’t live a certain way, they don’t get to participate.”

The coaching staff, Mullan emphasizes, reinforce this



mindset by “giving biblical examples to show that God calls us as Christians to work hard, to be mentally tough and to excel at what we do.”

One key to Briercrest’s success in this area, says Dyck, is that these young people “are students first, athletes second. We hear testimony after testimony, where they say that ultimately athletics is the means by which God got their attention, and told them what their life is all about.” He adds: “As role models on campus, they know they need to be seen as humble people who the Lord has gifted.”

Asked to describe what he considers the primary accomplishment of the program, Mullan says: “We are not only competing with schools that are massive compared to us, but we are also teaching our athletes how to be a success as followers of Jesus Christ.”

Briercrest, says Dyck, “is graduating student athletes who become leaders in missions, in the business world, and in church. They are making remarkable contributions to the Kingdom.” Athletics, he concludes, “is a profoundly effective way to produce people who are making a difference.” ■



Living in Community

Residence relationships enrich learning

By Lisa Hall-Wilson

For Briercrest alumni, the community and relationships found in dorm life are key factors cited in their academic and social success at the school.

That first time away from home and parental supervision is a time of transition and challenge for students and parents. Briercrest aims to help its students grow academically, athletically and spiritually – and uses residence living to provide a bit of structure, and instant community, amid all that new-found freedom.

Aside from the obvious benefit of sharing closets or having a friend for a late-night run to Subway, living in the dorms helps students get involved in campus life. Alumni comment on the sense of community, family-like atmosphere, campus events and lifelong friendships they enjoyed in residence at Briercrest.

For Keith Baxter, who studied worship arts technology at Briercrest in 2003 and 2004, the social and spiritual accountability was very welcome. “Because of the close quarters, you shared your everyday life with people, so there was a support system if you needed to talk to someone or pray. Another really big positive is the dorm life helped to keep everyone accountable, which is really important in a Christian community.”

One of the most challenging aspects of a new school is finding a place to fit in, and the easiest way to do that is through campus events and athletics. From Youth Quake to the Christmas concert, Briercrest provides many opportunities to get out and get involved. “Staying in the dorm immersed me in life there in a way living on

my own would not have,” says Erika Henkelman, who spent five years at Briercrest in the outdoor adventure and administration program. “Staying in the dorm definitely created a strong support group that felt like family. I was older when I was a freshman so was not excited for the dorm experience, but definitely am thankful for it now.”

Creating a spiritually nurturing environment is done with intentionality at Briercrest. David Cole is the vice president of student development. “We have over 400 students in residence and we work really hard at providing a quality Christian atmosphere. That allows us to develop deeper relationships and com-

munity that other schools don’t have. It’s a unique benefit.”

Living in the dorms, and the friendships formed there, create smaller family-like units within the larger community. When asked what was the most positive aspect of staying in the dorms, Jessica Belanger, a student between 1996 and 1998, says, “Many of us came from all over the country, and we were able to comfort one another when homesickness started to creep in, to encourage one another when classes were a bit overwhelming, to pray with each other and share our stories of what brought us to Bible college, and what we aspired to do.” ■

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The *Faith Today* Interview With Rev. Dawn McDonald

By Karen Stiller

Dawn McDonald is a Canadian Anglican priest serving with the Diocese of Central Florida. McDonald is a member of the **Zacchaeus Fellowship**, Christians who hold to the church's historic view on sexuality in the face of past or present struggles with same-sex attraction. McDonald lived in a homosexual relationship for 13 years. Through a profound encounter with God, McDonald left that relationship, became a priest, married her husband and now speaks to the issue of same-sex attraction and the Church.

“**M**any people in the Anglican Church see homosexual orientation as unchangeable, so they find my story politically incorrect and are quick to dismiss it. They tell me that I was never homosexual, or that I am still homosexual and living in denial,” writes McDonald in a Zacchaeus pamphlet. “But I know where I have been, and I know what the Lord has done in my life. Mine is a story of God’s transforming power at work in my life.”

McDonald spoke with *Faith Today* senior editor Karen Stiller.

FT: Most churches want to be a welcoming congregation to people who experience same-sex attraction. How do we do it?

DM: Let’s identify our target. We have people struggling with unwanted same-sex attraction, and those who are quite happy with who they are. We tend to forget that



PHOTO: DARYLE DUKE

[most of the struggling] people who come to church out of the gay community have tried living their orientation, and there is something within them that says, "This is not right. I've got to get some help." And they turn to God, and they come into the church.

Some of the churches are trying to bend over backwards to become gay friendly, and they forget that many who come with same-sex attraction are looking for help with something they think God doesn't want. They don't want someone to say, "Go and live it." They've tried it. They don't want judgment either, and that has been their experience. They're afraid of being condemned and afraid of being condoned. The first thing they're looking for is where is the pastor at, and where are the people at? Do I have to hide my struggles? They won't approach a pastor until they've heard them preach a few times, so what he or she says from the pulpit about sexuality is very important.

FT: What is the message that person wants to hear?

DM: They're looking for a person who is proclaiming the gospel in truth and grace. When we lean too heavily on the truth, we become more judgmental than we'd like to be. When we lean too far on grace, we lose the truth. Accommodating that person is not that helpful to the person.

What they need to be hearing is consistency. We've made homosexuality the greatest of sins in the pulpit. That is confusing to people who have come out of that lifestyle. They see adultery as equally sinful, pornography as equally sinful, and they're not sure why homosexuality has been elevated. What needs to happen is not condemnation, but a lifting up of what God wants, which is healthy sexuality within marriage between a man and a woman.

FT: Why does the Church tend to think that homosexuality is worse than, say, adultery?

DM: I don't know why this has become the issue that is splitting churches. But I think the gay movement is asking for us to normalize homosexual relationships, and to call good what the Scripture obviously calls wrong.

And there's not really a movement to say that adultery is great, or incest is great. You would have the same negative reaction to that if someone were trying to promote that.

FT: What does a biblically faithful, welcoming church look like?

DM: When I go in to teach in churches, my first thing is to know the level of maturity in the church. There may be some people in the congregation who are anti-homosexual in a very big way. There needs to be open talk and realization that it is no greater sin than any other that we struggle with. We need to foster an attitude of grace towards those who come and those who are different from us. I think equipping the congregation to minister in such a way is pretty important. I've heard of congregations inviting someone to head up an ex-gay ministry, but when gay people start to attend the church, the people in the pews are very uncomfortable. There needs to be good education, we fear what we don't know.

FT: What should the straight churchgoer understand?

DM: No one chooses to have same-sex attraction. It is often life events that have culminated to that point of the person feeling attraction to their same sex. It usually is a manifestation of unmet needs.

We need to understand it as manifestation of our brokenness. My brokenness manifested itself as homosexuality. Someone else's might manifest theirs as workaholicism, alcoholism [or] drug abuse. People are getting broken all the time. There are areas of our lives that really need restoring. There is nothing in the scientific field that says it is genetic. There is no real proof of that. But even if such a proof happens, it doesn't mean we need to cave into our genes. We might be predisposed to alcoholism, but we don't have to cave into that. Sexuality and spirituality are very interesting. They're both areas in which we can go terribly wrong, and they both need guidance.

FT: If the Church is affirming the same-sex attraction, what does that do to a gay person trying to live a different life?

DM: If you come out of a gay lifestyle and you're looking for direction from the Church, and you've started to make changes in your life, you may have left your partner, which is no small deal. It's just like a breakup of a straight marriage in some cases, with property and children involved. You've done everything you can to live as the Scriptures say God would want you to. Then the Church says to you, "Go back, it's alright. The sacrifices you've made don't matter."

That is a real blow. The Church has always been the rock where they could come and get support. When they're feeling weak, they could turn to Scripture, they could count on the pastor saying, "I will walk with you." Now, it's left them to walk alone. In fact, the Church is going the direction they believe is absolutely wrong.

FT: How have we reached this point?

“When we lean too heavily on the truth, we become more judgmental ... When we lean too far on grace, we lose the truth.”

DM: It is a bitter irony that the Church in trying to love is doing harm. We're really loving them into the hell of the lifestyle, of not knowing the grace of God that could utterly transform us into something new. We're robbing them of that opportunity to embrace what God has for them.

FT: You experienced what you describe as a healing. This can be a controversial idea for many. Can healing happen?

DM: "Healed" is a loaded word. Having our emotional and spiritual needs met is meant to lead us down a path to where we ought to relate to the opposite sex in a very healthy manner, and to the same sex in a healthy manner. But life experiences of all sorts give us wounds, inflictions, and hang-ups that if we were to look at a scale, and you [kept] adding these things, even a small thing can tip the scale because the weight has accumulated so much, and in turn makes that person unable to relate in a healthy way. Such wounds can eventually break a person.

When we speak of healing same-sex attraction, are we talking about healing all these things? Or healing the attraction itself? I spoke to a person who said, "We don't talk about same-sex attractions. We pray and work through all those issues and the same-sex attractions start to go away!"

The problem with the Church sometimes is we don't want to welcome someone unless they are "healed." Is it possible for someone to experience grace and the love of God, and live a chaste life and still experience same-sex attraction? Yes.

A lot of people who have worked hard on their issues, and even developed opposite sex attraction and would call themselves "ex-gay," still experience same-sex attraction from time to time. It doesn't mean they have to cave into it. Sexuality is very much learned, just like riding a bicycle. Once you've done it, you will always remember how. Part of your brain is wired that way. I do believe you can re-learn and learn to love the opposite sex, but that part of the brain that has been wired will still remember. There is always danger. But it doesn't mean we live in fear. I am very fortunate because the Lord miraculously took away my same-sex attraction. Some people have experienced that, but not many have. Like healing from cancer,

some are healed, but many are not.

FT: The idea of a chaste lifestyle can be viewed as unattractive or unfair, and it can be easy as a compassionate person to think that everyone deserves to love and be loved. How do we respond to that?

DM: I think that knowing you are right with God is the ultimate of blessings, isn't it? And even if it means no possible partner down the road, God has a way of blessing us. We've made marriage and being partnered into something that we celebrate in the Church. A long time ago we used to celebrate celibacy and singlehood. It would be grand to have a service where someone could say, "I want to live a chaste life."

We need to uphold celibacy until such a time as God puts somebody appropriate in our lives. Culture has misunderstood the word "chaste." We need to lift it up and teach it well.

FT: Some evangelical denominations may feel they are insulated from the challenges presented by same-sex blessing or ordaining actively gay people. Are they?

DM: It's going to hit all denominations at some point. The movement is not going to stop until it's normalized. Children in preschool are being taught it's an acceptable lifestyle. I meet with people who have family members or congregation members experiencing same-sex attraction. It only takes a few activists to bring it to the forefront. The younger generation is becoming more and more confused by this issue. When we were growing up, it was perfectly normal to admire someone from the same sex. Now our kids are told that if they're feeling admiration, it might mean they are gay. They are encouraged to explore that possibility. We are creating some really confused younger people.

We've never before identified ourselves so much by our sexuality. The best thing the Church can do when someone walks in is to love them to Christ, and truly love them for who they are because that's what Jesus does. It's in encountering that unconditional love that I came to Christ.

FT: The Church can play a huge role by accepting our own mutual brokenness and providing a loving, grace-filled community for people who have same-sex attraction.

DM: I've been an advocate for understanding the power of Christian community and the power of Christ in a person's life. The gay community is where a person's identity as a gay person solidifies. Ideally in a Christian community, that is where our Christian identity solidifies – a place where we receive love, understanding,

affirmation, inclusion, identity, and we find others like [ourselves].

In the gay community it would be others who experience attraction to the same gender. In


the Christian community it will be others like me striving to live a Christ life. We need to understand that in so many circles we have cheapened the grace. Bonhoeffer talks about cheap grace that requires no repentance.

Because people are not coming to Church as much as they used to, the churches are so desperate for numbers and are so afraid of offending people that we are not preaching the gospel.

If you come into a building and hear nothing different than you hear in the world, why would you want to come back? But when people understand there is a cost to discipleship and reward to obedience, that rightness that you feel is in you becomes so precious. When we start walking holiness, we start to feel better about ourselves.

The argument that has been given to us is that when we demand holiness and people can't meet it, they feel yucky about themselves.

But I think the opposite is true. When we demand holiness in people's lives, we are enabling them to have greater self-esteem. I think the Church needs to be a place where people can experience healthy friendship, including a same-gender friendship with good, healthy boundaries, and a place where people can enter into good, healthy community.

FT: Thank you, Dawn. 

“When we demand holiness in people's lives, we are enabling them to have greater self-esteem.”



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What the Growing Global

Glimpses of God's People Forming in New Constellations

By *Diane Stinton*

An African proverb from Tanzania says, "I pointed out the stars to you and all you saw was the tip of my finger."

Although some of us can recognize the Big Dipper, the Southern Cross and some other constellations in the night sky, our knowledge is miniscule compared to a sky full of stars. All those astounding deep-space photos beamed down to us from the Hubble space telescope only reinforce that.

Abraham must also have felt daunted looking up into the sky. In Genesis 15:5 God tells the aged, childless patriarch to gaze at the stars as a sign of his numerous offspring to come. What a miraculous promise, and what amazing fulfilment God brought to it by forming a people for His own redemptive purposes!

We too are Abra-

ham's offspring by faith, little lights in an amazing sky bursting with the growing number of God's people.

We too can be encouraged, if we look with the eyes of faith, at current scholarship on the vast population of Christianity around the world today.

What scholars tell us about how the Church has changed over the last century is as astounding as those photos from the Hubble telescope. They can lead us to ask good questions about what God is doing and how we fit into the global Church.

Church Can Teach Canadians

Now a Non-Western Faith

The face of world Christianity is changing dramatically, with unprecedented growth of the Church in Africa, Asia and South America. The number of Christians worldwide has grown from approximately half a billion in 1900 to 2 billion in 2000.

While the percentage of Christians in the world's population has not changed (roughly 33 per cent then and now), the demographic shift is remarkable.

In 1900 over 80 per cent of the world's Christians lived in Europe (including Russia) and North America, while only two per cent lived in Africa. By 2000 less than 40 per cent remained in the North Atlantic region.

Today over 60 per cent now live in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Oceania.

So for the first time in a millennium or so, Christianity is again predominantly a non-Western faith – and increasingly so as these trends continue in the 21st century.

Take Africa for instance. The number of Christians has risen from approximately 9 million in 1900 to over 500 million today, a 60-fold increase. Where less than 10 per cent of the population were Christians a century ago, today almost 50 per cent are Christians (with well over 70 per cent Christians in sub-Saharan Africa). Has there ever been such staggering growth of Christianity elsewhere?

Or take China with its expulsion of foreign missionaries and brutal suppression of the Chinese Church under Communism after 1949. While statistics are uncertain, the story of dramatic growth within Chinese Christianity since then is undeniable. Reasonable estimates suggest an increase from 4 million Christians in 1950 to around 65 million by the end of the 20th century.

Through these meteoric changes over the past century, Christianity



has truly become even more of a world religion.

Fundamentally, the Christian faith has always been universal in principle, being the good news of Christ's redemption open to *all* people. And certainly the first millennium of Christian expansion reflects geographical expansion in all directions – from the Middle East to Europe, Africa and Asia – as well as decline in certain regions.

Yet only in recent history has Christianity become universal in practice, being present in every continent and virtually every nation on earth. Consequently, the gospel is being expressed in more languages and cultural forms than ever before!

So what are the implications of these shifting skylines in global Christianity, specifically for Evangelicals in Canada? A few glimpses indicate both the challenges and the promise of these new constellations of Christians worldwide.

From Everywhere to Everywhere

First, there's the obvious paradigm shift in world mission. No longer is it tenable to think of mission in terms of "the West to the rest," for in this new era of global Christianity mission is now "from everywhere to everywhere."

Already in the 21st century, international missionaries have gone to every country on Earth from almost every country. If the United States still sends the greatest number of these by far, it also receives the greatest number. If Canada ranks among the top ten sending nations in 2010, it nonetheless joins the trend of significant decline in missionary sending from the global North.

Meanwhile, missionary sending is on the increase from Brazil, South Korea and India, but also from South Africa, the Philippines, Mexico, China, Columbia, Nigeria and elsewhere.

The challenge then is to overcome the default thinking of "us" and "them," and to discover in humble unity what it means to truly participate in God's mission with our brothers and sisters in Christ both locally and globally.

For example Nairobi Chapel, my home church in Kenya, seeks to redeem and cultivate the biblical concept of "partnership" in the gospel – so crucial in Paul's letter to the Philippians, for example, yet so abused in Western models of mission that fostered paternalism and dependence. Nairobi Chapel had dwindled from its foundational congregation in colonial times to a few dozen members by 1989, but it has grown exponentially since then through local African initiatives partnering organically with fellow Christians beyond the continent.

With a prayerful goal of planting 300 churches locally and globally by 2020, and a deep commitment to social justice as integral to the gospel, the church nurtures relational, "synergic" partnership with other churches

worldwide that share such vision for mission (www.nairobi-chapel.org/NC/partnerships.php).

Holistic Gospel

Another feature of this new era of global mission is a renewed understanding and appropriation of the gospel as holistic, with God's redemption addressing the whole person, the whole of humanity and indeed the whole of creation.

Key evangelical leaders such as John Stott and Chris Wright, and particularly Latin American theologians Orlando Costas, Samuel Escobar, René Padilla and the Latin American Theological Fellowship, have firmly insisted on the integration of evangelism and social responsibility in ministering the gospel.

Their combined influence on the Lausanne Movement has significantly shaped the nature of world evangelicalism today. We have examples in the dual focus on church planting and social transformation in Nairobi Chapel, as well as the global Micah Network (www.micahnetwork.org) for integral mission and the international A Rocha environmental movement (www.arocha.org).

These are but glimpses of Evangelicals (and those of other Christian traditions) around the globe seeking to live out the holistic gospel of Jesus Christ in relation to major issues of our day.

Only in recent history has Christianity become universal in practice, being present in every continent and virtually every nation on earth.

New Leadership

A third major implication of the new constellations of world Christians is the changing nature of church leadership. Perhaps most obviously the recent election of cardinal Jorge Bergoglio of Argentina as the new pope, Francis I, and the first Latin American pope, reflects new leadership within global Christianity arising from what is now often called the "Majority World" (Africa, Asia and Latin America).

Pope Francis is only the most prominent among a growing cluster of such emergent global Christian leaders.

For example, the president of the World Communion of Reformed Churches Jerry Pillay is a South African Presbyterian. The president of the Lutheran World Federation Munib Younan is a Palestinian Christian native to Jerusalem. The chairman of the Pentecostal World Fellowship Prince Guneratnam is from Malaysia. The majority of bishops in the worldwide Anglican Communion are from Africa and Asia.

Clearly, the pastoral agenda of the global Church is being significantly shaped through the perspectives and practices of non-Western leaders.

Likewise, despite the enormous challenges in logistics and cost, international gatherings of Christians in the 21st century rightfully seek better representation of the global Church.

PHOTO: DOUG VANDERHOOFIAN



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PHOTO: LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION/LWF

The global church is increasingly being led by people from Africa, Asia and Latin America. Clockwise from top left: Jerry Pillay, president of the World Communion of Reformed Churches; Munib Younan, president of the Lutheran World Federation; and Jorge Bergoglio as the new pope, Francis I.

In the famous 1910 world missionary conference in Edinburgh, only 19 of the 1,215 delegates were non-Western (virtually all from Asia, without a single delegate from Africa or Latin America). In stark contrast, the centenary celebrations of Edinburgh 2010 held key events in that city while also hosting other meetings in many locations around the world, with an intentional bias towards Christianity in the Majority World.

Participant Vinoth Ramachandra, an evangelical leader from Sri Lanka, justly lamented the lack of women, youth and lay Christians present in the Edinburgh 2010 proceedings. Yet overall the 2010 conference undoubtedly took a major step in the right direction with respect to global diversity.

Similarly, some observers noted the conspicuous presence of white males at the 2010 Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization held in Cape Town. Yet as Doug Birdsall, a Lausanne leader, observed, the congress was “the most representative global evangelical meeting in

Catholic charismatic renewal movement.

Congregations across the globe display contemporary worship styles, like that of Hillsong Church in Sydney, Australia, marked by heightened emotion expressed through exuberant singing, praying and often dancing.

Also ministry practices often reflect Pentecostal influence by a renewed focus on the power of the Holy Spirit and the direct intervention of God in the life of the believer, for example through prayer, healing and spiritual warfare.

These trends in churches worldwide gain momentum through globalization, informal networks of charismatic movements, and the extensive migration that is reconfiguring Christianity worldwide.

Clearly, the pastoral agenda of the global Church is being significantly shaped through the perspectives and practices of non-Western leaders.

history,” with over 4,000 participants from 198 countries, 650 websites linked to the congress in 91 countries, and 100,000 website “hits” from 185 countries.

Certainly Lausanne III strove towards its goal of gathering a microcosm of the global evangelical Church, soliciting 65 per cent from the Majority World with appropriate attention to age, gender and lay representation.

Global Christian leadership and conferences don’t capture exhaustively the changing nature of the Church worldwide, yet they do provide visible witness to the demographic shifts.

Most significant is the increased acknowledgement of Christianity being contextualized or translated into diverse cultures, being authentically homegrown there and not merely a Western import.

Pentecostal Influence

Other indications include the pentecostalization of Christianity that has significantly impacted not only mainline Protestant and evangelical churches, but also Roman Catholic churches around the world, particularly through the

International Migration

Another feature of 21st-century Christianity is the contribution of immigrant churches to the renewal of Christianity in Europe and North America. The largest

churches in Western Europe, in London and Kiev, are founded and led by Nigerians. American Christianity is fortified and increasingly diversified by new congregations of immigrants, not only from Latin America, but also significantly from Korea, the Philippines and West Africa.

The decline in Christianity in Canada is countered by the influx of immigrants from around the world. For example, while Catholic congregations are shrinking across Canada, they are growing in Toronto due to it being home to over 37 per cent of Canada's immigrants, many of whom are Catholic. As a result Toronto has become one of the most multicultural dioceses in the world, with mass offered on Sundays in 36 languages!

New Theology

Given this unprecedented cultural diversity within the Christian Church worldwide, a final implication concerns new trends in theology.

Christianity in Europe and North America has developed vast intellectual resources and sustained leadership in

theology over the past millennium. It therefore continues to play a vital role within this new era of global Christianity – particularly in blessing the nations, like Abraham, by faithful obedience in its vocation and sharing the wealth of its accumulated resources.

However, the danger lies in the enduring tendency to consider Western theology as normative and universally applicable for all Christians in every culture.

Yet with the dramatic rise of Christianity in the Majority World come two fundamental affirmations – first, that for all the richness of Western theology, it does not adequately address the situations in need of theological reflection elsewhere. Pressing issues in the Majority World include, for example, theological identity, exploring the relation between Christianity and your pre-Christian past; gospel and culture; religious pluralism; poverty and social justice, governance and corruption; suffering; violence, peace and reconciliation.

Hence there is need for “glocal” theologies, addressing particular local realities while also pertaining to the universal truths shared by global Christianity.

And second, we stand on the verge of a theological renaissance, with the potential enrichment of mutually sharing theological insights not only with those across the world, but also with those we’ve over-

looked in our own communities within Canada – First Nations and Inuit, Asian Canadians and other cultural minorities. The current Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada provides fertile ground for theological reflection to bless God’s people here and beyond.

Final Vision of God’s People

The new constellations of God’s people worldwide raise both challenges and unprecedented opportunities. Never before in all of history have we come closer to


the final vision of Revelation, of that great multitude from every nation, people and language worshipping the Lamb of God on the throne!

When we look to the stars, like our ancestor in faith Abraham, we see many amazing things, and only understand in part, as that Tazanian proverb reminds us. If this is the “tip of God’s finger,” what more might we see in the future? **FT**

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DIANE STINTON is associate professor of mission studies at Regent College, Vancouver. She has taught theology for many years in Kenya, and is the author of *Jesus of Africa: Voices of Contemporary Christology* (Orbis, 2004) and the editor of *African Theology on the Way: Current Conversations* (SPCK, 2010).



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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-



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?

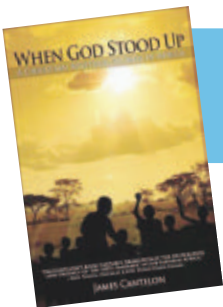
We had no idea what the ensuing years would bring. At times we felt like we were on the back of a bucking bronco. Unexpected blessings and major challenges add to the adventure every day. For reasons only God can be credited, this has become a significant grassroots movement in southern Africa. The Church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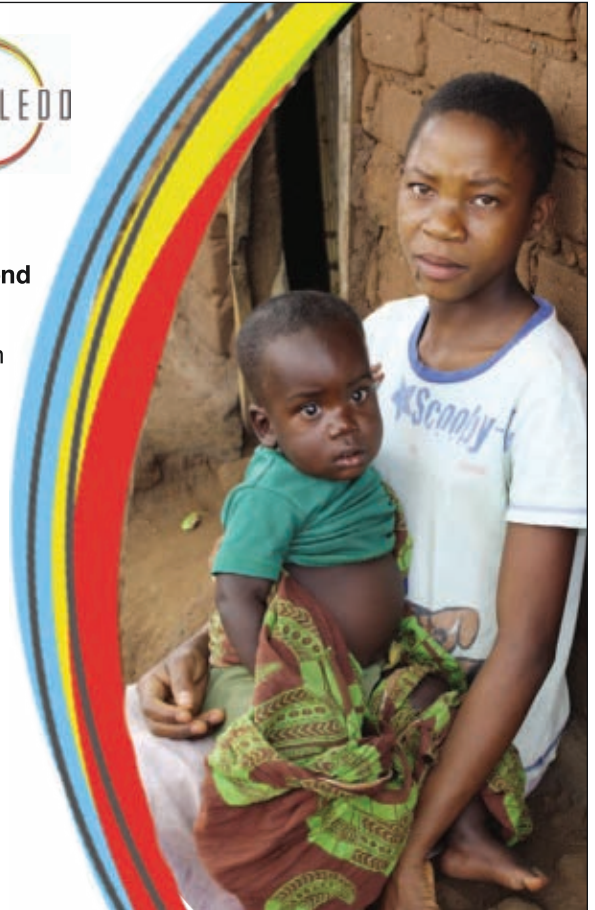
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Canada's Farm

Elaine Froese is a farm succession consultant based in Boissevain, Manitoba. She brings peace and Christ-like principles to the tumultuous mix that can be family, farm and very strong feelings.

By Andrew Douglas

Elaine Froese leans her elbows on her office desk, hands clasped near her face. Her hand reaches to push aside a stray hair, straighten her glasses or rub her eyes. Late afternoon sunshine floods her office. Today, she looks weary. "By springtime, all I want to do is spend time in my garden," she says.

Froese is being pushed to recount last winter's worth of hurt and healing she walked farming families through – often while seated at their kitchen tables. Sometimes to find healing it takes looking at old wounds – evaluating damage, figuring out a remedy. It can be exhausting when you're the one poking and prodding.

She isn't a pastor, although she has a pastor's heart. But she is the face of the Church, bringing Christ to businesses and families enduring very trying circumstances.

Froese is good and is paid well to travel the world offering seminars and conducting consults via Skype with farm families as far away as Ireland, Wales, Australia, the U.S. and Canada.

Like an ever-growing slice of the Canadian population in general, the families Froese works with go to church once a year, if that.

Froese finds great joy in her work. It's her calling. After a short season of recuperating she'll soon be ready to start meeting again. This chair at the kitchen table is one of her favourite places in the world, a place where she helps others sort through very hard things. Ultimately, her work energizes her.

Farm succession, or business continuance as Froese prefers to call it, is complicated. Families keep lawyers and accountants on speed dial through a process that can take years to fully roll out.

Farming is hard work. The back-breaking labour transfers naturally to the next generation and their young muscles. But the management and decision making on farms is a dance of release of power and control. And ownership of the assets is the last piece to be relinquished – and sometimes not without a fight.

"There's a deep despair that comes from years of frus-

tration of things not working out the way you'd hoped," says Froese. And in most families, the fact there's no history or mechanism for healthy conflict resolution can make things worse.

Around a kitchen table Froese joins an aging farmer and his family. It's an emotionally charged atmosphere. One side of the table talks openly and passionately about the aging father's retirement – either because they have a new vision or because they want to cash out their inheritance. Children push parents to confront their own mortality. To not plan properly could mean a huge tax hit. The other side – the older side – is equally passionate about the status quo.

There are healthy families that do farm succession well. But if there are any unresolved hurts, they tend to surface quickly when the stakes are so high – control of a valuable business where the land alone is often worth millions of dollars, not to mention the family roots that tend to run deep in rural Canada.

"I've had people take a swing at me from across the table," Froese says.

There's been massive consolidation in the agricultural industry in Canada over the past 30 years. The vast majority of farms in Canada are family owned, but they're bigger than ever before. These are large businesses with significant capital investments and a lot of momentum. But as of the last farm census published in 2011, the average age of farmers in Canada has climbed to 54.

To many farmers retirement is a dirty word. "They are reluctant to let go of their current role because they have nothing to go towards," Froese explains. "Typically their spouse has already let go and wants to travel, visit friends, move to the grandkids. But the males haven't created a life to go to off-farm."

And farmers love to farm. They love their land. They feel protective of it. It has often been a hard life, but a good life. It's tough to let it go with grace.

Froese isn't afraid of saying hard things. One time she listened to a farmer in his early 70s explain he wanted two more years of farming so he could say he'd harvested

**Farmers love to farm.
They love their land.
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hard life, but a good life.**

Whisperer

50 crops. His wife wanted to sell the farm and move into town to be near the grandkids. "She's given you the best 40 years of her life," said Froese. "When is it her turn to get what she wants?" The farmer cried.

The majority of those Froese coaches aren't believers. A connection to godly principles in a family could be a generation or more old. Froese is up front about her faith, praying a blessing over families and ushering Kingdom principles into mediation. She says the words "forgiveness" and "hope" often around the kitchen table.

"I give people a sense of hope and a chance to let go of the past so they can work towards what God has created for them," she says.

After nearly 30 years working with farm families, she has learned that having a functional model of forgiveness is foundational to healthy family life. Unfortunately, in many families it's a pretty wobbly cornerstone.

"Most families avoid conflict and become passive-aggressive with periodic explosions, or they try and manipulate each other," she says. "If you have a clear model of forgiveness and make quick repairs, your family workplace is much healthier because things don't get blown out of proportion."

Froese has a degree in home economics from the University of Manitoba, but it's a coaching certificate from the Hudson Institute of Coaching in Santa Barbara, California she draws on the most. That training gave her insight into how age and position affect family dynamics.

She says that around the farmhouse kitchen table, the mother is often tired. She's been the mediator for years, smoothing over hurt feelings. The son – sometimes as old as 40 or 50 – has been itching to prove his mettle as the head of the farm. The biggest wild card at the table is usually the daughter-in-law. She didn't grow up in the family. She's experiencing everything with fresh eyes. Sometimes she doesn't like what she sees. And



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Navigating Conflict Farm Whisperer-Style

In the business world and in life in general, you're going to face conflict. Instead of shrinking back, consider it an opportunity to live out Colossians 1:27: "To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Elaine Froese, a farm succession consultant (www.elainefroese.com), offers tips for bringing Christ-like principles into conflicts.

- Come from curiosity, not judgment, and make it your goal to understand the other person.
- Share your intent and why seeing this conflict resolved is important to you.
- Make requests rather than using "I need this" statements.
- Be open to new possibilities.
- Remove your conflict filters that keep you from being empathetic.
- Seek to find common interests and goals.
- Make quick repair. Don't let irritations grow.
- Use the model of forgiveness Jesus taught, and always be ready to forgive.
- Appreciate the context of the story being shared.

then there's the father, likely happy with all he's built and suspicious of anyone trying to upset the cart. He's at the head of the table, silent, arms crossed.

But in this day and age the table can get crowded with even more sad family dynamics. They may all be present in many Canadian families – kids struggling with substance abuse, second marriages with blended families, common-law relationships, boyfriends, girlfriends and the aftermath of affairs. But add a family farm business to the mix and the issues take on even more weight.

"I give families the sacred gift of listening," says Froese.

"I often let silence do the heavy lifting. My presence or just the threat of me coming is enough to get people talking. I'm someone who can hold their story and make sense of it, and offer new scenarios for the next chapter of their lives."

Farmers work on-farm all summer, so winter is crammed full of meetings for Froese. "You wouldn't want to do this without the wisdom and counsel of the Holy Spirit because where else is your power going to come from?" she asks.

Froese paces herself. She suffered serious post-partum depression when her daughter was born. She knows what the darkness looks like up close.

"My husband is home for lunch," she says, drawing our conversation to a close. Her husband has a demanding job running a large farm and selling seed to neighbours. Spring is his time to push hard. He needs her support. Froese has clearly learned to draw boundaries. She could be talking on the phone all night if she answered every call from clients.

Soon enough, she will be run off her feet again. There are lots of families who need Christ in their kitchen. **FT**

ANDREW DOUGLAS is a freelance writer from Ontario currently living in Redding, California as a student with his wife and three children.

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Balancing the Serpent and the Dove

What does it mean for Christians in the business world to be shrewd yet harmless?

“It happens to us as it happeneth to wayfaring men: sometimes our way is clean, sometimes foul; sometimes up hill, sometimes down hill; we are seldom at a certainty. The wind is not always on our backs, nor is everyone a friend that we meet with in the way.” These comments are made by Honest, a character in *Pilgrim’s Progress*, the classic Christian allegory from the 17th century by John Bunyan.

Christians today, just like Honest, meet many people in the marketplace, some of whom distract us from our faith journey.

A common concern among marketplace Christians is how to balance our faith and yet be effective in business. Faith sometimes becomes a recipe for being too kind, too forgiving, too generous, too understanding – with the net result that a Christian enterprise can collapse under its own benevolence. How can a balance be maintained?

What’s in the Bible? Surprisingly, Jesus commends the shrewd manager in the parable of the talents in Luke 16. He notes, “For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light” (v.8). Paul writes that we are not unaware of the Devil’s schemes (2 Corinthians 11:14-15). All of us are a mixture. Those who have become Christians are new creatures. But they are not fully sanctified. Some of the old nature persists.

Thus Thomas à Kempis in *The Imitation of Christ* (a devotional book from the 15th century) contrasts faith in the Lord with faith in people. He refers to the fallen nature of people. “In whom shall I put my faith, Lord? In whom but You? You are the truth which does not deceive and cannot be deceived. Every man, on the other hand, is a liar, weak, unstable, and likely to err, especially in words, so that one ought not to be too quick to believe even that which seems, on the face of it, to sound true.”

So, we are aware of the nature of evil, but how to deal with it?

Matthew 10:16 states, “I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.” This verse is an antidote to the naïveté of many Christians, and may be among the most important for a Christian in business to fully understand.


What is the meaning of “be as shrewd as snakes”? Disciples of Christ are hated and persecuted as serpents, and their ruin is sought. Therefore they need a serpent’s wisdom. It is the will of Christ that His people and ministers, so exposed to troubles in this world, should not needlessly expose themselves, but use all fair and lawful means for their own preservation.

Christ gave us an example of this wisdom. Consider the many escapes He made out of the hands of His enemies until His hour finally came. It is the wisdom of a serpent to secure its head that it may not be broken, to stop its ear to the voice of the charmer (Psalm 58:4-5), and to take shelter in the clefts of the rocks. In such ways we may be as wise as serpents.

What does it mean to “be as innocent as doves”? Matthew Henry, a well-known Bible commentator, explains. “Be mild, and meek, and dispassionate; not only do nobody any hurt, but bear nobody any ill will; be without gall, as doves are; this must always go along with the former.”

We are sent forth among wolves, therefore we must be as shrewd as serpents – but we are sent forth as sheep, and therefore must be as harmless as doves. We must use the harmlessness of the dove to bear injuries, rather than the subtlety of the serpent to offer or

return them. This passage is very relevant to Christians in business and entrepreneurship.

The challenge for marketplace Christians is to be able to balance the serpent and the dove, and to be under no illusions as to human nature. Paul Fast of Fast + Epp Engineers in Vancouver offers some wisdom. “You’re going to get shafted in business. You’ll get wronged somewhere along the way. I always tell myself to never harbour grudges, never harbour bitterness, if something unjust happens to you. It’s very difficult at times, but that’s a principle we try to live by.” 

Christians today . . . meet many people in the marketplace, some of whom distract us from our faith journey.

RICHARD (RICK) J. GOOSSEN of Richmond, B.C., is relationship manager at Covenant Family Wealth Advisors (www.covenant.ca), and chairman of the advisory board at Entrepreneurial Leaders Organization (www.eleaders.org).

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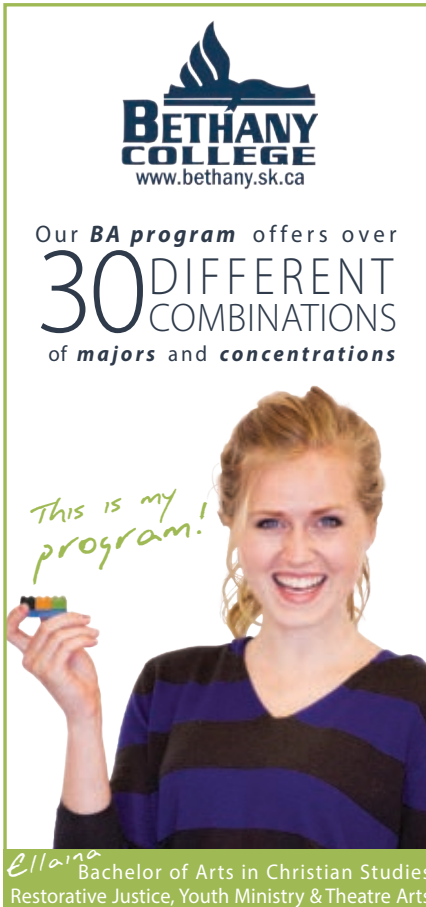
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program. As a consultant, Matthew “wasn’t even thinking of being a pastor.” Yet a few months later, a friend heard about a pastoral position and encouraged Matthew to apply.

“I remember ... having a conversation with the one [hiring] pastor.... We talked for two hours and at the end ... a light bulb went on, saying ‘That’s your next step; that’s why you began your master’s degree’.... I started that year.”

For Matthew, the transition to being a pastor and the physical move to a new city all felt natural and good. “There were never any doubts for either me or my family.”

Matthew continues to serve at the same church. Be prepared for where God will lead you. Come to Tyndale. Visit www.tyndale.ca/seminary. ■

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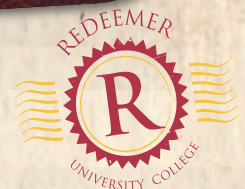
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A Wake-Up Call

Spiritual warfare is real in our families.

I'll never forget that early morning phone call. "Mom, I'm in the hospital. Can you come and get me?" I jumped out of bed and headed right over, not sure what I'd find. I sat in the waiting room for what seemed like hours before a young man appeared across the room. I didn't know if it was my grogginess or my worried mind, but I didn't recognize him at first.

Then I heard, "Mom!" and realized it was my oldest son – his face swollen, covered in blood from head to toe. My heart stopped as I took in the reality of the situation.

This was my loving boy who was so easy to raise, good-natured and tender-hearted, now slumped in the chair beside me, beaten, bruised and bleeding. He was agitated when he saw my tears as I took in the sight and stench of alcohol and marijuana. *Was I living a nightmare? Who was this young man, and where did my son go?*

Have you ever felt you were living someone else's story? That this was not the dream you had for your family, your marriage or your kids? You feel overwhelmed, scared and uncertain of what lies ahead. Was this a result of bad parenting, bad friends, the influence of society? Or a combination?

Eventually all three of our kids were running from God toward drugs, alcohol, fights and parties. Our parenting, our Christian beliefs, our love and service to God all seemed to be for not.

Was there something happening we couldn't see?

In 2 Kings we see Elisha and his servant doing what God called them to do. Elisha told the king of Israel the secret plans of the enemy king, and the king of Aram was not happy.

So one night the king of Aram sent a great army with many chariots and horses to surround the city. When the servant of the man of God got up early the next morning and went outside, there were troops, horses, and chariots everywhere. "Oh, sir, what will we do now?" the young man cried to Elisha (2 Kings 6:14-17, NLT).

Circumstances were not looking good. An army surrounding them, Elisha and his servant don't seem to stand a chance. Look at Elisha's response:

"Don't be afraid!" Elisha told him. "For there are more on our side than on theirs!"

What? The servant only saw what was in front of him, but the greater reality was God's army *surrounding* them, and it was *much* greater.

In December 2007 we invited a prayer team into our home and got a reality check. We became truly aware of the spiritual attack on our family. We prayed together against the presence of darkness and claimed the presence of Christ.

Scriptures were shared and hope was given. Our new reality began! Our struggle was not just about external behaviours. There was a spiritual battle going on for our family, and it was time for us to get fully engaged.

What happened to Elisha and his servant?

Then Elisha prayed, "O Lord, open his eyes and let him see!" The Lord opened the young man's eyes, and when he looked up, he saw that the hillside around Elisha was filled with horses and chariots of fire.

Things are not always as they seem. Your circumstances are symptoms of the greater spiritual reality. When you call on heaven's armies, your eyes will be opened to the victory that is already yours.

We were naïve as to the influence the demonic can have on a believer. Yet we are told in Ephesians 6:12, "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." We are also warned in Ephesians 4:26-27 not to give the enemy opportunity or a "foothold" in our lives.

The enemy wants us to be naïve. But when our eyes were opened to the reality of spiritual warfare and we started unleashing the power of prayer, calling on the armies of heaven to fight on behalf of our children, we witnessed the unmatched power of Christ to set each of our children free.

If this were simply teenage rebellion, it would discount the powerful encounter each one of them had when they surrendered to Christ. They were set free from addiction, from the torment of the enemy, their spiritual "right minds" were restored and freedom was realized.

As women and men alive in Christ, each of us can find freedom in the middle of our circumstances when we accept the reality of spiritual warfare. God's army is much greater. He will fight for us. He will fight for our family! **FT**

LORIE HARTSHORN will be the keynote speaker at a Women Alive regional conference in Barrie, Ont., this October (www.womenalive.org). She offers a *Finding Freedom* DVD Bible study for learning more about spiritual warfare and the power of prayer (www.loriehartshorn.com). Find more of these columns at www.theEFC.ca/WomenAliveFT.

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VISION

SCA is called to be an organization that glorifies God, serving the people of Canada by sharing the love and truth of Jesus Christ.

MISSION

SCA is committed to mobilizing people to work on, from, or with our Ministry Centres, and with the involvement of the Christian community, to passionately fulfill its vision by:

1. Primarily working with the Aboriginal people of Canada
2. Providing opportunities to connect with Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour
3. Addressing Biblically spiritual, emotional, and physical needs of those we serve
4. Helping to develop fully-devoted relationships with Christ & His followers
5. Equipping Christian Aboriginals to minister in Aboriginal communities, including ministry with SCA

VALUES

Prayer; Adherence to Scriptures; Honouring God through excellence; People and relationships; Pursuit of full devotion to Christ for every Christ follower; Evidenced authenticity and continued growth; Culturally relevant ministry; Accountability to authority; Community and family; Unity and cooperation of the entire body of Christ; Financial integrity.

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Invite to Jesus; Connect in Community;

THEN

Over 100 years ago, William Henderson, with a vision to see every person in Canada reached for Christ, traveled on foot, and later with a large sleigh, into the wilderness of the Canadian north, his backpack heavy with tracts and Christian literature. Later, other equally committed men like Oswald J. Smith (founder of People's Church in Toronto) joined him in his ministry. They visited and set up their Bible studies in the lumber camps where the "jacks" lived in "shanties". Whenever one of these missionaries came near the camp, the workers would call to each other, "Here comes the Shantyman".

AND NOW

SCA Int. (formerly Shantymen Christian Association) continues to reach Canada by **INVITING** Aborigines to life in Christ Jesus, **CONNECTING** in Christian community, and **EQUIPPING** to lead others to recognize and reach their full potential.

MINISTRY CENTRES

SCA's vision is to have a year-round Ministry Centre in each province & territory of Canada, primarily in remote regions, to minister to the needs of families and individuals. Currently, our four Ministry Centres provide summer camps, discipleship, counselling, marriage and family help, local community events, and more. Our desire is to provide a place of new beginnings, hope, and safety - all too often a rarity in the lives of those we minister to. The Centres focus on creating an atmosphere where anyone can enjoy themselves, where they will know they belong, and where they are free to learn about and grow in their knowledge of Christ.

MINISTRY PROGRAMS

- ◆ Kids' Club
- ◆ Bible Study
- ◆ Summer Camps
- ◆ Retreats
- ◆ Hockey
- ◆ Music Ministry
- ◆ Counseling
- ◆ Shantyman
- ◆ Christmas
- ◆ AND MORE



PRAY—for those in Christ and the Field Missionaries

PROMOTE—to encourage them

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Equip to Lead.

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FIELD MISSIONARY

Ministering at rodeos, festivals, logging camps, through Bible Studies, visitations, preaching, in counselling, and intentional relationships, the gospel is being proclaimed to men and women, young and old, and lives brought out of loneliness and despair into joy and peace found only in Christ Jesus.

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se we minister to, that hearts would be open to receive life that they would walk with Christ; for our Ministry Centres, ries, Staff, Board Members, and Volunteers.

ell your family, friends, and church about the mission and n to get involved.

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ake a donation towards a Ministry Centre, Missionary, ms or where needed most (online at CanadaHelps.org).

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WHAT WE DO @ CHRISTMAS

SCA missionaries will be delivering Christmas Gift Bags in schools, where they have an opportunity to present the true meaning of Christmas, and to homes, some of which are those of the children who have participated in SCA summer camps, 'Kids Clubs', 'Play Days' or other events. Deliveries are made to First Nations' communities, in rural areas, even as far away as communities in the North-west Territories, and to low-income housing in northern cities.

In each bag there are treats/toys, personal necessities, the real Christmas story, and an invitation to an SCA camp.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

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Welcome People From the Periphery

Let them join with joy, not judgment.

He sat on the fringes of the small group, a crusty older man with suspicion in his eyes.

The group had gathered in the rec room in the seniors' centre to sing, but he refused the songbook the pianist offered him. He said he had no favourites and was just there for something to do. He sat silently at the outside edge of the circle while other residents crooned old standbys and hits from years gone by.

Then something changed. In a lull between selections, old Crusty suddenly bellowed, "Roll out the barrel!" The singers obediently turned to the page and launched lustily into the old beer barrel polka.

What changed? Something inside the man. Something about the music, something about the camaraderie, something about the standing invitation softened something in him. He, in his own way, was able to join in a communal event.

Safe Starting Place

The periphery is a safe starting place for many people, and I'm not only talking about a singsong for seniors.

It could be your neighbour who just went through a sad divorce, but only seems to venture a quick hello when your lawnmower or snow blower makes conversation next to impossible. You know he's lonely, yet something interferes with his desire to connect.

Or it could be the server at your regular lunch spot who lingers expectantly for a minute beyond the necessary, but moves on just before friendly words can properly begin. You want to connect at an appropriate level. You know that some human impulse desires deeper contact, but that some inhibition – a ghost from an unknown past – keeps it in check.

It could be the person who slips into the back pew as the service begins and leaves just before it ends. What is he really looking for? What does he fear?

It could be an estranged family member who, in a moment of crisis, turns his heart toward home. Can you

receive him the way he is? Will he feel judgment? Or welcome?

Bring Them In

One of my favourite Bible characters is Andrew, a man who early on decided to follow Jesus and who had a knack for bringing others to his leader. It was Andrew who introduced a wild and woolly fisherman from the Galilean hinterland to Jesus (John 1:41-42).

Simon came. He saw. He stuck around. In due course Simon "Peter" became the "rock" on which the Church was built (Matthew 16:18).

Later when thousands of people were getting hungry in the wilderness, it was Andrew who brought to Jesus a young lad with his lunch pack (John 6:8-14). Andrew brought an unlikely person to the centre of the action, and thousands of people benefited.

A couple of years later when some Gentile outsiders expressed curiosity about Jesus, again it was Andrew who was able to hear their concern and make himself available to bring them to meet the teacher for themselves (John 12:21-23). Andrew had a way of prowling the periphery and inviting people into a new circle of belonging.

Jesus, of course, was the master of welcoming people from the margins. Take for example the much-despised tax collector named Zacchaeus – a scumbag with a height disadvantage (Luke 19:1-10). Yet he was also a human being with needs and feelings.

There was Zacchaeus on the fringes of the crowd, climbing a tree to rise above the clamour to see the miracle-performing rabbi for himself. Jesus noticed the man out on his limb, called him by name and invited him into His presence. Great transformation occurred.

The world is full of people who want to belong, but are reluctant to commit. Blessed are those who allow such people the time and space they need to come closer. Blessed are those who find ways to make them feel welcome. Blessed are those who create an atmosphere of invitation that draws peripheral people into healthy community. **BT**

The world is full of people who want to belong, but are reluctant to commit. Blessed are those who allow such people the time and space they need to come closer.

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



Bestseller on Jesus Falls Short

A Muslim scholar interested in Jesus is news, but this new book is wrecked by intellectual bias.

Reza Aslan's new book on Jesus became one of the top ten Canadian nonfiction bestsellers when it was released in July, and was #1 on *The New York Times* list by mid-August.

Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth (Random House, 2013) gained enormous attention and sales courtesy of a controversial interview by Lauren Green on Fox News on July 26. Green was pummeled in the liberal media for alleged bias against Aslan, a Muslim.

Despite his Islamic faith, Aslan argues that the crucifixion of Jesus really happened, contrary to traditional Islam. He also suggests the Virgin birth is mythical, a view most Muslims and evangelical Christians will deplore.

Most of the commentary on *Zealot* has been wasted on the Green interview and on whether Aslan has the proper academic credentials to write a book on Jesus. All things considered he has done serious scholarly training in religious studies, including a master's degree from Harvard and a PhD from the University of California at Santa Barbara. Further, the endnotes to *Zealot* show fairly wide reading in the literature on Jesus. Beyond this the fabulous sales alone mean Aslan must be noted.

None of this proves *Zealot* is a reliable book or that Aslan is a great interpreter of Jesus. Sadly, the opposite is true. While well written, *Zealot* offers a grossly distorted view of Jesus, and Aslan deserves plenty of critique. Craig Evans, the Canadian New Testament scholar, argues in a review for *Christianity Today* that "*Zealot* is riddled with errors, probable errors, and exaggerations." He cites Aslan's neglect of relevant archaeological data about Galilean culture and says *Zealot* is built on "an outdated and discredited thesis" that Jesus is to be understood solely as a political revolutionary. Evans' critique of Aslan is duplicated in a devastating critiques by other scholars, including John Dickson, Anthony Le Donne, and Simon Joseph.

Aslan was raised a Muslim in Iran and moved with his family to America in 1979. He did not take Islam seriously in his youth and converted to evangelical Christianity when he was 15. He abandoned evangelicalism after he started academic study of the Bible and returned to his Muslim roots. He claims in *Zealot* his research into the life

of Jesus has led him to a profound commitment to Jesus of Nazareth, but not the Jesus of traditional Christianity. The question to ask, of course, is whether he has captured the truth about Jesus. On this, the answer is negative.

Aslan's vision of Jesus is marred from the outset by an undue skepticism towards whatever parts of the New Testament do not fit his preconceived agenda. Thus he argues there are no "eyewitness accounts" of Jesus though Luke and Paul make plain their attention to such reports. He calls the trial of Jesus before Pilate "pure fantasy" and opines that the conversion of Paul on the road to Damascus is a legend. The miracles of Jesus are all embellished and the resurrection "is not a historical event." His doubts here are directly linked to his wholesale adoption of liberal scholarship and the so-called verdict of scholars.

The big point of *Zealot* is that Jesus was only a man and that His divinity was a late creation of the Apostle Paul who had no interest in the living Jesus of history. Aslan argues unconvincingly for a radical split between Paul and James, the brother of Jesus. *Zealot* claims James and the earliest Jewish Christians lost out to Paul's vision of a divine Saviour.

While Aslan is free to deny traditional Christian faith, what he has not done is present a credible case that the earliest Christians did not believe in the divinity of Jesus. On this C. S. Lewis warned about scholars who can't see elephants in broad daylight.

Aslan writes that "nowhere in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke is Jesus ever considered the literal son of God." On any plain reading of these two Gospels it is clear the affirmation of Jesus as Son of God is about His divinity. For example, according to Matthew 14, after Jesus walks on water the disciples actually worship Him and proclaim, "Truly you are the Son of God."

While *Zealot* makes a valuable contribution in noting the radical elements in the life and teaching of Jesus, Aslan makes too much of it and ruins his interpretation of Jesus by dismissal and denial of other central elements in the Jesus story.

His distortion of Paul, minimizing of the pacifist element in Jesus, rejection of the Virgin birth, exaggeration of Jesus' focus on fellow Jews, skepticism towards miracles, neglect of important research (as Le Donne notes) and denial of the New Testament's case for a divine Jesus all add up to a serious misreading of Jesus of Nazareth. It is no wonder Evans ends his review with the comment, "Let the reader beware." **BT**

JAMES A. BEVERLEY is professor of Christian thought and ethics at Tyndale Seminary in Toronto. Find more of these columns at www.theEFC.ca/ReligionWatch.

God or Godless? One Atheist. One Christian. Twenty Controversial Questions.

**Authors: John W. Loftus and Randal Rauser
Baker Books, 2013.
208 pages. \$15.99**

Atheism has received a lot of attention over the last decade as a result of some very zealous advocates. Although there are Christian responses to the new atheism, it is helpful to actually include a representative of the other view.

God or Godless? is an attempt to allow readers to listen in on a conversation between an atheist and a Christian. John Loftus is a former Christian pastor and apologist who is now an atheist. Randal Rauser is an apologist and associate profes-

sor of historical theology at Taylor Seminary, Edmonton. Each was allowed to choose ten questions, to which both authors answered and then responded to each other's answers.

One of the refreshing aspects of this book is that the authors attempted to find some new areas to debate instead of asking the same old questions.

Many of John Loftus' responses are disappointing and not just because I disagree with

his conclusions. His answers often drift from reasoned thinking to emotional outbursts. Loftus is obviously angry with the Church, and often gets rude with his Christian counterpart.

Randal Rauser does a commendable job on the philosophical questions. His argument for "If there is no God, then everything is permit-

ted" is brilliant. Rauser seems at home when it comes to wrestling with the hard philosophical questions. Some of his biblical answers are less convincing. He suggests God did not really command the killing of the Canaanites and allowing slavery was a misunderstanding.

Overall, an interesting read for both atheists and Christian readers.

—Stephen Bedard

Dead Petals: An Apocalypse

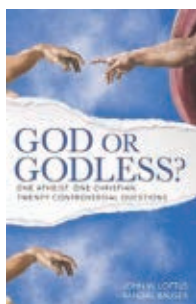
**Author: Eric Ortlund
Fingerpress (U.K.), 2013.
362 pages. \$10.99**

Dead Petals is an engaging, challenging novel for those who like more from their fiction than a moment's entertainment. The book is a zombie tale that has little to do with the current cultural craze. It's an end-of-the-world story, a modern myth in the best sense of the word, and a Chris-

tian allegory of death and hope. Though it resists genre categorization, it's most of all what the subtitle proclaims – an *apocalypse*, a word which can mean disaster, cataclysm, revelation and a climactic battle between good and evil.

As the narrative opens, an engineered airborne virus has turned most humans into zombies who cannot be destroyed and whose hunger is never satisfied. A small group of survivors gathers around Oz, an ex-professor who has been running from a personal tragedy. Their journeys bring them face-to-face with many appalling realities, including those within.

Death, decay, and chaos are the spreading themes of the changed (or perhaps not so changed) world in which they find themselves. The borders between material and spiritual realms prove far more permeable than 21st-century human-



Rebel Transmission

**Artist: Newworldson
New Day Records, 2012. \$14**

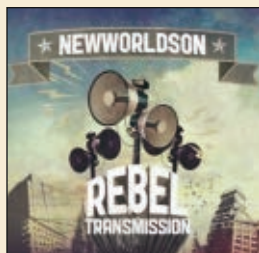
The soulful boys from Niagara Falls have done it again. If you enjoyed their first two projects, I guarantee you will not be disappointed with Newworldson's 2012 release *Rebel*

Transmission. I remember reviewing their 2008 debut album *Salvation Station* and remained hooked on the disc for months after my first listen. Their self-titled follow-up release was equally strong, giving their growing international fan base more of what they fell in love with in the first place.

On *Rebel Transmission* they keep the party going with squeaky tight, slick performances combining elements of gospel, Motown, blues, soul and pop. They manage to mix a rootsy "old-time religion" vibe with '60s R&B flavour to create something uniquely fresh and lively. This is feel-good music that will get you on your feet while also nourishing your soul with a strong lyrical message.

How can you call it old-time religion
when it's right here and right now?
Ain't nothing old about God's Holy Spirit
He's the same today as yesterday.

I find the album's title and the title track itself to be a bit mis-



leading in that they feel darker and heavier than the overall playful, uplifting vibe of the project as a whole. Soulful horn arrangements dominate the funk-driven tracks "Homeless Child," "5,6,7,8" and "Son of Man," while tasty guitars shine in the softer ballads "Today," "Sweet Grace" and "Southern Cross."

The disc's very successful award-winning radio single "Learning to Be the Light" is simply one of the best songs I've heard in the last year. It is infectious and intelligent – a lovely balance of tenderness and power. As I listen I am continually amazed at the brilliant, gritty-silk voice of band leader Joel Parisien, not to mention his strong piano performances and his astute writing.

What I love most about these guys is their humility and authenticity. There is something powerfully pure and real about this band. They are uniquely themselves. Their name suits them. They are new boys with old souls. By any standards their musical talent is top-notch. The joy of which they sing is real and heartfelt. No pretense. No studio tricks. One listen will draw you into anticipation of their energetic, live performances which have proven to be an impressive representation of their studio efforts and vice versa.

I tire of the ever-growing slew of homogenous, cookie-cutter bands in the Christian music industry where it gets more and more difficult to tell anybody apart. Kudos to this hard-working Canadian band for being consistent and true to their calling. They shine brightly in a sea of "sameness." Newworldson is the real deal.

—Ali Matthews

ity might prefer to believe.

Why zombies? In an interview at www.TheMidnightDiner.com, Ortlund says, "I find zombies uncanny and oddly revelatory because they are simultaneously unlike and like us. What does it mean to eat and consume in a non-zombie-ish way – in a way that is meaningful and (for lack of a better term) sacramental, instead of mindless and unsatisfying and endless? What does community look like, outside of preying on each other?"

Dead Petals feels both old and new – new because of how it fuses various modes of storytelling, old because of how it draws upon a large range of classic literature such as the writings of Charles Williams, C. S. Lewis (*That Hideous Strength*), Gerard Manley Hopkins, William Blake, the Book of Ezekiel and ancient Near Eastern mythology.

Author Eric Ortlund is associate professor of Old Testament at Briercrest College and



Seminary in Caronport, Sask. His writing style is descriptive and often dream-like, both when characters are experiencing dreams or visions and in "normal" time. While occasionally transitions or lines of

dialogue feel awkward, for the most part the narrative flows skillfully.

Where does the narrative flow? Almost any answer would be a spoiler, but to me the destination is both obvious and unexpected. Make of that what you will. It's intended as a strong recommendation to read this unusual novel.

–Bradley Baurain

Pastors in Transition: Navigating the Turbulence of Change

Author: Glenn Taylor
Word Alive Press, 2013.
222 pages. \$18.99

Glenn Taylor knows a thing or two about transition and its potential for progress or regress in the lives of those experiencing it.

He has been a church planter, correctional services chaplain, professor, mission CEO, and a counsellor and consultant to over 30 international mission organizations. His wife Mary has served alongside him in many of these ministries, including running a retreat centre for pastors and missionaries – a ten-year project benefiting 1,600 people.

"Change is a constant in life," says Taylor. "It is sometimes sought, but often feared. It excites and challenges, and it frequently shakes the foundations of our stability and comfort. We know it is coming, but are often surprised when it is suddenly upon us."

The book examines five components of transition: the starting place, the leaving, the in-between time, entering new ministry and belonging again. Each component is unpacked through case studies, lucid observations and wise counsel for all who have already, are now or will yet experience transition. Investing the time

to understand these stages is important because as Taylor notes, "Understanding is a prerequisite to preparation and effective response."

His writing, informed by broad ministry experience and built upon solid professional



credentials – graduate degrees in theology and psychology, as well as training in trauma counselling – is warmly inviting and thoroughly pastoral. It is a perfect mixture for his target audience of

ministry personnel navigating the turbulence of change.

Along with being an excellent resource text for both pastoral studies and counselling programs, ministerial associations would benefit from studying this book together. And while the target audience is ministry personnel, I believe laypeople will also benefit greatly from this book as it will help them understand what their leaders face when going through transition. I highly recommend this book.

–David Daniels

Recommended Resources

- **Learning and Teaching English Through the Bible: A Pictorial Approach** by MariAnne Dibbley (CELA Publishing, 2012, www.bibleandenglish.com). Teaches English (including ESL/EFL) within a biblical context and in a pictorial format, focusing on the thousand most frequently used words. Overviews key pronunciation and grammatical concepts while teaching major parables, verses, narratives and themes from Scripture. Includes classroom games, lessons and activities. Dibbley is based in Thunder Bay, Ont.
- **We Knew Him: Personal Encounters With Jesus of Nazareth** by George Henry Dawe (WestBow Press, 2012). A series of monologues by a retired Pentecostal pastor in Newfoundland describing personal encounters with Jesus of Nazareth, intended for scripts and dramatic sermons. Brings alive biblical accounts of men and women engaging Jesus one-on-one.
- **Entrepreneurial Leadership: Finding Your Calling, Making a Difference** by Richard J. Goossen and R. Paul Stevens (InterVarsity Press, 2013). Two Vancouver thinkers present a theologically robust vision of entrepreneurship, along with insights on practising and sustaining such leadership.
- **Free to Be: Defeating Insecurity, Transforming Relationships, Building Character** by Sarah Tun (Essence Publishing, 2011). An Ontario teacher and performing artist shares her personal story with honesty and courage while challenging us to rethink our mindset and extend our faith beginning with a deeper appreciation of God's unconditional love.
- **The Unfolding Mystery of the Divine Name: The God of Sinai in Our Midst** by Michael Knowles (IVP Academic, 2012). A professor of preaching at McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, Ont., examines the facets of God's name in Exodus 34:5-9 and echoed elsewhere in Scripture, in the Rabbinic Hebrew tradition and in Islam.

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Now for Something Completely Different

Want to be countercultural? Take up admonition.

Hello there, reader. I'd like to admonish you. "Certainly not!" you might retort.

But then you might continue, "Uh, what does 'admonish' actually mean? And why do you want to do that to me?"

As most Canadian churches continue to struggle in the light of the steady de-Christianization of Canada (the last census says we're down to just 67 per cent of the population identifying as "Christian" from 83 per cent 20 years ago), we worry about the state of our religion.

Regular church attendance, tithing, Bible reading – these practices, pollsters suggest, mark a small minority of the North American population, as low as one in five.

All of this is familiar enough to *Faith Today* readers. From Paul's oldest letter in the New Testament, however, comes a practice that might seem esoteric even to most serious, church-going, tithing, Bible-reading Christians today: admonition.

Put "admonition" alongside its companions "exhortation" and "reproof," and the puzzlement only deepens. But these and similar words show up throughout Paul's letters.

It is hard though to imagine a set of activities less congenial to Canadian Christianity today.

Pastor Jones greets Churchmember X after the morning service. Churchmember X replies with a friendly greeting of his own and begins to move away.

But Pastor Jones doesn't release him from the handshake. "I'd like to talk with you this week. Can we get together for coffee?"

"Well, sure," Churchmember X mumbles, and a place and time is set.

In the restaurant after pleasantries, Pastor Jones says, "You know, Churchmember X, you're lazy."

Churchmember X now begins to cast about for more napkins, having spewed his coffee all over the table. Pastor Jones is unruffled and helps with the cleanup.

Then he continues. "You've attended our church for two years now and contributed nothing to its life and work. And, since I have visited with you in your home and gotten to know you better in a couple of other coffee times, I'm pretty sure you don't do much to advance the gospel anywhere else either. So let's talk about how you're

going to shape up and pull your weight for the Kingdom."

Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians tells the church to "respect those who labour among you, and have charge of you in the Lord and admonish you; esteem them very highly in love because of their work" (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13, NRSV). Why would Paul feel he had to command us to respect and esteem *very highly in love* those who have charge over us? Because most of us aren't naturally crazy about having someone in charge over us, and we *especially* don't want someone to admonish us.

Admonish, exhort, reprove, rebuke, correct, discipline. We can hardly imagine a schoolteacher doing much of this anymore, and certainly few enough parents seem to have the first clue about it nowadays. But to have a pastor interfere with my life and presume to judge me? Who does he think he is? What does he think he's doing?

(Answer: He's a pastor doing his job.)

However, it's worse than that. Paul goes on immediately to say that everyone, not just leaders, is to admonish – and particularly "to admonish the idlers" (1 Thessalonians 5:14, NRSV).

Sure. That'll boost attendance. Church Growth Tip #4: Call People Out on Laziness.

Paul, however, like his Master, isn't tremendously concerned with pleasing everyone. He is tremendously concerned, by contrast, with *sanctifying* everyone – helping everyone set aside evil and put on good, helping everyone grow out of infancy and up into maturity, helping everyone escape death and embrace salvation.

And admonition is part of how we help each other do that.

We Canadians actually *do* expect admonition – from our coaches. We also expect it from our bosses. But we're serious about our sport and about our work, so we put up with the humiliation and irritation of being corrected by good coaches and competent bosses because we know it is in our best interests to be corrected.

Paul tells us it is in our immediate and eternal interests to admonish and be admonished in turn.

With patience, yes. With gentleness, yes. In love, yes. But steadily guided toward the goal of shalom without apology and without respite.

Can you imagine Canadian churches growing if we all began to admonish each other?

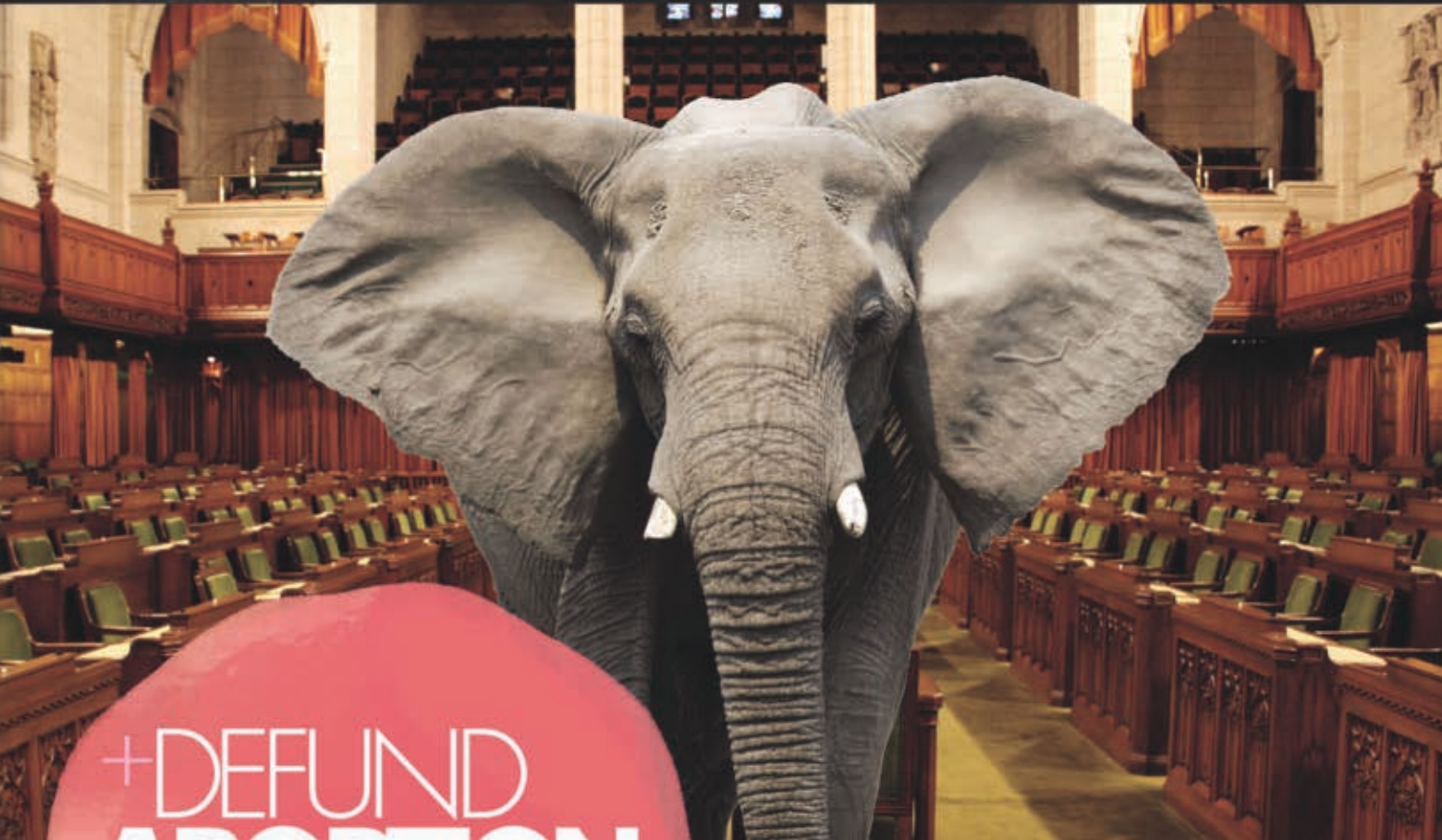
Can you imagine us growing if we don't? **FT**

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.



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