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## Weakness

J.I. Packer explores the beauty of a painful reality



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**Canadian Christians and Debt:** We're in as deep as anyone else. Here are solutions p. 26

**Working With Women** to change communities overseas p. 29

**From Pastor's Wife to Prostitution Reform Activist:** The FT interview p. 52



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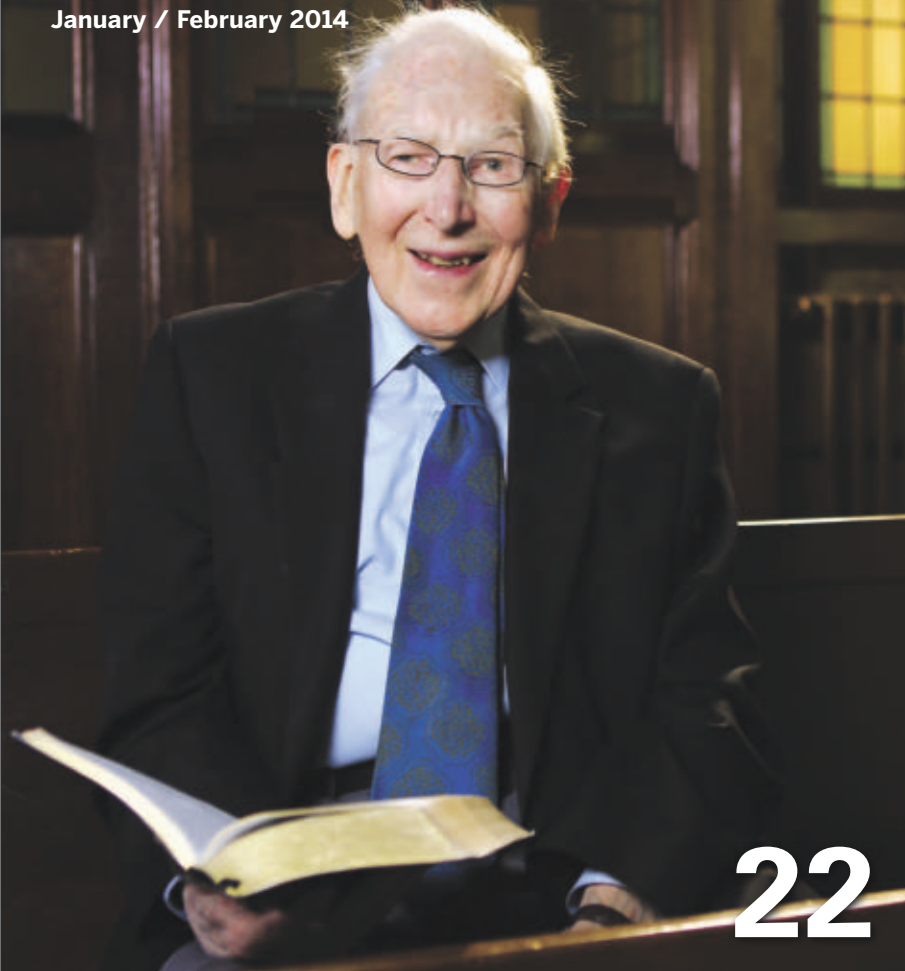


PHOTO: CROSSWAY

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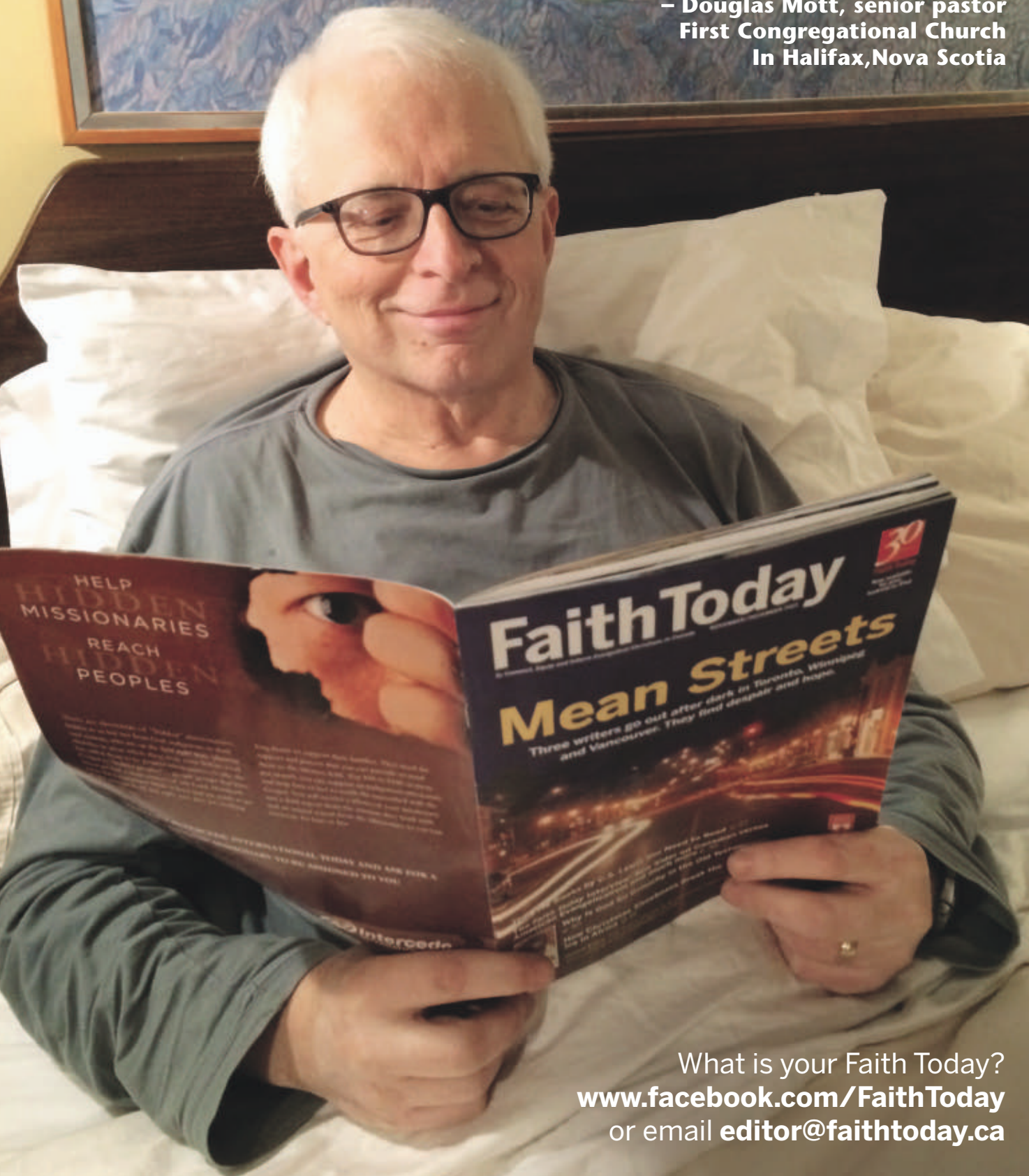


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**“My Faith Today is what helps me to dream big.”**

**– Douglas Mott, senior pastor  
First Congregational Church  
In Halifax, Nova Scotia**



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## Doing Things the Less Instant Way

Being a Christian can mean embracing weakness rather than strength.

**A**rranging to interview Dr. J.I. Packer, one of Canada's most celebrated evangelical scholars, involved phone calls, faxes, more phone calls and another fax or two.

In an age of immediate electronic communication, Packer prefers to do things offline, the less instant way.

Even the writing for which he is so well known (his classic book *Knowing God*, originally written as a five-year series of articles for *The Evangelical Magazine*, turned 40 last year) is carefully composed on a manual typewriter.

Although that bit about the typewriter is the least of the many insights Packer shared with *Faith Today* in this issue's exclusive interview, it's still a delightful peek behind the scenes at the work of a wise and unique evangelical influencer.

(By the way, we're offering a free copy of Packer's latest book *Weakness Is the Way* along with every new subscription purchased before the end of February. Pass the word along to anyone you know who may be interested!)

This issue also includes a second major interview, a follow-up to the Nov/Dec "Mean Streets" story about Christian outreach to prostituted women. Glendyne Gerard shares a bit of her own journey from pastor's wife to public activist, and helps us connect the dots between prostituted women in Canada, human trafficking and, of

course, the Church. And what a Church it is.

As editors, we always spend the final days of our publication cycle poring over each page yet again, trying to find the little errors we might have missed the first 50 times through.

There's always something to improve.

But there's also always something to be thankful for as we witness to the amazing diversity of the Canadian evangelical Church – from godly help in dealing with debt and reaching out to women overseas, to wisdom about effective collaboration between worship leaders and pastors, from the news in Kingdom Matters to the final opinion column.

We were also thankful as we put together the middle 16 pages, a commemorative insert for the 50th anniversary of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. As a *Faith Today* reader you may know the EFC best as the publisher of *Faith Today*, but we think you will be astounded at the breadth and impact of this unique organization in Canada. Read on. And thank you. **FT**

**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](http://www.facebook.com/FaithToday).

# Faith Today

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**Giving and the Full Gospel**

*Re: The Faith Today Interview With Ronald J. Sider (Nov/Dec 2013)*

Pentecostalism, as Sider notes, is indeed the fastest-growing part of the evangelical world. When are the theologians going to see that Pentecost is an experience that Jesus made clear is for *all* Christians, and not a denomination for a select few (something like 800 million and counting)?

Sider also states, “Many Canadian Christians could give not 2 or 10 per cent, but 15 or 20 per cent of their income and still not even be close to poverty.” But a more biblical approach would point out that you prosper when you give to God’s work. For example: “The generous man will be prosperous” (Proverbs 11:25, NASB); “Give, and it will be given to you ... a good measure — pressed down,

shaken together, and running over” (Luke 6:38, NASB); and “he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully” (2 Corinthians 9:6, NASB).

The Bible is clear that the givers gain. If Christians are not even tithing, then their pastors either have not taught the blessing of tithing and giving, or the Christians are in rebellion. With the embarrassing level of giving in Canada, why doesn’t your magazine, at least once a year, publish an article or even provide a teaching series on the blessings of giving?

God has a simple plan for financing the gospel. He raises up someone with a ministry, and then He prospers those who support it. Do you agree that if your life is not supernatural, it is superficial?

Our pensions add up to about one teacher’s salary, and we give away at least 40 per cent — and we live in the super-



natural financial blessings of God so that we would never go back to even just tithing.

The prosperity gospel is no different than the gospel of healing. A.B. Simpson wrote his book *The Gospel of Healing – A Classic Presentation of a Revolutionary Doctrine* [Christian Alliance Publishing, 1890] over a hundred years ago, and God has raised up many people who minister healing to the sick and infirm. But a large part of the Church ignores these truths with a doctrine that says healing is not for today.

Instead of lamenting that the youth are leaving the Church, why not emphasize the Full Gospel. I think you will find that churches that do, do not have a problem with the youth leaving their church.

Charles Runolfson  
Ottawa, Ont.

**Stackhouse on Dissent and Conflict**

*Re: Christ & Culture in Canada (Nov/Dec 2013)*

Just signed up for your digital delivery. Love the John Stackhouse articles from the current and previous issues – thought-provoking and informative. Thank you for providing a first-rate magazine!

Diane Hamm  
Abbotsford, B.C.

**Stackhouse on Admonishment**

*Re: Christ & Culture in Canada (Sep/Oct 2013)*

I write with a view from the

**Milestones**

**APPOINTED**

**Dave Addison** as executive director of Toronto City Mission. He is a business executive and spiritual leader currently serving as trustee at St. Paul’s Anglican Church (Bloor Street). Since 1879 Toronto City Mission has improved the



PHOTO: WWW.TORONTOCITYMISSION.COM  
**Dave Addison**

lives of thousands of families impacted by poverty in Toronto. Addison succeeds Andrew Schell, who served in the position for eight years.

**Ed Wilson** as acting executive director and COO of International Justice Mission Canada. Jamie McIntosh, founder and executive director for the group’s first 12 years, departs the organization to join World Vision Canada as vice-president of policy and programs.

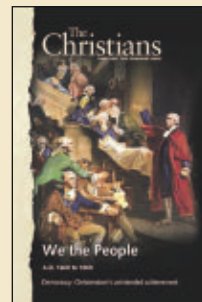
**James Gimbel** as president of Concordia Lutheran Seminary in Edmonton, affiliated with the Lutheran Church–Canada denomination. He has served as a professor since 2002 at Concordia University in St. Paul, Minnesota, where he has focused on leadership and management. He has also been an editor at Concordia Publishing House in Missouri and a parish pastor in North Dakota.

**INCORPORATED**

**MK Safety Net Canada**, a group advocating for people who have been hurt in a missionary environment, recently received charitable status in Canada. Beverly Shellrude Thompson, a Canadian, helped found the group (www.mksafetynet.net) in 2005 in the United States.

**COMPLETED**

**The Christians: Their First Two Thousand Years**, a 12-volume popular-style



history of Christianity, after almost going bankrupt halfway through production in 2005. General editor Ted Byfield, known as the publisher of the defunct politically conservative news-

magazine *Alberta Report*, started the project 30 years ago (www.thechristians.ca), and created a charity called the Society to Explore and Record Christian History (SEARCH) to raise funds for its completion.

**SOLD**

**Yonge Street Mission** has sold its namesake property at 381 Yonge Street in Toronto, just south of Gerrard Street. Although just one of six program loca-



pew. [Admonishment] is another evangelical word we seem to have forgotten, and worse still another scriptural practice we seem to have laid aside. I can recall with appreciation words of admonishment received from pastors, song leaders and other brothers and sisters in our local assembly. These words were given in Christian love with patience, gentleness and concern for my Christian life. A brother in Christ said it plainly some years ago in reference to church leaders when he proclaimed, "There is not enough demanded of us."

*Don Hennessey*  
Conception Bay South, N.L.

*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](http://www.facebook.ca/faithtoday) to join in on discussions sparked by letters to the editor and more.

tions, the site (known as Evergreen for the past 30 years) is the most visible and best known, having been in continuous use to serve the poor of Toronto since 1904. The purchaser, a private equity real estate company, has agreed to a closing date of September 2016 to allow for a careful transition of the ongoing outreach and ministry to the street-involved youth currently served from the location.

**APPROVED**

Plans by **Trinity Western University**, a Christian university in Langley, B.C., to establish a law school can now move ahead, with the planned first class to commence in 2016, after approvals were received in December from the Federation of Law Societies of Canada and the B.C. Ministry of Advanced Education.

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## Ancient Document Inspires New Songs

Canadian singer/songwriter Jeremy Zeyl faced two new challenges with his latest project. First: Write a series of songs for corporate worship – something he hadn't done before. Second: Base the songs on the Heidelberg Catechism. Zeyl met those challenges in *Heidelberg: Songs from the Catechism* – an 11-song CD celebrating both the beauty of the document and its 450th anniversary.



The catechism, created by theologians, seminarians and church leaders in Heidelberg, Germany, was first published in 1563. Used to teach doctrine, the catechism comprises 129 questions and answers divided into 52 sections on topics such as sin and misery, deliverance from sin, thankfulness for deliverance, an explanation of the Apostles' Creed, and instructions on the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer.

"What I set out to do wasn't to offer an exact representation of what the catechism was, but breathe new life into it," says Zeyl, a member of the London-based trio Isobelle Gunn. The project, and funding, came at an opportune time – the band was taking a sabbatical because Zeyl's wife and bandmate Lara was pregnant.

"I thought, 'I'll try to write a couple of songs and see if I'm inspired,'" says Zeyl. "The whole project started shaping from there." Work began in 2012 after Ed Den Haan, chairman of the Stanford and Priscilla Reid Trust, heard Isobelle Gunn in concert. The group sang "Not My Own," a decade-old song Zeyl wrote with lyrics copied from the first part of the catechism.

"I was enthusiastic about the concept of music and catechism together," says Den Haan. He also saw how the trust, which promotes projects around the education of Reformed and Presbyterian theology, might help. "[We] appreciated the catechism as a solid Reformed statement of God's teachings. And we were much aware of the anniversary." The trust, through two separate grants, gave Zeyl \$10,000 to write and produce the CD. Since its fall 2013 release, Zeyl has been holding workshops on using the songs in corporate worship. He's also considering a second CD for songs already written, but didn't make the cut. **FT**

–Robert White

# Calgary Church Opens Centre for New Immigrants

Assisting immigrants through the struggles of a new life in Canada is what the New Canadian Friendship Centre (www.ncfcentre.com) in North-east Calgary is all about. The centre, run by Centre Street Church, helps new immigrants learn English, seek employment, and fill out forms that can be very complicated to a new arrival in Canada. The centre also provides gently used clothing to families, and a safe place for children to play and teenagers to hang out.

Director Ashwin Ramani immigrated to Canada from India in 2009. He relates to what the approximately 60 people who come to the centre each day are going through. "People come to Canada with high expectations and they are often let down, especially in the first year," says Ramani. "They need someone to talk to, to express those feelings. It gives me great satisfaction to sit with someone and lis-



PHOTO: GORDON ERICSON

**The Ochieng family, new immigrants from Kenya, cut the ribbon at the opening of the New Canadian Friendship Centre.**

ten to their heart, to offer them hope that things will get better, to encourage them through their struggles."

## New Ministry Helps Young Fathers

Twenty-five-year-old Alec Roberts spent five years in and out of prison – and is awaiting sentencing on a past crime to which he recently pled guilty. But being a father was "the biggest fear I ever had in my life."

Roberts reached out for help when he found out he was going to become a father, eventually meeting Youth Unlimited's Dave Morgan, a guy he felt he could trust. "Dave has the same kind of story as I do. When we first met, I was relieved to see he dressed normally, had tattoos, looked like someone I could relate to, not another counsellor."

Young fathers who did not expect, or necessarily want to become fathers, are stereotyped as deadbeats – guys who want nothing to do with their kids and the responsibilities that come with them. Morgan started the mentoring and support program Stepping Up, because he knows, firsthand, that this is not the case.

In his experience a lot of expectant dads want to be involved, to get a job and begin a relationship with their newborn child, but they don't know where to start.

"Two and three generations without a dad in the home is having a staggering affect," says Morgan. Growing up without a father, or with dads who also struggled in the role, means that most of these young men face the spectre of fatherhood without the tools to make it work. Many quit school, take on a dead-end job to provide, but inevitably get frustrated. That frustration can lead to a number of dead ends, including criminal activity and addictions.

Morgan knows this cycle well. The 39-year-old father of three was once in Alec's shoes. As a child he had a learning disability that distanced him from his father. "This set me up for some hard times," he laments. "I made some crazy, hard decisions because of how wounded

Isolation can be a serious problem for new immigrants, especially for women staying home with their children. The New Canadian Friendship Centre provides a play area for children next to the café, so women can make friends and improve their English by talking with a female volunteer.

Ramani was already on the pastoral staff at Centre Street Church when he approached leadership with his vision of a centre to help new Canadians. The church leased a unit at a busy retail plaza, easily accessible to those who need the services. Officially opened in May 2013, the New Canadian Friendship Centre has two full-time and one part-time staff, as well as 200 regular volunteers from Centre Street Church.

Since new Canadians come from such a wide variety of religious backgrounds, the staff and volunteers emphasize showing their Christian faith through practical action. "We want it to be a neutral place where people feel welcome and we can build relationships," says Ramani. "When people ask the question, 'Who is behind this?' we can respond that Centre Street Church supports the New Canadian Friendship Centre and we are followers of Christ who care for the community." **FT**

—J. Paul Cooper

I was." He says it's only through God's grace that he was able to change the direction in which he was heading. And he wants to help other guys understand that they too "are not defined by their pasts."

Stepping Up works in large part because of Morgan's story. He started the Youth Unlimited program in Surrey, B.C., almost four years ago, and is in touch with 40 dads right now. The typical age range is 18–24, but the youngest father that's been involved was 13 when he connected with the program.

Stepping Up is built on mentorship through relationship. "We set goals with them, help them and hold them accountable to those goals," says Morgan.

Roberts' home is a ferry ride away from his four-month-old son Elijah, who lives with his mother. He lives for those all too infrequent times he gets to see him. "It's like the whole world stops around me. I don't pay attention to anything but him," he says. "I don't look at my phone or anything." **FT** —Jeff Dewsbury

## Note-worthy

### One in Five Non-Christians Doesn't Know Any Christians

A new study has found that 20 per cent of non-Christians in North America really do not "personally know" any Christians. In addition, 60 per cent of the non-Christian population has no relationships with Christians. The research was conducted by Gordon-Conwell's Center for the Study of Global Christianity.

### Federal Government Awards Contract for Prison Religious Counselling to Company



The Federal Government has awarded

Kairos Pneuma Chaplaincy Inc. a \$2-million contract to deliver religious counselling to prisoners. A handful of current and former federal prison chaplains founded the private company in response to the request for proposals from the government.

### Study Suggests Children Flourish With Married, Opposite-Sex Parents



PHOTO: WWW.DESIGNPICS.COM

Children of gay and lesbian couples are only about 65 per cent as likely to have graduated from high school as the children of married, opposite-sex couples, according to a study published in the journal *Review of Economics of the Household*. Children of common-law parents, as well as single mothers and single fathers, also had a lower graduation rate than those of married, opposite-sex parents. The study was based on a 20 per cent sample of the Canadian census.

### School Board Considers Dropping Lord's Prayer

A public school board in Taber, Alta., has dropped the Lord's Prayer from the daily routine in classrooms following a complaint by a par-

ent. Taber's Dr. Hamman School is believed to have been one of the last public schools in Canada to recite the prayer. Parents in the town are campaigning to have the prayer reinstated.



### Montreal Hospital Vows to Defy Quebec Charter

Directors of the Jewish General Hospital in Montreal are standing up to the Values Charter proposed by Quebec premier Pauline Marois. The hospital released a statement saying it will not comply with the proposed legislation, which would essentially ban all public employees from wearing religious symbols. A statement from the directors states the Charter is "discriminatory and deeply insulting to public sector workers."

### Churches Respond to Typhoon in Philippines

Stepping Stone Ministries in Saskatoon is partnering with Circle Drive Alliance Church to send a shipping container to the most devastated areas of the Philippines. It is just one of many churches across Canada cobbling together resources to send to the Philippines in response to the devastation caused by Typhoon Haiyan. Ministries such as Compassion Canada, Crossroads, Operation Mobilization (OM), OMF Canada, Samaritan's Purse, Serving in Mission (SIM), The Salvation Army, World Relief Canada and World Vision Canada are providing relief. **FT**

### Helping children and families in the Philippines.



EDWIN ESTIOKO © COMPASSION INTERNATIONAL

## Canadian Ministries Use Sports to Raise Funds



PHOTO: SCRIPTURE UNION CANADA

**I Sarah Chaudhery and Victoria Nolan in training for a half-marathon.**

Putting feet to a cause has become a tried and true way of raising awareness and funds, forging a physical link between a real-life need and people willing to compete in athletic competition to prove their conviction. Two Canadian ministries are now seeing the fruits of that labour, having raised funds for programs that will benefit the lives of women and children here and abroad.

Last October, Paralympic rower Victoria Nolan and former Olympic rower Sarah (Bonikowsky) Chaudhery competed together in the 21-kilometre Toronto Waterfront Half-Marathon to raise money

for Scripture Union's Every Kid Camp initiative, a program where occupational therapists help make Scripture Union's camps successful for children with different needs and abilities.

Nolan, who has only three per cent of her sight, was tethered wrist to elbow with Chaudhery as the two athletes negotiated massive crowds at the popular fall running event.

"It required a lot of communication," says Chaudhery, "but that flowed really naturally out of us from our rowing experience." Competing together to support a targeted goal works because it "shows an extra level of commitment to a common

cause," says Chaudhery, who with Nolan raised \$23,000. Those funds will make every one of Scripture Union's camps inclusive, equipping host churches with specific support and planning such as precamp interviews between children, parents and an occupational therapist.

In a very different but equally challenging venue, a five-member team from World Relief Canada completed the Tough Mudder event – a team-focused world renowned obstacle course and endurance test – in September, raising \$10,000 for women's causes across the globe.

Those funds were matched two-to-one by the Canadian government. This meant World Relief's outreach to women, dubbed Tough as Her, was able to channel \$30,000 to programs such as the organization's Burundi Onramp to Banking microloan initiative, where women fight tremendous adversity and hardship by forming community banking groups, building savings and access loans, and supporting each other as they open or expand small businesses such as fruit stands, clothing stores and food shops.

"In Tough Mudder we were facing obstacles that we chose to overcome, but there are tremendous obstacles that women face every day throughout the world," says Eric Frans, team member and World Relief Canada's director of philanthropy. "Tough as Her has helped us spread the word – from our fellow competitors to people in restaurants who see us wearing our Tough Mudder T-shirts – how women are affected by scarce resources, poverty and violence across the globe." World Relief already has teams in place to participate in Tough Mudder events in Vancouver, Calgary and Toronto later this year. **FT** *–Jeff Dewsbury*

### Growing in the Art of Neighbouring

This year Karen Wilk of Edmonton joined a neighbourhood book club. This was not a Christian or religious book club, but somehow, through a series of casual conversations between neighbours, the book club began to incorporate spiritual practices into its weekly meetings.

Although Wilk is a Christian and active neighbourhood missionary, she had no role in encouraging the book club to explore spiritual practices. Then one week, before she knew it, the book club was exploring the ancient Christian spiritual practice of foot washing.

"My non-Christian, nontraditional neighbour is washing my dirty feet," says Wilk. "I'm not sure I would have been ready to wash her feet."

This, for Wilk, is what "being the church to your neighbourhood" is all about. It is messy work. And sometimes you have to be prepared not only to deal with other people's messes, but to let them deal with yours.

"Neighbouring" is seen by some as an emerging trend in Christianity, but Wilk has been working on building up her own community of believers in her Edmonton neighbour-

## Canadian Film Tours to Ignite Prostitution Discussion

The creators of the documentary film *Red Light/Green Light* hope it shows how the Nordic model of dealing with prostitution may prove beneficial if adapted for Canada.

“Right now we’re given two extreme options: full legalization or full criminalization,” says Jay Brock, co-director/producer of the film with his wife Michelle. The couple founded Hope for the Sold – an awareness and advocacy organization to

fight human trafficking – after producing their first documentary *Enslaved and Exploited: the Story of Sex Trafficking in Canada* in 2009.

While travelling the country, filming and showing that film, the Brocks were continually asked about prostitution. Initially they saw sex trafficking and prostitution as two separate issues.

“They’re not,” says Brock. “They’re inextricably linked.

“The average person engaged in prostitution started off with some form of exploitation. And they’d get out if they had a viable option.”

Three years ago the Brocks decided another film was needed. They travelled to ten countries exploring the question, “What is the best way to prevent sex trafficking?” The couple investigated areas where prostitution is legalized such as Germany, the Netherlands, Las Vegas, Nev., and countries where it’s criminalized like France, Canada and most of the U.S. And they looked at the unique approach taken by Sweden, known as the Nordic model, where it’s no longer illegal to sell sex, but is illegal to pay for sex. *Red Light/Green*

*Light* is the result, a film that suggests a country’s or area’s prostitution legislation also has an effect on sex trafficking.

Brock says the ten-year-old Nordic model law has changed attitudes towards prostitution, and that it’s no longer considered “manly” to pay for sex in Sweden. Julia Beazley, policy analyst at the EFC’s Centre for Faith and Public Life, says the film “does a really good job” at explaining the legislative options around prostitution. The EFC hosted an early screening at its Ottawa office last November. The film “makes a clear connection between prostitution and human trafficking for sexual exploitation,” says Beazley. “If we want to stop sex trafficking, we have to address the demands for paid sex.”

She adds the filmmakers present a strong case for the various options, giving the viewer enough information to “make an informed decision about what may work here.” Brock says his current task is to distribute the film ([www.redlightgreenlightfilm.com](http://www.redlightgreenlightfilm.com)) as widely as possible, and get people to sign a petition encouraging the Federal Government to bring the Nordic model to Canada. He eventually hopes to gather 100,000 signatures. **FT** –Robert White



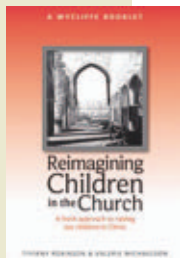
PHOTO: TAE PHOTOGRAPHY

**Sex trafficking and prostitution are not two separate issues: Jay and Michelle Brock.**

## Helpful Resources

- *Children & Youth Matter*, Tracy and Bruce Clemenger, general editors (Castle Quay Books, 2014). A study guide for personal and group use by more than 45 members of adoptive and fostering families and other experts. Affirms the worth of every child and empowers readers to be a blessing to adoptable children and youth and those in need of quality fostering, guardianship, kinship or custom care. Includes tips about navigating adoption and fostering systems, parenting, and supporting agencies that serve children and youth.

- *It’s Hard Not to Stare: Helping Children Understand Disabilities* by Tim Huff (Castle Quay Books, 2014). An illustrated book for children, part of a series which also includes *The Cardboard Shack* *Beneath the Bridge: Helping Children Understand Homelessness*. Includes a discussion guide for parents and teachers by Jan Fukumoto, an autism expert and educator.



- *Reimagining Children in the Church: A Fresh Approach to Raising Our Children in Christ* by Val Michaelson and Tiffany Robinson (Digory Publishing, 2013). Two Anglican thinkers discuss how to help children engage with the Christian story in “intergenerational, embodied and storied” ways. Includes original and practical tools for classroom use. Free PDF version online at [www.institute.wycliffecollege.ca](http://www.institute.wycliffecollege.ca). **FT**

**Do you have a Kingdom Matters story to share? Email us at [editor@faithtoday.ca](mailto:editor@faithtoday.ca).**



PHOTO SUPPLIED BY CASEY VAN WENSEM

**Karen Wilk**

This past October, she was invited to lead the Forge Canada Neighbourhood Engagement Weekend at Southside Community Church in Surrey, B.C.

hood since 2006.

Her experiences led her to write a book called *Don’t Invite Them to Church: Moving From a Come and See to a Go and Be Church* (Faith Alive Christian Resources, 2010). Wilk is also a national team member for Forge Canada, a missional training network that equips churches and leaders to multiply and transform neighbourhoods.

Forge trains both clergy and laypeople in missional living. “An event like this is designed not just for leaders, but for everybody,” says Scott Hagley, Forge Canada’s director of education.

The conference was designed to help people “be the church” to their own neighbours, whether they live in an apartment building, detached home or mobile home park. The conference considered what it actually means to be present in our neighbourhoods, how we love our neighbours in real and concrete ways, and what practices we can begin so we can better engage and serve our neighbours. As Wilk says, “He loves our neighbours more than we ever will.” **FT**

–Casey van Wensem



## We're More Than What We Do

Sustaining the principles that shape our laws and impact our lives.

**T**he sanctity of human life is a great example of a biblical principle that relates to both everyday Christian lives and Canadian law.

How it came to be argued in the Supreme Court of Canada in 1993 – and then affirmed in the court's precedent-setting *Rodriguez* decision – is a wonderful story of collaboration.

Soon after I was hired by the EFC in 1992 I got a phone call from Jennifer Leddy of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, inviting the EFC to join an intervention before the Supreme Court on assisted suicide.

The governing body of the EFC was actually set to meet the next day. Back then seeking intervener status in court was new to the EFC, but we got quick approval.

A few weeks later I headed to Ottawa to discuss the initial legal arguments with Leddy, Richard Haughian of the Catholic Health Association of Canada, and Robert Nadeau, a lawyer on the EFC's Social Action Commission.

We agreed the draft arguments were not sufficient, and we wondered how to instruct the law firm that would represent us. We all sat still, searching for wisdom. I recall breaking the silence and asking what arguments we should be making.

Robert Nadeau started us off, and we spent the evening building the argument. We did not want the court to treat this as a strictly legal matter, but to see it for what it was – a deep and complex issue about the meaning of human life, and how we as a society will affirm and protect all human life.

The criminal code is a moral code, and Canadian law should reflect the underlying principles that shape how we want to live as a nation. So we argued that the sanctity of human life was one of those basic principles upon which much of Canadian social and health policy has been established – and that allowing assisted suicide would undermine it.

In the end the court upheld the law against assisted suicide, and it did so based on an affirmation of the sanctity of human life – though it was quick to clarify it used the term in a secular sense that could be supported by all Canadians.

The court also noted there may come a time when the principle is no longer commonly and deeply held by Canadians – a warning that foundational principles need to continually be given life in the attitudes and actions of people.

It is one thing to have the principle stated in a court decision (that 1993 decision was reaffirmed, by the way, in 2013 by the B.C. Court of Appeal). But it's another thing for it to continue to have legitimacy and authority in the minds of lawmakers and judges – and in the actions of people.

The sanctity of human life implies two affirmations for Christians. Firstly, that life is a gift from God and therefore His, not ours. We are but stewards of this gift, not its author. Secondly, that we cherish not only our own lives but the lives of all His image bearers. Every human life has inestimable worth, not because of what I do but who I am.

As J.I. Packer told our interviewer (on page 24), rather than pondering when my life should end, "The first thought ought to be, 'God has given me my life. He's given it to me for service in doxology, praise, in service of others, in doing what you can for them, in saying what you can to sustain them.' "

Thus the sanctity of human life is affirmed and re-trenched, its value nurtured and its legitimacy sustained as a result of us living our lives accordingly, in our worship of God and our service and care for others.

It means seeing people for who they are, not what they do – what my wife Tracy calls their "business card." What we do with the life God gives is important, but the very meaning of our lives is rooted in our relationship to God as His image bearers. This is sacred and cannot be diminished or denied.

Over the 50 years of the EFC's engagement in social issues, our primary task has been to advocate for the wisdom of principles such as the sanctity of human life, to show how laws that reflect these principles contribute to the public good. And we can celebrate a strong record of how God has used us!

But it remains crucial that we all live out the meaning of these principles and daily affirm, in word and deed, the inestimable worth of each person. **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](http://www.theEFC.ca).

**BRUCE J. CLEMENGER** is president of The Evangelical

Fellowship of Canada. Read more of his columns at [www.theEFC.ca/clemenger](http://www.theEFC.ca/clemenger). Please pray for our work. You can also support it financially at [www.theEFC.ca/donate](http://www.theEFC.ca/donate) or toll-free 1-866-302-3362.

## Buying Sex Should Be Criminal

The EFC released *Out of Business: Prostitution in Canada – Putting an End to Demand* in December (at [www.theEFC.ca/OutOfBusiness](http://www.theEFC.ca/OutOfBusiness)). This comprehensive submission to government proposes a major reform to Canada's prostitution laws, based on the Nordic model proven to reduce prostitution, human trafficking and organized crime. Several days later, the Supreme Court of Canada released its decision in the Bedford case, striking down Canada's laws that prohibit activities related to prostitution. The EFC also hosted two screenings on Parliament Hill of the National Film Board documentary *Buying Sex* ([www.nfb.ca/film/buying\\_sex](http://www.nfb.ca/film/buying_sex)) in partnership with Defend Dignity. These showings created an opportunity for conversation about the need for changes to Canada's prostitution laws with MPs, Senators and Parliament Hill staff.

## What Happened at Presidents Day?

The latest issue of the EFC newsletter *Canada Watch* is now available at [www.theEFC.ca/CanadaWatch](http://www.theEFC.ca/CanadaWatch). It starts off with "Presidents Day Includes Visit With Prime Minister." You'll also find answers to common questions donors ask, our regular update on Parliament Hill, a message from EFC President Bruce J. Clemenger and more.

## Faith Groups on Quebec Charter

The Canadian Interfaith Conversation, a gathering of senior representatives of the world's faith groups, has signed a statement of concern about Quebec's Charter of Values, especially about claims it will bring an atmosphere of neutrality. EFC President Bruce Clemenger was one of the signatories of the statement, available at [www.councilofchurches.ca](http://www.councilofchurches.ca).

## WEA Celebrates Latin Evangelicals, Mourns Mandela

The EFC's global partner, The World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), is welcoming the establishment of a new Latin Evangelical Alliance (Alianza Evangélica Latina) formed in November. Pastor Alberto Solorzano of Honduras was appointed president of the group, designed to represent all Latin American evangelical alliances and strengthen evangelical unity among Spanish speakers.


As Africans mourned the death of Nelson Mandela in December, several WEA leaders also responded publicly with their reflections, and together called on "all people of goodwill to pray for the Mandela family and the nation of South Africa."

Details on both these stories are available at [www.worldea.org/post/press](http://www.worldea.org/post/press).

## EFC Expert Speaks Against Pornography

EFC policy analyst Julia Beazley recently addressed the need to protect children and youth from the violent reality of Internet pornography. Her comments at [www.theEFC.ca/ActivateCFPL](http://www.theEFC.ca/ActivateCFPL) (scroll down to Nov. 20, 2013) reflect on her participation in an Ottawa panel on the harmful impact of pornography on society, children and youth. The panel, convened by MP Joy Smith, also featured Gail Dines, a prominent expert from Wheelock College in Boston.

## Pray for North Korea

The EFC Religious Liberty Commission recently issued a prayer alert after 80 people were executed in North Korea, some accused of possessing a Bible. Read the latest alerts and sign up to receive them by email at [www.theEFC.ca/alerts](http://www.theEFC.ca/alerts). 

## Meet the EFC Board: Kristin Debs

As part of the 50th anniversary celebrations at The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, *Faith Today* will introduce members of the board of directors (listed at [www.theEFC.ca/board](http://www.theEFC.ca/board)). We'll start with a newcomer slated to take up her position in May 2014.

### FT: What makes you want to sit on the EFC board?

**KD:** I interned with the EFC as a law student several years ago, and since that time have remained very interested in its work. As a lawyer I am specifically interested in the public policy and religious freedom issues in which the EFC is involved.

I jumped at the opportunity to join the board because I truly believe in the work done by the EFC. It's an organization to

which I can make a meaningful contribution.

My age and station in life enable me to share the perspective of my generation with the board.

### FT: What's the most important thing the EFC is doing these days, in your opinion?

**KD:** Bringing together many Canadian Evangelicals and speaking for them with one united voice on important issues.

### FT: What do you think is the biggest challenge facing Canada right now?

**KD:** The preamble to our Charter states that our nation is founded upon principles that recognize the "supremacy of God and the rule of law." But Canada is

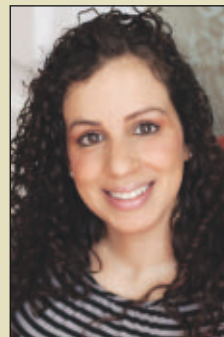


PHOTO: EMMA POLIQUIN PHOTOGRAPHY

**| Kristin Debs**

facing a major challenge to this identity. The proposed Charter of Values in Quebec is one example of the many challenges to the "supremacy of God." The reality is that our nation is culturally and religiously diverse, and, as Canada moves forward, this notion will continue to be challenged.

The EFC is an important voice in helping to answer the questions which shape our national identity.

**FT: Thanks, Kristin. May God bless your service on the board and beyond.**

## Meet Alberta Pastor Dion Mitchell

**Dion Mitchell** has been the lead pastor of Claresholm Pentecostal Assembly for four years. His wife Susan and family of girls (Annalise, Emily and Ileana) keep life full as they minister in an older community of faith in southern Alberta ranch and farming country.



PHOTO: WWW.JENNIFERLEEPHOTOGRAPHY.CA

### What has been your greatest joy in ministry?

Watching someone come alive in their spirit. It's that moment when the heart light turns on and you remember why you are doing this.

### Your greatest struggle in ministry?

Journeying with people who refuse to live by God's Word and thus end up struggling with the fruit of their disobedience. There is also the struggle to walk in great humility with these people, to see them through the eyes of Christ. Brokenness must mark our path as pastors. In this performance-based society that has crept into the Church, fulfilling God's will through our lives is the most important calling. Understanding that we are called to be faithful – to shepherd first.

### What Christian book do you most often recommend to others to read?

Other than the Bible, Brennan Manning's *Ruthless Trust: The Ragamuffin's Path to God* (HarperCollins, 2000) because it powerfully and commonly relates to many of our journeys in trusting God's love for us. Trust is something we see broken everywhere in society. The church has an opportunity in the midst of all this distrust to show that we, through Christ, are trustworthy people of an authentic faith.

### What do you think is the biggest opportunity available to the Canadian evangelical Church in the next ten years?

To accurately represent the love of Christ to our com-

munities. There are a lot of misperceptions about Christ today in society that are rooted in the misrepresentation by the Church, and the coming of age of another generation that has no biblical Christian memory (they have not been exposed to genuine Christians, therefore have no appreciation of the truth in Christ). The Church must break out of its traditions that are not Christ-centric and look for new ways to touch the culture around us in loving and compassionate ways.

### What would you like the Canadian Church to know about the church and ministry in Claresholm, Alberta?

Rural churches are losing and, in many cases, have lost this "next generation." You can see it in the populace of the local church. In an effort to preserve our Christian heritage, we have allowed traditions that have isolated the generations – traditions that are more about what we want rather than what Jesus would

There are a lot of misperceptions about Christ today in society that are rooted in the misrepresentation by the Church.

want. The greatest church is not made up of just youth and young adults or seniors, but is represented by the whole generational spectrum, and I sincerely believe this generation yearns for it. Therefore, there is a bunch of compromise on everybody's part, but especially on the older church population, to embrace new ways to express our faith in Christ that will reach everyone by expressing His love. Change should not mean a loss of faith standards, but rather an embracing of new vehicles and modes to share our faith in a language society can understand. **BT**



# Protecting Human Life and Religious Freedom

By Don Hutchinson

The EFC will be in the Supreme Court again soon, continuing a 25-year effort.

In December The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada applied to make its 25th appearance before the Supreme Court of Canada. The first time was 25 years earlier in 1988, in a case dealing with the legal status of the child in the womb.

Curiously, 25 is also the number of times the EFC has appeared in lower courts, primarily provincial and federal courts of appeal.

Some might think, amid all these 25th anniversaries, that we've either won or lost a lot of lawsuits. But the truth is different.

While we might favour one side of a case or the other, we aren't actually intervening to help one party win. The EFC goes to court to win the advancement of biblical principles in practical legal application. And we seek to secure the continuing rights of Christians to live out our beliefs and practices in Canada.

In any court battle there are parties – the primary combatants. But groups such as the EFC that have an interest can also apply to intervene.

A successful application must demonstrate the decision in the case will have an impact on the applicant beyond simply the interest of the parties, that the applicant can bring a unique perspective to inform and benefit the court, and that the applicant has enough of the necessary expertise in the area to be of assistance.

The EFC has so far not been denied intervener status. We have proven we can meet these requirements, offer an informed national perspective and communicate in appropriate legal language.

So, a court decision that “goes in our favour” is one which accepts and advances the principles presented in our intervention, sometimes regardless of which party appears to win.

Two of the principles our courts have accepted as underlying the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* are “sanctity of human life” (as the court stated,

“in the non-religious sense . . . to mean that human life is seen to have a deep intrinsic value of its own”) and “human dignity.”

The EFC presented these two principles in 1993 in an assisted suicide case named after Sue Rodriguez. They became vital to the Supreme Court's decision – and to its subsequent decision in a 2001 euthanasia case named after Robert Latimer, another in which the EFC intervened.

These “Charter values,” as they're called, were also important in an assisted suicide case decided last October in the B.C. Court of Appeal, another in which the EFC intervened. (That case is named after Lee Carter, who helped her mother Kay arrange an assisted suicide in Switzerland.)

Protecting human life is important to Evangelicals, because each person is created by God in God's image.

Over the decades the EFC has intervened before the Supreme Court eight times in cases dealing with life.

In one of these Harvard University was attempting to patent a genetically modified mouse. The EFC argued that allowing the patenting of animals would turn life into an object. We also argued that permitting the first patent of a higher life form would establish a precedent that could have led to the genetic modification and patenting of human beings. Think about the biotechnology issues in the news today, and the foresight required to make that argument in 2002!

The EFC is also well known for strong and clear engagement on the topic of



PHOTO: FRED CHARTRAND

Don Hutchinson

religious freedom. We have appeared before the Supreme Court nine times in cases challenging religious freedom.

Both the protection of life and religious freedom overlapped in one recent intervention, in a case named for Hassan Rasouli, a comatose

man whose wife objected to his doctors' desire to remove life support. When physicians and family members disagree, the Supreme Court of Canada declared on October 18 of this year, a major medical decision should be referred to a dispute resolution body – where the patient's religious beliefs must be considered.

For the EFC the case wasn't about keeping people alive indefinitely on machines or expense to the medical system. It was about the sanctity of life, human dignity, and respecting the religious beliefs and practices of patients.

The EFC argued from a track record established over two and a half decades of translating biblical principles into the language of the courts. Thanks to the support of many, we have been able to do so in a logical, sensible, accepted and influential way. **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](http://www.theEFC.ca/activateCFPL).

Please pray for our work. You can also support it financially at [www.theEFC.ca/donate](http://www.theEFC.ca/donate) or toll-free 1-866-302-3362.

## For details on the legal cases mentioned:

- *Rodriguez, Latimer and Carter*: [www.theEFC.ca/ResourcesOnEuthanasia](http://www.theEFC.ca/ResourcesOnEuthanasia)
- *Harvard mouse*: [www.theEFC.ca/ResourcesOnGenetics](http://www.theEFC.ca/ResourcesOnGenetics)
- *Rasouli*: [www.theEFC.ca/Rasouli](http://www.theEFC.ca/Rasouli)

# Like Being Knocked Down

Do Christians have a different approach to weakness in a world that values independence and strength? Evangelical theologian **J.I. Packer**, author of the classic book *Knowing God* and professor at Regent College in Vancouver since 1979, draws wisdom on this issue from 2 Corinthians in his latest book *Weakness Is the Way* (Crossway, 2012). As he nears the end of his own life (he was born in 1926), he also explains how he has personally struggled with weakness in recent years. **By J.I. Packer**

**M**y own recognition that the Christian way of life and service is a walk of weakness, as human strength gives out and only divine strength can sustain and enable, may well be rooted in my youth.

A solitary and rather somber child, I had to wear at school, for ten years, a black aluminum patch covering a hole in my head, the result of a road accident, and hence I was unable to play outdoor games. During those years I felt out of most of what mattered, which is of course one form of the feeling of weakness.

This sense of things, sinful as it is in many ways, has hovered in the background throughout my life, and it has certainly been deepened over the past three years by the experience of a hip disintegrating (two years of hobbling and wobbling discomfort, leading to a year of steady but slow recovery from its surgical replacement).

I was told that since the surgery was invasive, its initial impact would be to shock the system – like being knocked down in the street by a truck – and full recovery for mind and body would take time, with creativity (in my case, power to write) at first noticeably in abeyance.

During these three years, my firsthand awareness of physical and cognitive weakness has grown, as has my acquaintance with Satan's skill in generating gloom and discouragement. My appreciation of 2 Corinthians has also grown, as I have brooded on the fact that Paul had been there before me.

## Weakness and Vocation

Weakness is a state of inadequacy, or insufficiency, in relation to some standard or ideal to which we desire to conform. It takes many forms. There is physical weakness, which keeps us from excelling in sports; there is weak health, which makes us vulnerable to all sorts of diseases; weak capacity limits us as employees, business people, and entrepreneurs; weakness of memory keeps us from becoming top-notch teachers or managers; weakness of character unfits us to be leaders, parents, trainers, team captains, and perhaps team members too; and so on.

Subjectively, the sense of being weak, which the weak yet intelligent person can hardly avoid, generates feelings of inferiority – the Charlie Brown syndrome – and of uselessness and worthlessness, along with consequent gloom and depression – not at all happy feelings to live with. The sense of weakness casts a cloud over one's existence.

In this fallen world, where original sin in the form of pride, ambitious independence, and deep-level egocentricity has infected everyone, we all crave to be admired for strength in something, and the expectation that it is not going to happen makes one feel like a punctured



# in the Street by a Truck



PHOTO: WWW.DESIGNPICS.COM

balloon and plants bitterness in one's heart.

The gospel message, however, calls on us all to be realistic in facing and admitting our sinfulness, our weaknesses, our actual transgressions, and our consequent guilt before God; and then it addresses us, in God's name, substantially as follows:

*Look to Christ as your loving Sin-Bearer and living Lord. Embrace him as your Savior and Master. And then in his presence resolve to leave behind the old life of conscious self-service, marred as it was by bitterness, self-pity, envy of others, and feelings of failure, in order that you may become his*

faithful – that is, faith-full – disciple, living henceforth by his rules under his care.

*Love Christ, in unending gratitude for his unending love to you. Labor to please him in everything you do. Let his love constrain, compel, command, comfort, and control you constantly, and, like Paul, stop regarding human approval as in any way important.*

*(Earlier he wrote to the Corinthians, "With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you . . . . It is the Lord who judges me," 1 Cor. 4:3-4). Live and love the way Paul did before you, and aspiring eagerness*

**We all crave to be admired  
for strength in something.**

will replace gloom and apathy in your heart.

*Lean on Christ and rely on him to supply through the Holy Spirit all the strength you need for his service, no matter how weak unhappy circumstances and unfriendly people may be making you feel at present. As part of his response to being berated as “weak” by the Corinthians and their “superapostles,” Paul reveals that Christ has set him to live with an unhealed “thorn” (pain, disability) in his body and has told him, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor. 12:7–9).*

We need thus to take to heart his triumphant concluding comment on this aspect of his life situation: “Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong” (vv. 9–10).

So lean on Christ, the lover of your soul, as Paul did, and in all your ongoing weakness, real as it is, you too will be empowered to cope and will be established in comfort and joy.

We should recognize that the fierce and somewhat disabling pain with which Christ in due course required Paul to live, and which Paul clearly accepted as a weakness that would be with him to his dying day, had in view less the enriching of his ministry than the furthering of his sanctification.

The clues are there: Paul refers to increase of humility in face of privileged revelations (12:7), deepened dependence on Christ in face of Satanic discouragements and distractions (vv. 7–9), and a robust readiness to welcome whatever other forms of suffering might come his way in the future (v. 10). He demonstrates a sustained recognition that feeling weak in oneself is par for the course in the Christian life and therefore something one may properly boast about and be content with (vv. 6, 9–10).

In this, Paul models the discipleship, spiritual maturity, and growth in grace that all believers are called to pursue. When the world tells us, as it does, that everyone has a right to a life that is easy, comfortable, and relatively pain-free, a life that enables us to discover, display, and deploy all the strengths that are latent within us, the world twists the truth right out of shape.

That was not the quality of life to which Christ’s calling led him, nor was it Paul’s calling, nor is it what we are called to in the twenty-first century. For all Christians, the likelihood is rather that as our discipleship continues, God will make us increasingly weakness-conscious and pain-aware, so that we may learn with

Paul that when we are conscious of being weak, then – and only then – may we become truly strong in the Lord. And should we want it any other way? What do you think?

### Christ and the Christian’s Hoping

The Bible speaks directly to our weakness, setting before those who are Christ’s a destiny that reaches beyond this world to a kaleidoscope of wonders, enrichments, and delights to which it gives the generic name “glory.” This destiny is big and exciting, and the New Testament writers show that they felt it to be so.

As having something big and exciting to look forward to – a major family holiday, say – will keep children alert and on tiptoe for quite some time before it happens, so the big and exciting future for Christ’s faithful disciples that Paul looked forward to undoubtedly kept him at full apostolic stretch through all the adverse experiences to

**We shall be given  
a new dwelling  
place, new clothes,  
and a new home  
life in the company  
of our Lord.**

which he alludes in 2 Corinthians.

Indeed the New Testament writers as a body, with the Lord Jesus himself, clearly expect this promised destiny to bring excitement and awe and amazement and joy into the hearts of all Christian people.

2 Corinthians is a good example. For all that Paul is writing out of a situation of weakness and, without doubt, a sense of weakness more intense than we meet in any other of his letters, he is not lapsing into self-pity or voicing gloom and doom, but he is expressing his sense of ongoing triumph in Christ in face of all obstacles. And he is declaring his sure and certain hope of glory when his course through this world reaches its end.

It is this hope for his personal future – a hope which, to echo Bunyan’s Mr. Stand-fast, lies as a glowing coal at his heart – that determines his attitude toward all the pressures of the present.

### Supernaturalized Living

We are on our way home, and home will be glorious. And contemplating that glory, however inadequately we do it, will brace minds and hearts to resist the weakening effect, the down-drag into apathy and despair, that pain, hostility, discouragement, isolation, contempt, and being misunderstood – and all the rest of the suffering – might naturally have on us otherwise.

Ministers of Christ will keep on keeping on, no matter what. The watching world may well wonder where they find the energy to do so, but the puzzlement of outsiders is no concern of theirs. What animates and propels them is the power of their hope as they “look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are

unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal" (4:18).

This is how, by grace, the God of grace supernaturalizes the natural, bodily, mortal life of all who through faith are in Christ, united to him by the Holy Spirit for endless power and joy. God-taught hoping leads to God-given strengthening. When, humanly, we are weak, then in the Lord we are strong. So it was for the apostles and their colleagues two millennia ago, and so it can and should be today for you and me.


What is it, then, that we have to look forward to? Second Corinthians 5:1-8 sets before us in picture language that aspect of our hope which will counter, cancel, and consign to far-off memory "this light momentary affliction" – bad health, crippled limbs, bodily pains; minds, memories, relationships, personal circumstances all going downhill; insults, cruelties, and whatever else.

This hope fills us with wondering joy that everything can be so good. We shall be given a new dwelling place, says Paul, new clothes, and a new home life in the company of our Lord. It sounds marvelous, and so indeed it is.

None of us knows as yet what it will be like, experi-

entially, to leave this world. But one day we shall all have to do that, and it is wonderful to know that somewhere in the process of transition out of the body into the next world, Christ himself will meet us, so that we

may expect his face to be the first thing we become aware of in that new order of life into which we will have moved.

Looking forward to this is the hope that will sustain us, as evidently it sustained Paul, while we grow older and our weaknesses, limitations, and thorns in the flesh increase. "So we are always of good courage" (2 Cor. 5:6). May it ever be so. 

## When I am weak, then I am strong.

Through a special arrangement, the complete book *Weakness Is the Way* is available free with each new subscription to *Faith Today* purchased in January and February 2014. Visit [www.faithtoday.ca/subscriptions](http://www.faithtoday.ca/subscriptions) or call 1-866-302-3362.

**J. I. PACKER** is the board of governors' professor of theology at Regent College in Vancouver, B.C. This essay adapted from *Weakness Is the Way* by J. I. Packer, ©2013. Used by permission of Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers ([www.crossway.org](http://www.crossway.org)).

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# Being Made Strong on



In an exclusive interview with *Faith Today*, Vancouver theologian **J.I. Packer** talks with senior editor **Karen Stiller** about weakness, being God centred, euthanasia – and old-fashioned typewriters.

# the Strength of the Lord

**FT:** In your recent book *Weakness Is the Way* you mention you have few years left. You write, “We are on our way home, and home will be glorious.” Are your thoughts turning heavenward? What do you anticipate or fear about your earthly life coming to an end?

**JP:** I don’t think I have an impressive answer. I live a day at a time. I hope and pray that I shall be left in this world as long as I can be useful – useful to the Church, to Christian individuals, useful to the glory of God.

I have no idea how long that will be. I’m in very good health at the moment. I believe my proper concern is with living a day at a time and making the most of each day for usefulness.

I have lived long enough, by the way, to realize that usefulness is much more profoundly a matter of the kind of person you are than of the particular things you do.

When you are young you tend to think of usefulness entirely as the things you do. All through the years, however, steadily

God has been reminding me that what I am is fundamental to what I do, and is really much more important than what I do.

That’s the perspective that I live with and relax with, and I try on a day-to-day basis to ensure that I am what I claim to be, what I need to be. That is a concern which I find keeps me God-centred and Christ-centred in my concerns in living rather than self-centred.

**FT:** As I listened to your answer, I thought that the world really defines our worth by what we do, but I’m wondering if the Church is any better?

**JP:** I think that in the Church it’s the quality of relations that count, and that ought to be central to our concerns – relationship with God and with each other. I’ve just read for the first time, and the book has been on the shelves for some years, *The Jesus Creed* by Scot McKnight. He writes that Jesus focused the life to which He calls us into loving God and our neighbour. The book goes through a whole series of specifics along that line. I rejoiced in the book. [Editor’s note: (Paraclete Press, 2004).]

I found myself in tune with it, and it was in tune with where I am these days. When I go around to churches, I get the strong feeling that we aren’t taking love as our primary calling anything as seriously as we should – which I now diagnose as immaturity rather than perversity.

In our churches we are juvenile in many ways at points where we ought to be adult. We’re the victims actually of the world’s conviction that your significance depends entirely on what you do and not at all on who

you are. That creeps into us without our noticing it. It doesn’t get challenged very often in preaching, in Bible study groups – not as far as I can see.

And if you hold to that idea that what you do is what counts, it does keep you juvenile. It keeps you from real spiritual development at a deep level.

It lets pharisaism in through the back door into your life and into the life of the congregation. The essence of pharisaism, the taproot, is the thought that what you do is what counts, and any challenge to that assumption is scandalous. A lot of us are living with much more of that assumption, making us tick more than we realize.

**FT:** In your book you describe how God’s strength is made perfect in our weakness. I’m wondering how that has manifested itself in your own life?

**JP:** The experience of physical limitation as I waited for my hip surgery was what got me going on the theme of weakness as day after day I lived with that, waiting for surgery.

The essence of weakness is that you feel you are in a situation that is beyond you in some ways.

It set me going on the weakness theme, and I highlighted it in my book as a hook to catch the reader’s interest. Writers do this, and the impression left is that when we think about weakness, Packer is leading us to think about our own physical conditions and our limitations, but that is not what the book is supposed to be about. The book is supposed to be about being made strong on the strength of the Lord, the fact that the hope in which we live is an enormous strengthener.

I hope that readers are getting that message.

I want to help people, that’s my edification concern, and I don’t talk about myself in a way that merely generates human interest and stops there.

Having said all that, the experiences I have had, they are experiences of help, God helping me to do things I didn’t think I could do. When I was called to a life of pastoral ministry, I was very clear I was no good with young kids. That’s a weakness, and I felt I had been assured God would be alright with that.

In pastoral ministry generally I had often felt apprehensive. I go to visit people who I know are dealing with problems I know I don’t have to deal with.

The Lord, as a matter of fact, has helped me in all sorts of things, all through my career.

The essence of weakness, as I understand it, is that you feel you are in a situation that is beyond you in some ways. The Good Lord has been helping me with this and that constantly over the years, but the this-and-that is really the thrill of achieving the things I believe He was

calling me to attempt, but at the same time I didn't feel I was up to. That has covered lots of things, and books, and articles I suppose, things I have written where I felt I had to tackle it, but I didn't think I could bring it off.

**FT:** Euthanasia is something Canadians talk about and debate more and more. There seems to be a growing sense that people who consider themselves physically and even mentally and spiritually weak have the right to choose to end their own lives at a time of their choosing. You've written a book that challenges readers to see times or conditions of weakness as a time to experience God's faithfulness. What are your thoughts on euthanasia?

**JP:** I have a strong belief that euthanasia is a form of self-indulgence that is not to be encouraged, that in fact is ruled out by the biblical view of life as a valuable gift of God to be preserved as long as in the providence of God it can be.

When I say life, I don't just mean the heartbeat and all that goes with it. I'm talking about being a person alive, and that makes me more flexible on some issues where it isn't euthanasia, but keeping a machine going so the heart keeps beating although the person is gone – 999 times out of 1,000 the medical people can be absolutely certain that the person is gone. That's one thing that God in His providence makes possible.

When you are that certain the person is gone, then it seems to me the appropriate thing is to turn off the machine and let the body follow the person.

But as for euthanasia, people wanting permission publicly and with professional help to commit painless suicide in order to escape what they regard as intolerable suffering, I have a very different view.

Life is good.

It's a good thing to behold the light of the sun, and it seems to me that as long as the person can stay with us as a person relationally and in conversation and in personal rapport if nothing else, then that person's responsibility before God is to cherish the life that God has given.

**FT:** What do we miss out on as humans when we choose to exit life early because we are suffering and weak?

**JP:** The flight from pain and physical limitations of one sort or another is always and everywhere spiritually unhealthy.

It's a form of self-indulgence which cannot be justified by those who believe in the wide providence of God.

I don't think that the first thought ought to be [about] what I might miss if I terminate my life at my own discretion. The first thought ought to be, "God has given me my life. He's given it to me for service in doxology, praise, in service of others, in doing what you can for them, in saying what you can to sustain them."

The general truth that pain is regularly part of the learning discipline of God is a truth that I hope my book makes clear, and certainly which I wish to make

clear whenever my ministry calls on me to talk about it.

I put it that way because I don't think I'm preoccupied with pain as a concern to write about. I'm really not qualified to do that.

I think we are going through a very self-indulgent phase in Western culture. Nobody enjoys pain, so people naturally grab at freedom from pain in any shape or form and are preoccupied in doing that. Quite apart from what we know about the Bible, pain does actually strengthen

the self in the ordinary human self. You learn to live with it, you learn to be patient with it. You learn to love in spite of it.

**FT:** Can a Christian who served the Lord their entire life still be filled with fear and sadness near the point of dying? Can great fear co-exist with the great hope you write about?

**JP:** Cautiously, I agree with that. My caution lies in the fact that fear isn't always a rational apprehension of something rough that one knows about and knows is coming. Like fear in the trenches, fear can also take the form of shrinking back from the unknown.

In some cases the more you know about what was previously unknown, the less you're going to fear.

I think that has been the problem all through the 20th century, that very many Christians in very many churches – I include Evangelicals, indeed I highlight the evangelical church in particular – all through the 20th century to the present, have put a tremendous amount of emphasis on the fact that once you are Christ's it is joy, victory, triumph over things you felt you could never cope with, the experience of near miracles, remarkable providences where God shows His hand and makes it clear to you He's on your side. All of that comes out in our preaching and in the books we write for each other to read.

In comparison, very little is said and thought about the hope of glory, the vision of God and the communion with Christ that await us all. Because believe it or not, the Lord Jesus being God as well as man is able to make himself present to any number of millions of people who are His, and each of us will feel, I'm quite sure, that all through eternity we will have His undivided attention.

I find that a wonderful thought to juggle with, quite frankly.

We simply haven't talked through and therefore looked forward as Christians to the glory that lies beyond this world.

When people have lived all their lives on a standard evangelical diet and they know that leaving this world is coming near, and they've never been taught how to think and prepare for it, you can't wonder that they are afraid, simply because they don't know.

The New Testament enables us to know in general terms quite a bit about the sort of experience it's going to be, even though we can't imagine the specifics. Just like

## The flight from pain and physical limitations is spiritually unhealthy.



we can't imagine the resurrection bodies in which we will be experiencing the specifics – experiences that will bring joy, that will bring us a sense of our being loved, that we will be stronger than we have ever known in this world, and more permanent too. The sense that this is what we were made for, the sense that this is wonderful and I don't want it to ever stop. Well, it never will stop.

All of that is, it seems to me, very clear in the New Testament. Fellowship with the saints who are with us is going to be wonderful, just as fellowship with the Saviour is going to be wonderful.

One can't imagine the specifics. I may say that the boldest and fullest attempt ever made was by Richard Baxter the Puritan in 1650 in his first book *The Saints' Everlasting Rest*. I've gone through it with some care. I sometimes go back to it. He wonderfully conveys the sense that it's going to be wonderful.

**FT:** Dr. Packer, what do you wish you knew about God as a young man that you know now?

**JP:** This is I think a scholar's answer to the question, rather than the ordinary Joe, having discovered after decades of neglect how good the Fathers are, the Christian writers for the first six Christian centuries. I wish that I hadn't been prejudiced against them at the beginning of my Christian life.

There is so much that is helpful in the [Early Church]

Fathers, because of the focus on the health-giving realities of worship, prayer, fellowship with God. The Fathers are just very strong on that aspect of things because the New Testament is very strong on that aspect of things.

They were very God-centred, very Christ-centred, and very strong minded in their recognition that in the Christian life you never know what is coming.

For some of us it's actually going to be martyrdom that may be what is coming for us. And it doesn't make a difference. Think of the glory of heaven, until the time comes for God to summon us to heaven.

Make sure your life here is one of love of neighbor and love of God. We are a flabby lot in comparison.

**FT:** In the very moving video promotion of your book, we see you writing on an old-fashioned typewriter. Do you really work on a typewriter?

**JP:** I have the last typewriter to be manufactured all metal and that is what I write on.

**FT:** You're kidding.

**JP:** No I am not. In the last era of typewriters the bodies were made of plastic. That was planned obsolescence with a vengeance. The plastic warped, the type got out of line. What I produce still looks like the product of a new typewriter and it's the best part of 40 years old. Well...you said that.

**FT:** Dr. Packer, thank you so much. **FT**

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# The Canadian Christian Debt Problem

When it comes to overwhelming debt, Christians in Canada are the same as everyone else – in it up to their eyeballs. Christian experts take a fresh look at the problem – and solutions. *By Debra Fieguth*

**J**anet loves jewellery. A bright bracelet catches her eye, she slaps down her credit card. A necklace that goes with the new top she purchased last week – hers. Earrings to match? Got them.

The problem is that Janet (not her real name) can't afford all that bling. Nor can she afford the high-definition TV she watches, or all the shoes that line her closet floor.

Is Janet unusual? Apart from perhaps her spending priorities, not really. Although most Canadians think twice before spending big amounts – renovat-

ing the kitchen, say, or buying a car – too many of us are out of control when it comes to spending money we don't have, on things we don't need. And that means debt. Lots of it. The average Canadian consumer debt in 2013 was more than \$27,000. Add in mortgages and that amount leaps by about \$100,000. In total Canadians now spend \$1.65 for every dollar they make.

The bad news for the Church is that Christians are no different from the rest of the population. One study shows that 2.3 per cent of average monthly income goes to charity, and 9.8 per cent goes to paying

off interest on consumer debt.

The good news is that something is being done about this imbalance between spending and income as Christian financial advisors take a compassionate and biblical approach to helping others.

"One of the things we have to do is take back the conversation about money," says Jan Kupecz, executive director of Canadian National Christian Foundation ([www.cncf.ca](http://www.cncf.ca)). "The Bible says an awful lot about money." (Indeed, Crown Financial Ministries has compiled a comprehensive list of 2,350 biblical references to money in a document 139 pages long.) "But we're not

hearing an awful lot about it.”

A 2009 Crown Financial survey ([www.crowncanada.ca](http://www.crowncanada.ca)) showed a third of Canadian pastors had not preached on money in the past year. Yet 98 per cent of people in the pews indicated they believe the Church should be teaching biblical principles about money and finances, while only 32 per cent of churchgoers had heard teaching on the subject more than once in the last 12 months.

Although there might be many reasons for getting into debt – student loans, marital breakdown, illness, bad investments – most people get there by living beyond their means. And society – which is “driven by consumerism,” says Kupecz – does not help. Credit cards are too easy to obtain. And the banks, which used to be conduits for saving, Kupecz notes, are now conduits for debt. “When you go into a bank and have a financial issue, what they do is exchange one debt for another.”

CNCF, with headquarters in Ottawa, was incorporated in 2001 as a way of “connecting God’s money with God’s work.” From that organization Advisors with Purpose (AWP), a discipleship network of Christian financial advisors, was developed.

Canada’s burgeoning debt load has led to a new initiative by AWP – Debt Freedom Centres, where debt-laden Canadians can go for financial counselling. Several have already been set up in the Ottawa area, as well as other parts of Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia. For \$200 a month, a church – or group of churches working together – can get enough training and resources from CNCF to offer free volunteer counselling to anyone in the community who needs it.

Janet hasn’t yet learned to deal with her debt, but many others are realizing they can do something about it, if they only get the right help.

About 20 years ago Fred Brogan was in the military and living from one paycheque to the next. He asked the Lord for “knowledge of money.” When invited to become a director of a company, he leapt in, turned over his life savings and co-signed for his partners. “They took the equity and left town,” he says, laughing at the memory. But he has no regrets. “If it wasn’t for that,

I wouldn’t be where I am right now.”

Although he was up to \$200,000 in the hole, Brogan managed to pay off his debts without going bankrupt, learning about money management on the way. Now the owner of his own financial services company, the Empirical Group ([www.empiricalgroup.ca](http://www.empiricalgroup.ca)) in Kingston, Ont., Brogan

has been helping people with their money issues for two decades. A member of AWP, Brogan is determined to make Kingston

Canada’s first debt-free city, a goal he believes God gave to him.

Canadians across the economic continuum are challenged by personal debt. A Statistics Canada survey from 2012 discovered people with higher education levels, higher incomes, and better knowledge of the financial world actually have higher levels of debt, partly because of heavy mortgages.

At the lower end of the scale, those on government assistance struggle just to buy groceries. Nicole Bade, a young Hamilton, Ont., woman who had to drop out of college because of an injury, defaulted on her

## Most people get into debt by living beyond their means.

### How to Get (and Stay) Out of Debt

While many advisors would tell you to consolidate your debts into one megaloan and chip away at it, or tackle the biggest one first, Jan Kupecz, executive director of Canadian National Christian Foundation, warns that can be overwhelming and discouraging. She comes at it from the opposite direction, which she calls the “snowball” approach: Get rid of the smallest debt first. That way you can claim a victory – however small – and be inspired to move on to the next debt.

No matter how big or small your income, it is vital to build a budget and stick to it, says Helen Johnson, national director of Christians Against Poverty (CAP) Canada. Sometimes that means having a coach with whom you can check in regularly for encouragement and advice.

#### Other ideas:

- Put a freeze on your spending – literally. Fred Brogan of the Empirical Group suggests dropping your credit card into a soup can of water and freezing it to avoid emotional or impulse spending, thawing it only when you really need it.
- Build up a “Murphy account” of \$2,000 to \$5,000 (in a fund that is not easily accessible) for the time when something goes wrong – a major car repair or a furnace breakdown, for example.
- Plan ahead for big purchases, such as a vacation or even a new car. “We’ve bought into the bill of goods that says the only way you can buy a car is by getting a loan,” says Kupecz, who advocates long-term planning and saving instead.
- Tell the people close to you if you are in trouble, advises Nicole Bade, who has been benefited from CAP. “It’s a first step, because maybe the people close to you can give you the resources.”
- Make your intentions public. At least let friends and family know you are tackling your debt.
- Stop going into stores and reading flyers, says Brogan. “Marketing is very powerful today.” But if you stay out of the shopping mall and avoid looking at glitzy flyers, the desire to buy what you don’t need will be curbed.

#### For more information, check out these websites:

- [www.advisorswithpurpose.ca](http://www.advisorswithpurpose.ca) and its Freedom Initiative
- [www.morethanenough.ca](http://www.morethanenough.ca) with Lynn Fraser, who also hosts a radio program called *Financial Fitness*.
- [www.capcanada.org](http://www.capcanada.org) and [www.crowncanada.ca](http://www.crowncanada.ca).
- For lots of small ideas that can make a difference, go to [www.dumbblittleman.com](http://www.dumbblittleman.com) or google “Christian frugal living” for a wealth of tips. **FT** –DF

# The Spiritual Side of Spending

**A** view of spending that is not God-centred would suggest that if we earn money, we get to decide how to spend it. But from a Christian perspective we are using resources God has entrusted to us. “He owns it all,” Fred Brogan of the Empirical Group points out. “We’re stewards of it.”



SUPPLIED PHOTO

**Jan Kupecz**

That means every spending decision is a spiritual one, says Jan Kupecz, executive director of Canadian National Christian Foundation. “It indicates your priorities and your understanding of your role as steward. Spending decisions are an indication of where you place your faith.”

The consumer-driven society in which we live pressures people to believe more in material satisfaction than spiritual contentment. “Even some Christians,” notes Helen Johnson, national director of Christians Against Poverty, “have lost that [idea of] being content in what God has given us. We want to have something new, something more and something better.”

Kupecz suggests asking why before making a purchase. Why spend the money on this item? “What does shopping fulfil in a person? Will enough ever be enough?” Rather than letting possessions shape our identity, Christians need to be reminded that “our identity is in God.”

If spending has gone beyond our means and we are in debt, the issues become even deeper. Debt makes us slaves to the lenders, it says in Proverbs 22:7. “It eats away at our trust in God,” says Kupecz.

Debt can affect so many other things in our lives, she points out. It can eat away at our peace of mind, leading to depression and hopelessness, and it can harm our family relationships. And even though debt itself might not be a sin, “It ushers in other sins – lying to cover up spending, cheating, gambling.”

“The Bible says we cannot serve both God and money,” Kupecz adds. “It is one or the other. Debt makes us serve money, it binds us to itself and does not leave us free to serve God.”

Debt also affects our ability to be generous to others and give back to God. “We already tend to give from our leftovers,” she says. “With debt there are no leftovers.” **FT** –DF

rent and couldn’t pull herself up. “I was frustrated, I was upset, I kept on beating myself up,” she says. When her rent cheque bounced, “I felt I couldn’t tell anybody.”

Her compassionate landlady at the Christian-based housing complex where she lives suggested she contact Christians Against Poverty (CAP) Canada. Though it was difficult, she took the first step, and that has made all the difference. “The people close to me have seen a dramatic change in me,” she says.

When the CAP volunteer coach assigned to help Bade visited her apartment, “I had no food in my fridge. I hadn’t eaten for two or three days.” The volunteer returned later that day with “a cart full of food,” stocked her fridge and worked out a budget with her.

CAP ([www.capcanada.org](http://www.capcanada.org)) was started in Britain about 17 years ago by John Kirkby, who had lost everything but began a new life when he came to faith. “We had so many phone calls from [Canadian] church leaders saying, ‘We have massive debt problems,’” says Helen Johnson, who worked for CAP in the UK for seven years. After numerous pleas from pastors, CAP opened a Canadian office in Hamilton last March, with Johnson as national director. CAP Canada now partners with 41 churches and has trained 82 money coaches across Canada.

The need is “absolutely massive,” says Johnson, quoting statistics that say 50 per cent of Canadians worry about money. And the results of indebtedness can be dire, sometimes resulting in mari-

tal breakdown and even suicide. CAP is unabashedly Christian in its approach. Every phone call and visit ends with an offer to pray. If clients aren’t interested in hearing about God, “We respect that,” says Johnson. “Ninety per cent of the time they say yes.”

While people and their money problems are similar everywhere, Johnson has seen some worse situations here than in Britain, because the level of government assistance for the poor is lower. She has met clients with only \$50 available for food each month, after rent and utilities are paid.

CAP coaches not only help clients with budgeting, they also meet very practical needs. Johnson tells of one woman whose house was trashed by tenants who didn’t pay the rent, putting her behind in her mortgage payments. Some volunteers from a CAP-associated church cleaned up her property, while others took her out for coffee. It was a very direct way of showing Jesus’ love.

With her coach’s help Nicole Bade follows a strict budget, carefully distributing the \$147 a month left after her rent is paid by Ontario Works. “If I don’t have that treat money, there’s no treat for me.” It is hard, but Bade is determined. “I never want to get myself into that again.” **FT**

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

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# Canadian Ministries Empowering Women Overseas



■ Rita Prins assists with the Mngwangwa widows' group in Malawi.

PHOTO: VISIONLEDD

Change a woman's life, and often her family and community change along with it. Canadian ministries are strategically and compassionately engaging with women around the world. Here is the story of three distinct ministries with a heart for women – and how they enable positive change. **By Alex Newman**

**R**ita Prins spotted Alice from a distance. The thin, young woman sat on the ground with a baby, her back resting against a mud hut. "I could see that she was very sick, and as we drew closer I could see that the baby she was holding was limp and also very ill. Both were HIV positive and struggling to live." Prins was asked to pray for Alice, but found herself choked up with tears and at a complete loss for words.

"It was at that moment that I knew I needed to commit my life to helping the orphan and the widow, and to allow God to work through me, to touch their lives in whatever way He leads," remembers Prins.

That encounter was her introduction to Africa. But her journey to that dusty Malawian slum began two years earlier when she heard Jim Cantelon, director of VisionLedd ([www.visionledd.com](http://www.visionledd.com)),

speak at People's Church in Toronto. She remembers a moment of clarity, realizing she needed to live her life differently. VisionLedd is a ministry reaching out to orphans, widows and others affected by HIV/AIDS, and at that moment Cantelon was considering a new program aimed at empowering women specifically.

That was the 1990s, and Prins, a medical lab technologist, knew about the es-

## Many Canadian Christian organizations recognize the strategic value of working with women overseas

- **Christar:** Partners with Arab Woman Today. [www.christar.ca](http://www.christar.ca)
- **Compassion:** Child Survival Program rescues moms and babies from material and spiritual poverty through local churches. [www.compassion.ca](http://www.compassion.ca)
- **Intercede International:** Works with partners in India, Nepal and Cambodia that rescue women from the sex trade and give them a safe place to live in a Christian environment. [www.intercedenow.ca](http://www.intercedenow.ca)
- **Operation Mobilization:** The Freedom Climb project delivers skills training for trafficked women and helps others develop transformational businesses. [www.omcanada.org](http://www.omcanada.org)
- **OMF:** Reaches women in a red light district in Taiwan and helps them escape their lifestyle through the gospel. [www.omf.org](http://www.omf.org)
- **Partners International:** Cares for neglected widows in Nepal by providing them with shelter, love and support. [www.partnersinternational.ca](http://www.partnersinternational.ca)
- **Samaritan's Purse:** Healthy Children, Healthy Families Program protects women from exploitation and helps build their livelihoods and empower them to raise healthy families. [www.samaritanspurse.ca](http://www.samaritanspurse.ca)
- **SIM:** Almost 600 women-related projects worldwide. In Burkina Faso, Canadians Bill and Joy Stregger teach income-earning skills such as sewing, crocheting, knitting and soap production. [www.sim.ca](http://www.sim.ca)
- **Women Together:** Brings teams of qualified and skilled Canadian women to serve the needs of women in developing countries. [www.women-together.org](http://www.women-together.org)
- **World Relief:** Among other programs, supports 24,000 women in Bangladesh with skills and financing to establish small businesses. [www.worldrelief.ca](http://www.worldrelief.ca)
- **World Vision:** Women's programs include education, vocational training, business loans, combatting trafficking, maternal and child health in 100 countries. [www.worldvision.ca](http://www.worldvision.ca)
- **Wycliffe Bible Translators:** Women of the Bible Workshops help Quechua women in Peru engage with translated Scriptures. [www.wycliffe.net](http://www.wycliffe.net)

For more examples, visit [www.faithtoday.ca/WomenOverseas](http://www.faithtoday.ca/WomenOverseas).

calating AIDS epidemic. Heavyhearted about the fate of vulnerable African girls, she connected with Cantelon. It was Prins' Malawi trip that launched WOW (Women for Orphans & Widows) with the goal of working with local (African) churches to help widows form support networks for access to better nutrition and income-generating activities, so they could "initiate change and become an influential force for good in their communities," Prins says. "When a woman has money and a strong faith, she can influence her children and the greater community."

But when a mother dies, her children are left without a caregiver and so begins a cycle of poverty, shorter life spans and lack of education. That reality is the foundation of Dr. Jean Chamberlain Froese's work in Uganda, and her founding in 2005 of Save the Mothers (STM, online at [www.savethemothers.org](http://www.savethemothers.org)). STM aims to radically reduce the hundreds of thousands of *preventable* maternal deaths that occur yearly in Sub-Saharan Africa. It's not just about the death of the mother and the baby she is carrying, Chamberlain Froese explains, but also the other children she has left behind, thus deepening the tragedy.

As an obstetrician working in Uganda for the past several years, Chamberlain Froese has observed three delays that contribute to maternal deaths. There's the delay to seek care because a mother in trouble needs money and permission from her husband; the delay to secure transportation on overcrowded buses; and the delay in medical attention

because basic meds or blood transfusion supplies at hospitals have run out, or unpaid midwives do not show up.

Infrastructure can only change, though, if leaders are first aware of the issues and then willing to address the social and cultural causes, she adds. Ugandan MP Sylvia Ssinabulya, whose sister died of pregnancy-related complications, did not realize the extent of the problem – or that it was easily prevented – until she took STM's master's in public health leadership. The nine weeks of class and one-year practicum in the field is administered by Uganda Christian University, and offered to East African working professionals in the fields of medicine, law, politics, media, education, social services and faith communities.

Voice of the Martyrs (VOM, online at

[www.persecution.net](http://www.persecution.net)) is another Christian NGO aimed at improving women's lives in the developing world. Volunteers in Canada – mostly women – have focused on Christian women who have led devastated lives of persecution, being tortured, raped or widowed for their faith. These women pray and write cards and letters, which volunteer Ingrid Hajen then takes with her when she travels to places such as Colombia or Nigeria. "It makes such a huge difference to know they are not alone, and that they are being prayed for by another Christian woman," she says. "It's a circle of grace between us all."

The emotional and spiritual supports are balanced by practical aspects – cash donations to VOM are used to establish safe houses, rebuild churches, purchase food, clothing, medical supplies, and Bibles that continue to be confiscated. But Hajen says almost more important than these physical essentials are the personal visits made, where possible, by Western women. "Women need to hug each other, cry together, pray together. We look so different and yet when we kneel down together, we are sisters, and in our hearts we are the same."

### Help Requires a Local Community

A development project aimed at women is only as effective as the local community's

**“I was filled with awe for someone who could risk their life to stand up for their faith.”**



**■ Clockwise from top left: Voice of the Martyrs Canada volunteer Ingrid Hajen meets with Nigerian widows. Dr. Jean Chamberlain Froese founded Save the Mothers in 2005. Each year in Uganda 6,000 women die of complications related to pregnancy and childbirth, but several Canadian ministries are now making a difference.**

buy-in. Ownership, says Prins, is the best foundation for long-term development, because women are more likely to maintain infrastructure and programs when something is perceived to be theirs.

Offers of help, especially in the training of handicraft skills, tailoring, animal husbandry or farming, extend to the entire community. But when it comes to giving out material supplies, WOW tends to work with just a handful of widows at a time. Each one receives a pair of piglets, or seeds and fertilization to improve crop yields. Once the first women are on their feet, their payback to the community goes to help the next widows.

WOW also seeks to address root issues, such as the widows and orphans left in the deadly wake of HIV/AIDS. Support groups include, among other things, nutrition workshops on locally grown health boosters. Volunteers care for the critically ill, praying with them, bringing food, and washing them. WOW also provides rape counselling training – to address the

seemingly ever-present reality of gender-based violence. The effects of stabilizing a community through working with and for women are far reaching, Prins insists. Stable communities, she says, result in stable countries.

### Who's Helping Whom?

Often the experience has as much or more impact on those doing the helping, says Hajen. Thirteen years ago, when she first learned a persecuted Christian speaking about WOM at her church needed billeting, she “groaned – not those people,” but signed up to take them in anyway.

That one step changed her heart. “Sitting at the table after dinner, none of us would dare leave the table even for the bathroom in case we missed one word of their stories. I was filled with awe for someone who could risk their life to stand up for their faith. What would I do in such a situation?”

It was a question she would ask herself many times, especially after meeting and

interviewing Monica, a Nigerian Christian, who had witnessed her husband decapitated in front of her eyes – and yet said yes when asked if she was Christian too. Her throat was slit and she was left for dead.

“You see the victory in their eyes, and hear joy in their voices. You start envying these Christians, not for what they’ve gone through, but for what they have come to, that Christ is so real and their relationship with Him so close.”

Faith sustains the work, says Prins. “We can drill a well, build a school, but without transforming their hearts, it’s all for nothing. We aim to show that the specific reason we’re there is because we love Jesus, and Jesus loves them.” It’s why WOW also provides pastoral and biblical training to communities.

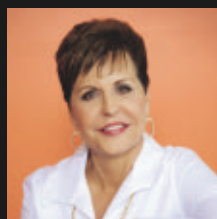
Making faith a requirement before someone receives care, though, “can’t be supported from a biblical point of view,” says Chamberlain Froese, even though it’s very much why *she* is there. “The

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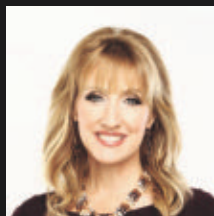
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whole point is that as we do these good works, people will glorify the Father in Heaven. It's my privilege to somehow be a voice for these vulnerable mothers, and to have the joy of seeing how God can move people's hearts (on both sides of the ocean) to join in. No mother or her child should die from pregnancy-related complications."

There comes a time, though, when helpers need to get out, or take a back-seat, Chamberlain Froese adds. "I'm not saying you need to get out 100 per cent, but you need to step back from the front lines and have indigenous people themselves do the work. I could stay here and catch babies – it's what I love, and what I trained for – but if I did, I'd be taking away from the Ugandans who need to raise up leaders who will change those social and cultural issues. At the end of the day, that is what will bring down the rates of mothers dying." **FT**

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

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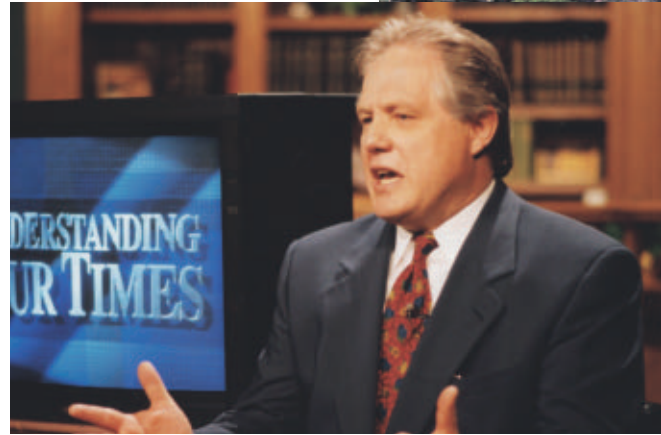
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# The EFC: Present and Future

By Jeff Dewsbury

**T**he future of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) is firmly rooted in the actions – flesh and blood, hands and feet – of Canadian Christians spurred by a deep compassion for those around them, say both the organization’s president Bruce Clemenger and the chairman of its board Bill Fietje.

The EFC has a longstanding reputation for speaking in the Supreme Court of Canada on a wide range of public policy issues, from prostitution and human trafficking to areas that affect sanctity of human life and religious freedoms. But that advocacy goes deeper when it’s expressed in the lives of Canadian Christians.

“In most areas we address in public policy, there is a corresponding way the church needs to engage,” says Clemenger, noting that big picture debates in the halls of government and the courts are only effective “in concert with the life of the church” – action added to voice.

“The EFC communicates and expresses the wisdom we find in Scripture, and imports it into public policy,” says Clemenger. “Wisdom, compassion, fellowship are the three broad areas we focus on.”

The president refers to the “tone and timbre” of which the EFC is ever aware as it engages in public discourse. “It’s part of our identity not to come out as if we are angry at the world, but to be constructive and come to the table with solutions in a way that’s respectful and open to dialogue, yet firmly grounded in a faith tradition that contributes to that dialogue,” says Clemenger.

“If you’re serious about a public witness, then the character of that witness is critical. It’s really how we say it. People need to know what we are for. What we support. Not just what we are against.”

The EFC has succeeded in being actively involved in public policy discussions in Canada without being drawn into partisan politics, distinguishing the organization

from the evangelical footprint south of the border. It’s part of our national approach to issues that affect us all, regardless of one’s faith, says the president.

“It’s how we as Canadians engage best when there is disagreement. We are a co-operative, collaborative people who often come up with the ‘third way’ when there is a conflict. Rather than presume we have the answer, we want to dialogue first.”

That approach has been foundational to the EFC’s longstanding voice in Ottawa. In more than 25 cases the organization has never, for example, been denied intervener status by the Supreme Court.

“You can’t take for granted a seat at the table just because you represent a certain faith-based population,” says Clemenger. “It’s increasingly important that we can point to a record of having actually contributed to the conversation.”

Yet “we are called to be practitioners, not just opinion givers,” notes Fietje. “The EFC could be reduced to just giving opinions if it wasn’t for the church who works together for biblical outcomes in areas of justice and human rights. The things we see wrong in our society are important to us.

Getting involved is a way of life today, it’s not just seen as an option to be considered as it often was 50 years ago.”

The EFC board chair (currently also president of the Associated Gospel Churches of Canada, formerly national director of OMF International Canada) points to several tools the local church can use to identify who they are and assess the spiritual landscape



**“In most areas we address in public policy, there is a corresponding way the church needs to engage,” says EFC president Bruce Clemenger.**

around them: in 2012 the EFC co-sponsored a report, *Hemorrhaging Faith*, which brought to light the complexities of the relationship Canadian young adults have with the

church. Two other tools in development are a Canadian Bible Forum study focusing on how Canadians view the Bible and a trend-tracking study conducted every ten years since 1993.

The EFC's efforts to partner with church communities in adoption advocacy, including the website AdoptionSunday.com, is another way the organization is moving in concert with the convictions of Canadian Evangelicals. The range of areas of partnerships the EFC has led or facilitated is significant.

Twice a year the leaders of EFC affiliate institutions from across the spectrum meet together for prayer and conversation. Both Clemenger and Fietje laud the deepening of relationships and unity that has evidently grown over the years. Collaboration among such diversity has produced fruit, including an emphasis on encouraging the Canadian government to address religious persecution on a diplomatic level.

"The Office of Religious Freedom was



**"We are called to be practitioners, not just opinion givers," notes Bill Fietje.**

something we had been working toward for about ten years," says Clemenger. "Having direct contact with the office of the ambassador gives us more of a focal point for our international engagement on behalf of

persecuted Christians."

Clemenger refers to Luke 10 and John 21 – where Jesus tells disciples to first step forward in peace, then continue in fellowship and then healing, meeting a wide spectrum of people's needs – as an example of where the EFC gets its biblical mandate.

Looking ahead Fietje says there will be more times when the EFC will have the ability and the mandate to also be a prophetic voice. "We can say, 'Here's where the future lies, and here's how we can change it, challenge it.' Not in a mystical way, but a collaborative voice that comes from observing what's going on around us. If the EFC speaks, it never does so on its own behalf, but on behalf of its moral owners, the Canadian Evangelical Church. We endeavour to be their voice."

The voice of an evangelical understanding of the Christian faith and its meaning for life and society in Canada – that is the EFC. ■



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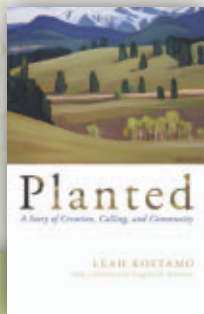


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


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# Forty Evangelical Denominations Together

The EFC is formally affiliated with 40 denominational groups in Canada.



For complete lists of the EFC affiliates, which also include individual congregations, ministry organizations and post-secondary schools, visit [www.theEFC.ca/affiliates](http://www.theEFC.ca/affiliates)

# Canadian Charities Appreciate the EFC

By Alex Newman

Institutions affiliated with the EFC, currently including 68 ministry organizations and 36 post-secondary schools, say the EFC's support is crucial.



PHOTO: BRIERCREST COLLEGE AND SEMINARY

## Michael Pawelke, president of Briercrest College and Seminary

The wide-ranging work of the EFC has the unanimous support and admiration of the charities formally affiliated with it, they tell *Faith Today*. As John Pellowe, CEO of the Canadian Council of Christian Charities, puts it, "I'd have glowing things to say even if I weren't a board member."

An affiliate of the EFC since 1972, the "four Cs" helps 3,200 Canadian charities navigate their way through government regulations, fundraising and governance. The organization appreciates the EFC's effectiveness in presenting an evangelical view of life in a clear, logical way so that both the public and the government will listen, Pellowe says.

One issue he expects to have to grapple with soon is why organizations that "advance religion" should remain eligible for charitable status. Pellowe believes the challenge is really about religion's place in society – the kind of complicated subject he knows the EFC's legal team can handle.

"The EFC is highly respected on Parlia-

ment Hill, whether the MPs agree with them or not," says Pellowe. That advocacy work in Ottawa combined with the EFC's research arm makes it well worth supporting because it "helps all of us with our work."

Larry Worthen, executive director of the Christian Medical and Dental Society, couldn't agree more. Facing a protracted series of legal challenges attempting to legalize physician-assisted suicide, the 1,500-member organization expects to continue drawing on the EFC's resources.

When Worthen recently spent the day with EFC senior staff in Ottawa, he felt "tremendously supported. It's a huge benefit being able to collaborate with them. They helped at a strategic level to see what we could do in partner-

ship to oppose this in Canada. I felt not so alone with the EFC in our corner."

What's at stake, Worthen says, is conscience protection, which has far-reaching effects on the general population as well as for Christian physicians. "We're finding ethicists at various medical schools now saying, 'If you don't want to be involved in abortion, then you shouldn't become a doctor,'" he notes. "This will be a serious concern if euthanasia is legalized."

Working with the EFC, the Christian Medical and Dental Society has developed *The Gift*, a video "which allows church leaders to share the message of opposition to euthanasia with their congregations," he says (see [www.cmdsmedia.wix.com/thegift](http://www.cmdsmedia.wix.com/thegift)).

Christian colleges and universities too feel the effects of engaging with secular society, and welcome fellowship with other academic institutions through the EFC. Relating to their secular peers "requires navigating a delicate line," says Michael Pawelke, president of Briercrest College and Seminary in Saskatchewan.

"We face the pressure of academic freedom

in educational institutions, especially around gender orientation. We want to ensure an environment for academic freedom, grounded in a biblical view. We don't want to be penalized for having that moral world view or be limited in the kinds of degrees we can offer."

The EFC's engagement in such issues, Pawelke says, really helps colleges. Reports such *Hemorrhaging Faith*, commissioned by the EFC Youth and Young Adult Ministry Roundtable ([www.hemorrhagingfaith.com](http://www.hemorrhagingfaith.com)), enable schools to better understand and then work toward addressing issues such as why so many young people are leaving the Church. The same goes for issues such as euthanasia, genetic engineering, abortion and prostitution – EFC statements and publications provide students with solid guidelines to help think through their views.

Bob Kuhn, interim president at Trinity Western University, agrees. "Negative secular perspective on the place of religion in society, and especially evangelical Christianity, [influences] Canadian policy and perspectives. No other organization has the same potential [to respond with such] national breadth and perspective."

For Rick Tobias, former CEO of Yonge Street Mission, the EFC has provided a platform by which he can speak to – and hear from – Evangelicals.

"I'm what you'd call far left on the evangelical scale," says the former street worker. "But Brian Stiller [EFC president 1983–97] kept a place at the table for us. It gave me a place to hear from Evangelicals and [to speak to them] about poverty and justice. I was being invited to speak at men's retreats, at Vision 2000 and other major evangelical events, to which I probably would not have been invited apart from my EFC affiliation."

Although Tobias has stepped down as Yonge Street Mission's CEO, he remains a representative, and in that capacity will be working with the Canadian Council of Churches on its presentation for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission with First Nations communities. Tobias says, "There's no question I will turn to people I have met through the EFC for advice and guidance." ■

# A Voice at the Intersection of Faith and Public Policy

By Robert White

Ottawa insiders commend the work of the EFC's Centre for Faith and Public Life.

**T**he EFC's Centre for Faith and Public Life, an Ottawa office opened in 1996 by current EFC president Bruce Clemenger, has established itself as a base for speaking into critical issues facing Canada and a key resource for those wanting to speak at the intersection of faith and public policy.

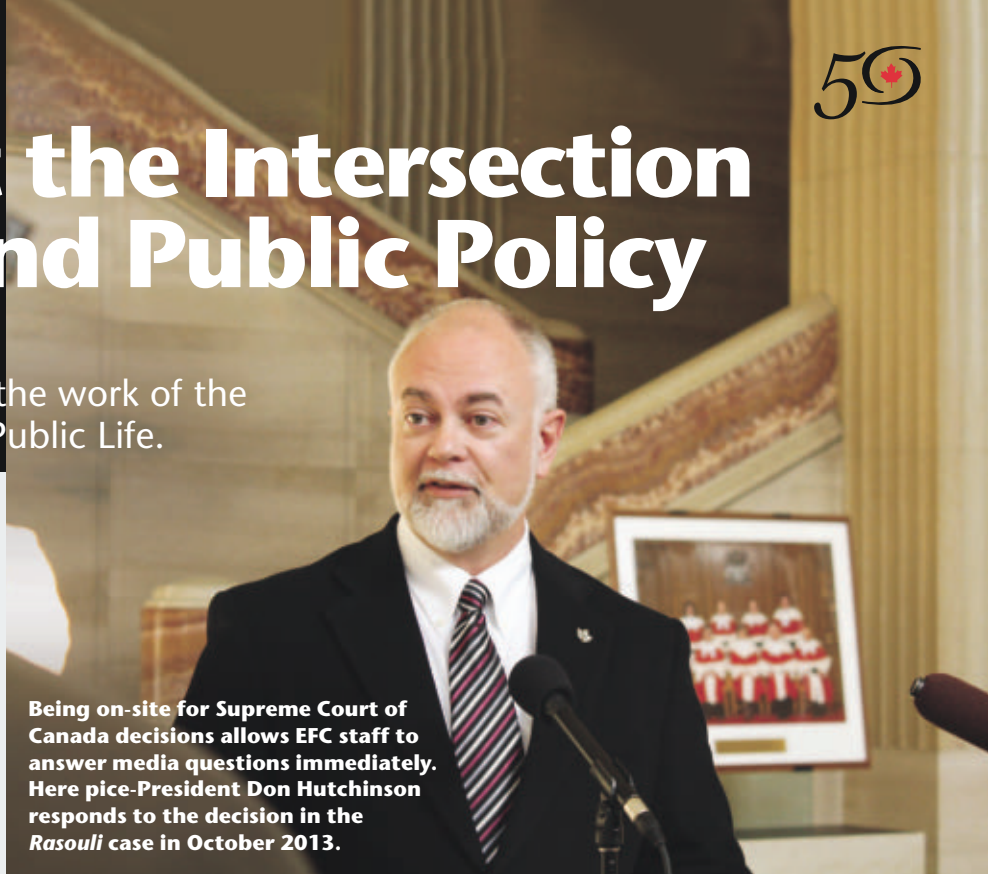
At the time it established the office, the EFC had begun intervening before various levels of Canadian courts and looking for other ways to bring an evangelical perspective to issues being debated in Parliament. Then-president Brian Stiller saw that the EFC's growing role of voicing a Christian perspective on federal issues would become more important.

"We knew that to be heard, we needed to establish ourselves in Ottawa," recalls Clemenger, then EFC's director of national affairs, who moved to Ottawa to establish the office. "Being a few minutes' walk from the Hill is invaluable when dealing with the schedules of Parliamentarians, committees and also partner non-governmental organizations. You need to be able to respond quickly to requests and opportunities for input and comment."

To develop a good reputation it was important to build a strong staff early on and present thoughtful and well researched submissions and court interventions. Persistence is crucial, particularly in the sort of multi-year process that took place in the late 1990s to establish new laws in biotechnology and assisted human reproduction.

"When Parliamentarians and committees seek you out, you know you have become an invaluable part of the process of enacting good law," says Clemenger. He adds that staff have always built connections with Parliamentarians from various political parties as well as networks with other non-governmental organizations.

Janet Epp Buckingham was part of the EFC Ottawa staff from 1999 to 2006, and now directs Trinity Western University's Lauren-



**Being on-site for Supreme Court of Canada decisions allows EFC staff to answer media questions immediately. Here EFC President Don Hutchinson responds to the decision in the *Rasouli* case in October 2013.**

tian Leadership Centre in Ottawa. "At the time there weren't many Christian organizations that had a presence in Ottawa. It wasn't until the debates over the redefinition of marriage [after 2005] that other organizations realized the value of being physically present."

Through study guides, background and position papers, fact sheets, government submissions, public events and court interventions, EFC staff in Ottawa today continue to provide information and analysis for those making public policy and those affected by it – on issues from abortion, euthanasia and bioethics to human trafficking, prostitution and religious freedom and beyond. Staff also meet with MPs and participate in the debates about the public good and what principles should guide the formation of laws in Canada.

Joy Smith is one of those MPs who has found the EFC invaluable, in particular with her private member's Bill C-268, which created a five-year minimum prison sentence for those convicted of trafficking anyone under 18.

"It was only the 15th private member's bill to amend the *Criminal Code* since Confederation," says Smith, MP for the Manitoba riding of Kildonan-St. Paul since 2004. She credits the "push and prayer of the CFPL" for the bill's success.

She also notes the EFC's help with Bill C-310, which lets authorities prosecute Canadians on human trafficking offences that take place outside the country.

And Smith says the EFC is supporting her latest projects – forcing Internet service providers to filter pornography before it gets into the home, and bringing a made-in-Canada version of Sweden's legislation around prostitution.

"They've been a tremendous influence with good action, positive action," says Smith.

Bill Blaikie, also a Manitoba MP, serving the Elmwood-Transcona riding from 1979 to 2008, wasn't as involved with the EFC as Smith, but was familiar with its work.

"They took national politics seriously," says Blaikie, a New Democrat who sees himself on the political left wing of the EFC's constituency.

The EFC's efforts to be nonpartisan and politically balanced are not always recognized, points out Don Hutchinson, the current director of the EFC Centre for Faith and Public Life. But the majority of politicians and staff still consider it a credible resource, he says.

Clemenger takes satisfaction in "a good track record. We are making a significant difference, and it's important that we Evangelicals be part of the national dialogue. Our country needs us to bring recommendations based on our biblical vision of life to the table. That's part of what it means to be a faithful witness and to bring faith into the public life of the nation." ■

# Partnerships Strengthen Many Ministries

By Debra Fieguth

The EFC has facilitated many partnerships that have blessed the nation.

**T**he EFC's work in building partnerships in areas such as evangelism, higher education, ministry to the poor, youth, First Nations communities and others has lasting influence.

One good example is Vision 2000, formed



**The StreetLevel conference gave street ministers a national voice, says Tim Huff.**

in the 1980s as a way to reach out to all Canadians with the gospel message. A task force begun in 1987 turned into a full-time ministry with Don Moore as its executive director.

"It began to grow beyond what anyone expected," recalls Moore, now with World Vision Canada. Some 120 denominations and agencies – many of them outside the EFC's membership – participated.

Vision 2000's goal was "that every person in Canada can see, hear and respond to the gospel by the year 2000." A 1990 congress in Ottawa brought together denominational leaders as well as those focusing on urban, ethnic and media ministries and many other areas.

Among those attending was Gord Martin of Waterloo, Ont., who remembers being "deeply moved" by what he heard at

the event. As a result Martin, a pastor and former missionary, founded Vision Ministries Canada in 1992 "with a focus on church planting, leadership development and cultivating a supportive network of churches." In the two decades since, Vision Ministries Canada has been involved in at least 70 church plants, most of them with Brethren roots.

The 1990 congress was followed by regional consultations across the country in 1995. That year the EFC also published a Vision 2000 book *In Search of Hidden Heroes, Evidence That God is at Work*. It included dozens of stories of ordinary Canadian Christians who have influenced their neighbourhoods, schools and workplaces through sharing their faith in their own unique ways.

Collaboration has also given strength to street ministries and agencies that focus on the poor and marginalized. In the early 1990s frontline workers from street ministries were brought together for a conference called *You Are Not Alone*, spearheaded by Rick Tobias, then-executive director of Yonge Street Mission in Toronto. That resulted in StreetLevel, an ad hoc umbrella organization that ministered to the needs of workers.

In 2003 the EFC convened a two-day consultation on poverty. Tim Huff, then working with Youth for Christ, remembers it as a time of discussing "what we might be able to do better together than separately."

Although street ministry workers had held their own conferences, Huff gives credit to the EFC for drawing them together again, first through a roundtable, and then a national conference in Ottawa in 2006, also called StreetLevel.

The 2006 conference gave street ministers a national voice, says Huff, especially through producing the Ottawa Manifesto, nine statements directed at citizens and the government to help alleviate poverty.

The EFC facilitated a second Ottawa conference inviting Members of Parliament to join with frontline workers. The EFC Ottawa office, says Huff, "was a big help because they knew a lot of MPs who were friendly to the issues."

Recently Huff joined Pat Nixon, founder and former director of Calgary's Mustard

Seed, to launch StreetLevel as a formal ministry and secure its own charitable status. It has a triple mandate of caring for frontline poverty workers, teaching children and youth to be compassionate, and building a national network.

EFC leaders are still "very connected to what we are doing," says Huff. He affirms that the EFC "really did help birth the current StreetLevel. We probably wouldn't be where we are" without the EFC.

Christian Higher Education Canada (CHEC) is another charity with roots in an EFC partnership. In 1998 the EFC facilitated a roundtable with representatives from Christian liberal arts universities and colleges. In 2005 the roundtable, together with two other groups (the Association of Canadian Bible Colleges and the Christian Higher Education Enrolment Association), launched CHEC, which remained under the EFC's umbrella for several years.

The education roundtable grew to include seminaries and gained charitable status in 2008. CHEC now has 34 members, all of them also affiliated with the EFC, according to executive director Justin Cooper, formerly president of Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ont.

"We have a very close and good relationship with the EFC," says Cooper. Examples include recent co-operation on a study of Quebec theological education, a database on Christian higher education and a higher education parliamentary breakfast in Ottawa.

"I'm not sure we could do what we do effectively without the EFC," Cooper says, pointing to the EFC's legal advice and expertise in carrying out surveys.

Other EFC partnerships have included the Aboriginal Ministries Council chaired by Ray Aldred, the Youth and Young Adult Ministry Roundtable chaired by John Wilkinson of Youth Unlimited, Equipping Evangelists headed by Merv Budd, the Child in Church and Culture Partnership led by Shelley Campagnola, the Canadian Network of Ministries to Muslims headed by Randy Hoffman, the Canadian Marriage and Family Network with Greg McCombs and Purpose at Work chaired by Gerry Organ. ■



# Connecting Worldwide

By Debra Fieguth

The Canadian church has contributed to, and benefitted from, the World Evangelical Alliance.

**T**he EFC is part of a global network of 600 million Evangelicals through the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA).

That relationship connects Canadians to their brothers and sisters worldwide.

It's such a strong relationship that the EFC has sometimes helped the Alliance continue when things looked very dark.

Gary Edmonds' resignation as secretary-general of WEA in December 2004 "almost paralyzed the operations" of the WEA, says International Council chair Ndaba Mazabane. Serious financial and other issues were sinking the organization.

Mazabane called an urgent meeting of the WEA International Council "to chart the way forward." EFC president Bruce Clemenger, a new member of the council, volunteered to host.

"This gathering at the EFC's offices gave WEA a lease of life in ways beyond imagination," recalls Mazabane. Important decisions were made to ensure the WEA could continue.

"The WEA needed a strong national alliance to step up, and we did," says Clemenger. The EFC agreed to host the WEA office and handle its administration and operations.

Most importantly the EFC released Geoff Tunnicliffe, then responsible for the EFC's global initiatives, to co-ordinate the affairs of WEA until a planned May 2005 summit. At the summit the council appointed Tunnicliffe head of the WEA, a position he still holds. The EFC is one of the major financial supporters of WEA, Mazabane adds.

Tunnicliffe's leadership in the international picture goes back to 1999–2002, when he led a team to develop the Refugee Highway Partnership, a WEA network of 350 organizations.

As secretary-general, Tunnicliffe

frequently meets with foreign government leaders and has brokered dialogue between warring factions. He has also had meetings with popes, archbishops and other religious bodies and leaders.

The 2005 intervention was the second time in 20 years that the EFC rescued WEA from the brink. Canadian historian W. Harold Fuller points to another moment in 1985, when WEA was in debt and without a solid support base. It was through persuasion by the EFC's Brian Stiller that the international director, David Howard, remained at the helm instead of resigning in discouragement, says Fuller.

Howard and members of the executive were meeting for two days of prayer, with Howard about to resign when the phone rang. It was Stiller, who had heard rumours of Howard's resignation but was unaware of the meeting taking place.

"You can't do that!" Stiller said to Howard. "WEA needs you and we need WEA." Encouraged by Stiller's insistence that he was still God's person for the job, and buttressed by news that others in the WEA supported that stance, Howard remained.

Fuller, a former missionary in Nigeria and member of the EFC's executive, eventually became vice-chair of WEA, assisting then-chair Tokunboh Adeyemo, whom Fuller had helped to mentor when they both lived in Nigeria. Fuller's 1996 book *People of the Mandate* (Paternoster Publishing) provides an early history of the WEA.

More recently Stiller was named the WEA's global ambassador. Since 2011 he has travelled the world encouraging Evangelicals, some of whom live and minister in difficult or challenging circumstances. He posts their



**Geoff Tunnicliffe was appointed head of the WEA in 2005.**

stories at [www.DispatchesFromBrian.com](http://www.DispatchesFromBrian.com) and elsewhere.

Other Canadians have also given leadership. For 10 years Eileen Stewart-Rhude chaired the EFC's task force on women in ministry. In 2001 she was appointed to represent Canada on the WEA global council. In 2006 she was named executive director of the WEA Women's Commission. Stewart-Rhude has a passion to share the stories of women around the world, especially those who are changing the lot of women through education in social, health and spiritual issues.

Another Canadian, Commissioner Christine MacMillan (retired) of The Salvation Army, provides leadership on issues of justice, particularly from her position as the WEA's international spokesperson on human trafficking.

"We owe our gratitude to the board of the EFC for their unrelenting and continued support of WEA's efforts," says Mazabane. "The EFC has set an example of how member bodies and affiliates can collaborate and partner with us in pursuing the grand vision and laudable ideals in the WEA mission statement. We wish them strength and success into the future!" ■

## Supporting Global Mission

**N**ot all of the EFC's work on global initiatives is done on the front lines. Here at home the EFC Global Mission Roundtable works hard at ensuring a healthy perspective on overseas work.

Here at home the EFC Global Mission Roundtable works to ensure a healthy perspective on overseas work.

The roundtable formed in 1995, after a student consultation on global

mission, says executive director Matthew Gibbins. The group focuses on strategic mission partnership, emerging mission leaders in the Canadian context (especially churches with non-European roots), and development of resources and research.

Its top resources are two national standards documents: a *Code of Best Practice in Short-term Mission* and a *Code of Best Practice in Church-to-Church-Partnerships*. The mission code has been copied and emulated in other countries. Both are free at [www.theEFC.ca/globalmission](http://www.theEFC.ca/globalmission). ■ —DF

50

# 50 Years in God's



## Communicating in the 20th Century

## Communicating in the 21st Century



# Service

## EFC Partnerships



- Religious Liberty Commission.** 1997–present
- Global Mission Roundtable.** 1997–present
- Youth & Young Adult Ministry Roundtable.** 2001–present
- Aboriginal Ministries Council.** 1995–2012
- Child in Church and Culture Partnership.** 2000–2011
- Vision Canada / National Evangelism Partnerships.** 1970s–2007
- Forum for Women in Ministry Leadership.** 1993–2003
- Task Force on Education.** 1989–2000
- Social Action Commission.** 1970s–2000

## The EFC Worldwide



Brian Stiller and other WEA delegates.



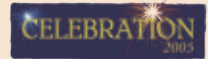
Geoff Tunnicliffe meets with the Minister of Unification for the South Korean Government in 2013.

Find more detailed historical information at [www.theEFC.ca/50](http://www.theEFC.ca/50).

## EFC Initiatives



EFC Consultation on Human Life, 1986



Celebration 2005



Julia Beazley,  
Centre for Faith  
and Public Life



EFC lawyers Don  
Hutchinson and  
Faye Sonier at the  
Supreme Court.

## Independent Ministries the EFC Helped to Start



**Canadian Marriage and Family Network** [www.cmfn.ca](http://www.cmfn.ca)



**Canadian Network of Ministries to Muslims** [www.cnmm.ca](http://www.cnmm.ca)



**Christian Higher Education Canada** [www.checcanada.ca](http://www.checcanada.ca)



**Equipping Evangelists** [www.equippingevangelists.ca](http://www.equippingevangelists.ca)



**Street Level.** [www.streetlevel.caom](http://www.streetlevel.caom)



**The Word Guild** [www.thewordguild.com](http://www.thewordguild.com)



**World Relief Canada** [www.wrcanada.org](http://www.wrcanada.org)

## Some Former Presidents



**Brian Stiller**  
1983–1997



**Gary Walsh**  
1997–2003



**Bruce Clemenger**  
2003–present

## Unlikely Stories: Historical Anecdotes From Early EFC Leaders

By Doug Koop

On a January morning in 1971, John Irwin received a phone call asking him to serve on the board of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. He declined. His dad had recently suffered a heart attack and was in hospital. And John had just been named president of a major publishing company. It was not a convenient time.

Two days later the phone rang again. The caller Jim Clemenger reported that the prominent evangelical politician Robert N. Thompson had been elected EFC president and wanted to meet with the full executive committee.

“Why tell me?” asked Irwin. “Oh,” replied Clemenger, “you were unanimously elected to serve as treasurer.” After consulting with his father, Irwin decided to accept the position.

It’s a decision he does not regret, but his first year was very busy – and very hard. The organization was strapped for money. In December 1971 his father died.

The day of the funeral is indelibly etched in Irwin’s memory. His friends from EFC were there, and despite the sadness of the day, the business of the fellowship could not be neglected. “I wish I had a photograph,” says Irwin. “After the funeral, ten of us signed \$4,000 notes on the trunk of a car in order to borrow \$40,000 to help us pay our bills.”

Irwin also recalls how he talked the principal of a major accounting firm into auditing the EFC books pro bono. Forty-three years later the EFC is still using the same auditor, and Irwin still sits on the EFC audit committee. “I’m 76 years old. I need to get off,” he says.

Don MacLeod was a young Presbyterian minister from Nova Scotia when he attended an early EFC gathering at Cooke’s Presbyterian Church in Toronto in 1964. As he watched the small group of mainline and evangelical Christians cluster in the large auditorium, he wondered how they would “get it together.”

Several years later, as pastor of Bridlewood Presbyterian Church in Toronto, MacLeod joined the EFC executive and began a term as president in 1973. (Until the EFC reached the stage of hiring staff in 1983, the

chair of the board held the title “president.”) The EFC had just weathered a season of hardship and managed to retire its debts.

MacLeod and his colleagues on the executive brought new energy, and organized a national leadership seminar that drew some 1,500 Christian leaders from all across Canada to learn from a roster of exceptional Evangelicals including John Stott and Donald McGavran.

“We had a great meeting in 1975 at York University,” he recalls. “It was the breakthrough as far as evangelicalism is concerned in Canada. It was inspiring to see 1,500 people praising God – certainly the capstone of my work with the EFC.”

MacLeod explains the group was very diverse and included a lot of mainline church people. “Anglicans came for John Stott. It was also the wave of the church growth movement and *Time* magazine proclaimed 1975 as ‘the Year of the Evangelical.’”

In retrospect MacLeod sees the event as a major tipping point that revealed a shift of growth and momentum from mainline to evangelical churches in Canada.

Christian & Missionary Alliance churchman Mel Sylvester first began attending meetings organized by the fledgling EFC in 1973. He later became a member of the executive, and in the early 1980s was asked to serve a term as president.

He reluctantly agreed. “My qualifier was that we needed a full-time executive director. I knew I wouldn’t have the time or abilities to do what needed to be done.” This wasn’t a new conversation for the board, but Sylvester was adamant and argued forcefully that Brian Stiller, a fellow executive member then serving as executive director of Youth for Christ, was the right person for the position.

“I had a strong persuasion that Brian was the one, if he would leave YFC. I said, ‘Brian, I think God has prepared you for this.’”

Mel Sylvester and Brian Stiller in the early 1980s.



Sylvester describes himself as “a strong believer in the providence of God, of providence and placement.” Citing the biblical examples of Joseph and Mordecai as people divinely situated to meet the demands of the day, he maintains it is part of the Christian calling “to seek to catch God’s signals, to discern who God has prepared ‘for such a time as this.’”

According to Sylvester, Stiller later confided “that he was in the process of finishing up at YFC and wasn’t at all sure what was next for him.” Within a few months Stiller took the reins and the organization began to grow in every way.

Sylvester calls Stiller “a true visionary,” a man with “great capacity” to see what needed to be done long before others, and to work effectively to get it done. “Along with that capacity was a pile of courageous faith – the courage required to step out in faith and trust God to see projects come to pass to God’s glory.

“Brian repeatedly demonstrated that. In God’s timing he was there to serve for those years. ■

# Stories From Three Presidents: 1983 to the Present

By Patricia Paddey

**A** lot can change in 30 years. Over the past three decades, the EFC has grown and shifted its focus under the leadership of three different presidents – Brian Stiller (1983–1997), Gary Walsh (1997–2003) and Bruce Clemenger (2003–present).

Each of the three has helped shape the EFC by responding to perceived needs in the broader Canadian culture at the time.

Ask Stiller about the emphasis of efforts during his tenure, and he doesn't hesitate. "Moving the evangelical mind from an exclusionary mindset to one of public engagement," he says. "To help Evangelicals recognize that the redeeming nature of Christ is for the person and their world. There's not one part of life that doesn't belong to the Lord."

He went about it in a variety of ways – delivering hundreds of workshops for churches across the country, cultivating relationships with the media that helped create a voice for Evangelicals in Canada, and engaging with public officials at the highest level of government.

Stiller recalls one of his earliest meetings with then-prime minister Brian Mulroney. The EFC leader arrived early, and as he waited for his appointment flipped through the Scriptures to Daniel 11. "I felt the Spirit say, 'Drop your agenda and bless this king.'" Stiller hesitated. "I wasn't sure whether this was the pizza I'd eaten the night before or whether it was really the Spirit speaking to me," he concedes. But he went into the meeting, and after some small talk told the prime minister he had no agenda other than to encourage him.

Next, Stiller led our country's political head in a Bible reading and prayer, and then left. "I had no idea whether what I'd done was appropriate or whether I'd crossed the line," he says.

But the following week he bumped into senior cabinet member Ray Hnatyshyn on a plane. The justice minister related that Mulroney had expressed gratitude for Stiller's encouragement, and told his cabinet that if, as a government, they ignored the Evangelicals, they'd be "the losers."

"That [meeting with Mulroney] opened more doors and opportunities than all the protests or papers or interventions we could have done," Stiller says.



**Each of the three presidents – Brian Stiller 1983–1997, Gary Walsh 1997–2003 and Bruce Clemenger 2003–present – have their unique stories to share.**

One of the final major initiatives to occur under Stiller's leadership was the World Shapers '96 Conference, designed to emphasize the importance of people of faith as world shapers. Through international speakers such as Chuck Colson, Tony Campolo and Michael Cassidy (of African Enterprise, who played a role in South Africa's peaceful first democratic elections), participants saw the importance of leadership "in bringing into reality ideas and visions that matter much to Kingdom witness," Stiller explains.

On the threshold of a new century, the emphasis was a timely one. He recalls that those gathered seemed to sense the Spirit calling Canadians "to become vigorous and active in creative and faith-inducing initiatives."

When Gary Walsh took over as president in 1997, he strengthened the organization's focus on facilitating ministry partnerships, and reached out beyond many of the traditional evangelical denominations to connect with renewal movements in the mainline churches. "I wanted to state our evangelical profile, identity and brand in terms that any serious orthodox Christian would [understand and] want to join," he explains.

In building ministry partnerships, Walsh emphasized "doing the things necessary to move the Kingdom forward, downplaying our private agendas." He maintained strong connections with the World Evangelical Alliance and opened the EFC's doors to Geoff Tunnicliffe – who would go on to become head of the worldwide organization.

During his time as president, Bruce

Clemenger – who previously headed up the EFC's Ottawa office – has deepened and enriched the organization's law and public policy work, brought a new focus on research and analysis of church and faith trends, and fostered collaboration with other agencies, both faith-based and secular, on a broadening range of issues.

Clemenger tells a story that serves as a good example of such collaboration. "In the debates over redefining marriage, there was a group of professors at McGill University who were very strongly committed to the male-female definition of marriage," he recounts. He called one of them – Daniel Cere, then-president of the Newman Centre (home of Catholic spiritual and intellectual life at McGill) – and suggested they meet and talk. "It was summer and it was time to assess our strategies and prepare for the next round of debates."

Cere agreed to meet Clemenger and suggested they meet at a Catholic family camp he was directing. "I thought it would just be me and him talking," Clemenger recalls, "but I pulled up and a car drove in beside me, and out popped Douglas Farrow, Margaret Somerville, Paul Nathanson – all prominent academics, thinkers and writers on issues of ethics, religion and human sexuality from McGill.

"So we all sat by the lake and munched on hamburgers, and talked and strategized."

Such openness to working with others will no doubt position the EFC well to continue to meaningfully represent Canadian Evangelicals – and to engage our culture thoughtfully – in the years ahead. ■



May God continue to bless your mission of bringing Christians together to dialogue, to equip and to partner for greater effectiveness in ministry and witness.

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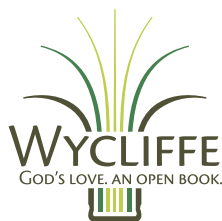
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*Brian C Stiller,  
Global Ambassador, The World Evangelical Alliance*

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# How Can Worship Leaders Work in Unity With Pastors?

The relationship between senior pastors and worship leaders can be fraught with peril – or really wonderful. Worship leader Andy Park guides us closer to wonderful. *By Andy Park*

I've served as a worship leader and pastor in 10 different churches over the past 38 years. The churches I've worked in range from 10 to 5,000 people. I've worked with pastors of a wide variety of ages, personalities and leadership styles. I've had distant relationships with most and a closer friendship with only a few.

What makes a co-working relationship between pastor and worship leader a lasting, fruitful and enjoyable experience?

## Trust and Respect

The trust factor is huge. If I trust my pastors, then I can follow them and "hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work" (1 Thessalonians 5:13). The Christlike qualities I look for in a pastor are generosity, freedom from selfish ambition and a servant's heart. When I see pastors

exercising spiritual authority for the benefit of those they lead, I know I can trust them.

A healthy co-working relationship is built on mutual trust. And trust is built by demonstrating a servant heart. To earn the trust of a pastor, I need to consistently and joyfully serve my team members, the leadership team and the entire congregation. My job as a servant-leader is to make worship easier for the entire local church family. That often means making sacrificial choices (in song selection, length of worship time, giving up my time on the platform to make space for someone else).

When pastors see me doing these things, they can trust *me* because they see that I really am working for the benefit of everyone. If I sense a pastor doesn't trust me, I don't feel the freedom to be creative and expressive in my worship – two es-

sential parts of worship leading. Life in the church is generally unhappy without mutual trust.

## Adjust Expectations

In 1979 I had my first experience as a Sunday worship leader. I was disappointed by the lack of relationship I had with the senior pastor. I was not only a primary worship leader, but also an intern pastor. I had almost no contact with the senior pastor. I was hoping he would be a friend and mentor to me. But he had hundreds of other people to attend to, and dozens of other leaders.

Since then, I've learned not to have unrealistic expectations of the role a pastor will play in my life. If you look up to a pastor and have an aching need to be guided and parented, you may find yourself craving attention from them and being

set up for disappointment. Jesus himself only had 11 people that formed his most intimate group of friends, and only three of them were His closest companions.

Pastors are human. They have a limited capacity to care for people, just like everyone else. So I do not expect them to be superhuman. I don't expect them to be mistake-free either. I forgive if I feel hurt by something a pastor says or does.

In more than one of churches in which I've served, I've seen other young leaders receive more favour and attention from the pastor. At times I felt slighted and ignored. I struggled with jealousy. But it was a sifting experience for me. It produced godliness in me. Whom was I serving? What was my goal? To serve Christ? Or to seek to gain favour from a pastor who would reward me with his friendship and maybe a staff position?

I do not expect pastors or leaders to initiate contact with me. I take the first step. I have a busy life with my work and family, and so does everyone else. It is my job as a member of the Body of Christ to

pursue fellowship. I know people who feel sorry for themselves because nobody calls them. That's the sin of self-pity. The way out is repentance and taking positive steps toward healthy relationships.

Friendship isn't the first word I would use to describe most of my relationships with pastors with whom I've worked. Coworker, leader, mentor, overseer and authority are more accurate. Sure, there has been an element of friendship with each pastor, but a deeper friendship only develops with a special set of circumstances.

### Values, Priorities and Practices

Do you share the same theology of worship? Do you speak the same musical worship language? From one denomination to another, the spectrum of worship styles is broad. There's great variety within movements and denominations. For worship leaders to know if they belong, they need to know what overarching guidelines the pastor has established. There needs to be ongoing clarification regarding the philosophy of worship and worship leading.

Ongoing communication and adjusting the style and approach to worship leading is often needed. Clear expression of expectations between the pastor and worship leader is essential for the team to work in unity.


In some cases, some of these elements will not be clearly defined because the pastor implicitly trusts the worship leader. They know the worship leader is aware of the historical precedent of worship in that particular church, and they will lead in a manner that fits the personality of that church.

### Communicate

Talk about issues. Have the courage to initiate discussions about pastoral decisions you don't understand or don't like. Begin by asking questions, not confronting. Seek to understand the pastor's viewpoint before you give your opinion. I have to fight against my natural tendency to defend my viewpoint, my "turf" and myself. If I go into a meeting with guns blazing, I'm not pursuing peace.

I've been a senior pastor. I know how difficult it is. I know what it feels like to

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be under the scrutiny of the whole church and be criticized. This helps me suspend judgement when I disagree with a pastor's decision. I know there are many factors behind the scenes I cannot see, and every leader has their own leadership style and priorities.

It can be intimidating to talk through policy issues with people in authority. But most of that fear comes from within me – it's not because my pastors have been ogres. A leader who is secure and values team leadership will be open to answering questions about their choices in a nondefensive way. All my pastors have been ready to listen to my ideas and answer my questions. The great majority of my discussions with pastors have been peaceful and encouraging.

### Give and Receive Authority

If a senior pastor wants to create an environment for a long-term relationship with a worship leader, they will delegate as much authority as they can. This provides a chance to mature as a worship leader and develop a worship leader's gifts. It

gives a healthy sense of ownership over the ministry to the worship leader. If a leader has decision-making power, they will work harder to serve the church and be more motivated to hang in there for the long haul.

Empowered leadership is a high value for me. I come from a movement of churches that strongly believes in delegating authority to people to lead – and then letting them lead – not as a puppet, but as a responsible decision maker.

The relationship between pastors and worship leaders works best when pastors train and release strong, capable leaders who can lead responsibly. Delegating authority to lead is about envisioning and empowering. Under God's authority people are mobilized into service, not confined to carrying out orders from an overseer.

Top-down leadership is less accepted today than it was 20 years ago. Gifted leaders do not want to be told what to do – they want to be part of a team that works and consults together.

### Avoid Jumping From Church to Church

I tend toward a spirit of wanderlust. It's easy to think of reasons why it would be better to live somewhere else and work in a different church. All kinds of things can make worship leaders look for the greener grass on the other side of the fence. Part of that is the discomfort of being a pilgrim on the earth. The only place that will really be home is heaven.

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**ANDY PARK** is a songwriter, worship leader and Christian recording artist. He is author of *To Know You More – Cultivating the Heart of the Worship Leader* (InterVarsity Press, 2002).

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The *Faith Today* Interview:

# How a Pastor's Wife Defends the Dignity



PHOTO: LINDSEY KAUTZ

**Glendyne Gerrard** is a minister's wife who went from praying for the persecuted in the privacy of her own home to very publicly defending the dignity and fighting for the protection of Canadian girls and women who are prostituted. Gerrard is director of Defend Dignity ([www.defenddignity.ca](http://www.defenddignity.ca)), a national ministry that encourages churches and individuals to fight for the abolition of prostitution in Canada. She lives in Oakville, Ont., with her husband Douglas, who is executive vice-president of the Christian & Missionary Alliance in Canada.

**FT:** Glendyne, for our readers who don't know, what exactly is Defend Dignity?

**GG:** We are a justice initiative of the Christian and Missionary Alliance family of churches to abolish prostitution in Canada. We act as a catalyst for individuals and churches to get involved in ending sexual exploitation. We build our work around three main areas of action: awareness through events and resources, advocacy with the federal government for prostitution law reform and aid to churches working with victims and municipal legislation.

**FT:** The word "abolition" doesn't get used very often, outside of talking about slavery. I'm assuming it's an inten-

tional choice to use that word?

**GG:** It's come to take on its own meaning when you talk to groups like us involved in the issue of human trafficking with its most common end point of prostitution. We believe that tackling this thing by dealing with the demand end of things is the way to go. We believe we can end prostitution if we end the demand for it. It's the belief that we can put an end to this much like Wilberforce did in England with slavery. With modern-day slavery we can end it if we take a serious look at demand.

**FT:** And when you say demand, you are referring to men in minivans, correct?

# nity of Women Who Are Prostituted

**GG:** That really is the face of it. It's any man. I think people often think it's the Robert Picktons and the guys who lurk in dark alleys. It's any man. We use the statistic of one in nine men in Canada buys sex. That's a statistic we found from the journalist Victor Malarek [author of *The Natashas: The New Global Sex Trade* (Penguin Canada, 2004) and *The Johns: Sex for Sale and the Men Who Buy It* (Arcade Publishing, 2011)]. I've got a number of survivor friends. They tell me it is the dads with the three car seats in the van, to the judge, to the policeman. It can be anybody.

**FT: So how did a nice minister's wife get so involved in this issue?**

**GG:** It started with my own engagement with God's Word. Fifteen years ago we were pastoring in an affluent prairie church. As I read verses on justice issues, I realized God was getting a hold of my heart. I started praying Micah 6:8 pretty much every day and asking God who was out there. At the time, that wasn't part of my day to see "those types of people."

A few years after that we moved to Regina. I pored over a whole bunch of books. Within a couple of weeks, I read that a food shelter was looking for volunteers in the office. That's where I met a prostitute for the first time. I started to pray. I embraced the challenge. God said in my ear, "This is who you've been praying about for ten years."

**FT: The Church seems to be adjusting its take on the issue of prostitution. It feels like we've moved from seeing women as "bad" to the prostituted woman as the victim. A shift from an issue of morality to one of justice. Is this what's happening?**

**GG:** It's about knowledge. Our audience is church people. When people come to understand the face of prostituted women in our country, they move to compassion. The number one reason a woman is in prostitution is poverty. And that becomes a huge factor as to why she can't get out. Most girls who start are 12 or 13 years old. People who are working on the front lines tell us there are now girls as young as seven or eight. That's not child prostitution, that is child sexual abuse. What kid is making a choice at that age?

**FT: Is sexual abuse in the past a common reality?**

**GG:** I don't know of any prostituted woman who would say that it hadn't been a part of their background. They have come to see themselves as good for nothing else. Sexual abuse and poverty both factor in. It has become the only bit of income they get. They don't have an education. How do you put it on a résumé to get a regular job? First Nations

women are the face of prostitution in Canada. You've got all those factors of colonization and racism.

**FT: How do we help the Church move to a place of actively helping women?**

**GG:** When the Church realizes these women are really oppressed and vulnerable, than I choose to believe the Church will act. I think we are turning a big corner on church engagement on this. They are seeing it as a Canadian issue, in every community.

**FT: For the Nov/Dec issue of *Faith Today*, we trailed Christian workers doing outreach to prostituted women. There was evidence of a lot of addiction. What role does that play?**

**GG:** It can work two ways. Sometimes it can be when the pimp tries to get the girl completely dependent

on him. So, she doesn't enter it addicted, but that becomes a part of it. It's another form of exploitation. Some gals are addicted because it's the only coping method to endure what they are enduring. Prostituted women in our country have a mortality rate 40 per cent higher than the national average. Addiction is another trap.

**FT: How do you help women get out?**

**GG:** There has to be a group or an individual who understands the factors that have kept her there, and come alongside and say, "We are here to help you financially."

They have to recognize this won't happen overnight. By this time the woman probably has children. She will need help. Some have criminal records and don't qualify for welfare. How can she support herself and her kids unless someone says, "We will help support you."

There's got to be some way they can make income. And with addiction there has to be someone standing beside them as they go through rehab.

I truly believe as a Christ follower that their encounters with Jesus come from being with a group of Christ followers who surround them. For the four women who speak for us in Defend Dignity and share their stories, if it wasn't that faith in Christ, which they first saw through the love of people, they wouldn't have stayed out of prostitution.

And in all those cases, the Church played a huge role. Some found Christ in Alpha, for some it was through a small group. Yes, there are success stories where Jesus was not involved, but church is a huge factor.

**FT: One woman interviewed for the story I mentioned earlier felt she was judged at church when the pastor**

“**Prostituted women in our country have a mortality rate 40 per cent higher than the national average.**”



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**found out about her former life.**

**GG:** That saddens me. I don't doubt that it happens. Thankfully I'm not hearing that in my circles. It is a learning curve for most of us middle-class people who have been in church for a while. This is not common for us. We're not used to coming to church and sitting beside a woman who has been prostituted.

We have to reach a place of loving unconditionally. The average number of times it takes a woman to get out is seven attempts. If we meet her at attempt one, there will be lots of time for love and grace.

At the forums we do, just about every time our women share their stories, there are three or four women coming and saying, "This was part of my journey and I never told anyone."

It's a little naïve of us to think there aren't women in our church who have had this as part of their journey.

**FT: So how does Defend Dignity interact with churches?**

**GG:** We do information forums. We come in and we bring in one of these gals to tell their stories. We partner with the EFC and Julia Beazley comes with her knowledge of the law. We're advocating for the Nordic model and Julia does a piece on that. We have a Calgary police officer travelling with us now. He's passionate about speaking to men and adds a great component by talking about pornography. We try and find a frontline organization in the local area doing great things with the gals. People need the local groups right there to connect with.

We have tables set up with template letters to MPs. We've put together a whole packet. We have done the research. If you took half an hour and read through, you'd have more knowledge than your MP.

**FT: But what about my church? I live in a smaller town outside Toronto where I don't think we have prostitution as an issue.**

**GG:** Oh my. You do, you do. Before I come and speak, I go on Craigslist in your part of the world and that tells the story. That's all it takes – two clicks on my computer and I can tell you who is for sale in your part of the world. If one in nine men is buying, we are pretty confident they are doing it in your area.

**FT: Do you ever have people who just**

**don't want to hear about this issue?**

**GG:** I think what I've seen is God at work in such miraculous ways again and again and again. It is the joy of my life to tell people the difference God is making. The doors that have opened for us, the way He has come through. We had been in existence for about a year. There were three of us as the core group. We knew we needed a First Nations woman sitting on our team, because how dare we speak on this issue without that woman at our table?

I kept seeing a woman's face that had been a cook at the soup kitchen I volunteered at years before. I knew nothing about her – just her first name and that she had lots of kids. I called her. I gave her the ten-minute version of who we were. She had been praying for a couple of months that God would use her story to affect women in Canada. A block from where we had been sitting, she had been turned out on the streets as a 13-year-old to prostitute. Her story is one from tragedy to triumph.

So now she sits on our team and is one of our speakers. I see again and again God's heart for the oppressed. When we do what He wants us to do, these wonderful things happen.

**FT: What is your sense on the situation in Canada with the Nordic model specifically? What do you think will happen?**

**GG:** My sense is that the Supreme Court is going to do away with our laws. I totally believe in Jesus' supremacy on this issue. No matter what the Supreme Court decides, it's a good opportunity for Parliament to bring in really good laws that would work. I know that Parliament will have to respond. My job is to keep doing what I'm doing and leave the results up to the Lord.

One of the beauties of our system is that we can influence for change, talk to politicians and let them know what our viewpoints are.

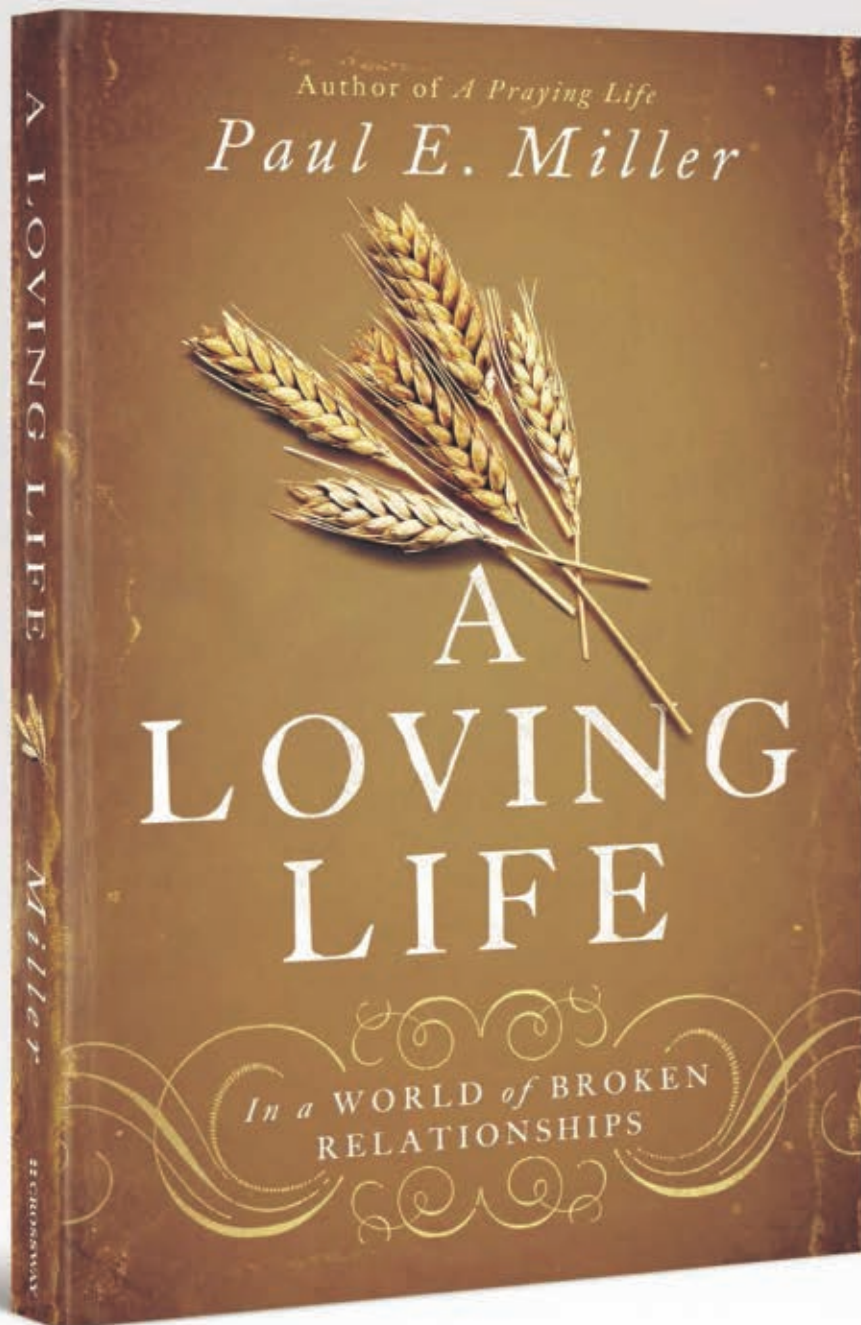
Let's be talking to our kids, our young boys. We sure better be addressing this with our young guys. How do we talk to and treat girls and women? A buyer just doesn't one day decide to go out and buy a woman. There have been steps that led to that. It is an economic truth that this thing would go away if we didn't have men buying.

**FT: Thank you. FT**

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Paul E. Miller is executive director of *seeJesus* as well as the best-selling author of *A Praying Life*, among other works. With the help of his ministry staff, Miller creates and conducts interactive discipleship seminars throughout the world. He and his wife, Jill, live in the Philadelphia area and have six children as well as a growing number of grandchildren.

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# He Shall Have Dominion From Sea to Sea

## Was Canada founded as a Christian country?

An unending series of meetings in the dreary setting of winter in London, England is probably not most people's idea of a great vacation. But the representatives of Britain's North American colonies who gathered there in 1866-7 had serious business – the unification of those colonies to form a single Confederation.

As the final negotiations wound down, the delegates agreed the new country should be called “Canada.” But they became stuck on what *kind* of jurisdiction “Canada” would be. Would it be a kingdom? A viceroyalty?

The answer came from Samuel Leonard Tilley, a New Brunswick delegate and former premier, who suggested a “dominion.” Tilley was inspired by his morning devotional readings from Psalm 72:8: “He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth” (KJV).

The phrase “from sea to sea” seemed perfectly suited for the new country the delegates were hoping to build, and the name “Dominion of Canada” stuck.

Stories like this one grab our attention as Christians who are also Canadians. They lead us to ask just what was the role of our faith in the founding of our country? In what sense, if any, was Canada founded as a Christian country?

To answer this question, we need to avoid – as C. S. Lewis said about belief in devils — two equal and opposite errors.

The first error we can make is to retroactively *secularize* our past by scrubbing all the Christian influences out of it.

Such an attitude simply shrugs off things like the Psalm 72 reference as irrelevant. This is too often the tendency of secular professors and teachers in secular universities and public schools, many of whom would prefer to write religion out of our collective history.

One popular textbook used widely by university courses on Canadian history, for example, has only five references to Protestantism in its 600-plus pages. Conservative Protestantism or Evangelicalism is only mentioned twice – and once in connection with the Klu Klux Klan!

This marginalization of the role of Christianity in our past is both insulting and historically irresponsible. At the time of Confederation, virtually every Canadian identified with a

Christian denomination (whether or not they were faithful church members). Christian influences suffused both private and public life. And the same has been true for most of Canadian history since then. To pass over this in silence is simply bad history. Who would think of writing a textbook on the history of the Middle East that ignores the role of Islam?

Nevertheless, we can also make the opposite error of retroactively *sanctifying* our collective past as Canadians.

The fact that Canada got its title from a Bible verse does not mean the Fathers of Confederation wrote the British North America Act with a quill in one hand and an open Bible in the other.

The specific form of government they adopted – for all its merits – was the fruit of centuries of British political development, not of sustained reflection on biblical political principles. Their foremost concern was cutting a deal that

would satisfy their political supporters and get them re-elected.

Likewise, though they professed Christianity, several of the politicians who met in London that year were hardly shining examples of Christian leadership.

Some were notorious for their

drunkenness, while others had engaged in serious political corruption. Nor were all of their ideas the best we could aspire to as Christians – they were unanimous, for example, in assuming that women should not be able to vote.

For these and other reasons, we need to be careful not to set up the late 19th century as a kind of golden age in which Canada was a thoroughly Christian country. But as Canadian Christians who care about our country, we can take heart knowing our faith has indeed played an important and positive role in our past.

Take the example of Tilley himself, who gave up a lucrative career as a pharmacist because his evangelical faith motivated him to enter the rough-and-tumble of politics to work for the good of his community. Historian Christopher Moore judges Tilley to have been “probably the most skillful finance minister Canada had in the nineteenth century.”

If God's dominion is going to be manifest in our nation “from sea to sea,” it will be through men and women like Tilley whose faith leads them to work for the common good in our common life. ” **FT**

At the time of Confederation, virtually every Canadian identified with a Christian denomination

**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).



## The Hope of the World

Our vision of the church should include the marketplace.

It has been said that “the hope of the world” is the local church. This is as true today as it was when Jesus declared, “I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18, ESV).

But the local church is more than steeples, buildings, sanctuaries, congregations, pews, robes, priests and preachers. The local church, as many of us have been re-learning over the past few decades, has a mandate to love and impact the city in which she resides.

Every Christian can become a servant and a disciple maker in their neighbourhood and in their workplace, and it is the job of churches to equip us to do so.

Do you agree that we all share the goal that every member of the Body of Christ, including every member of each local congregation, would be lovingly engaged in the purpose of God – to build His Church and invite all into His presence?

Surely we all want our congregations to be places where the Word is taught, the faith is shared, missions are at the forefront, the hungry are fed and the poor are cared for.

But where do the workplace and the marketplace fit in? These are the places where average Christians encounter their colleagues and customers, bosses and employees for many hours every day.

Many of us today are realizing these too are places of worship. These too are part of the Church.

There are many different ways to include the workplace and the marketplace in our understanding of the Church. The key is to engage the whole Church in the greater work of serving the Lord while going about daily demands and responsibilities.

What’s a bit new for some of us is realizing that reaching our city isn’t necessarily accomplished by inviting people to church or to a concert.

I have often argued Christians should not invite someone to church before inviting them into their home.

This point is based on the idea that the Church is bigger than our designated Christian buildings and meeting places. Our mission is to co-operate in advancing the Kingdom of God, which extends to everywhere and any-

where that people acknowledge Him as king, including our homes and workplaces.

The Lord’s Prayer declares, “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done” (Matthew 6:10, KJV). All are invited and all will be challenged to choose just whom they will serve. The workplace in particular is an unreached domain into which we are to shine the light of hope and truth.

Kingdom-focused workers, whether CEOs, managers, manufacturers, maids or merchants, have His work to do as they serve with diligence and competence in the place of their calling.

We trust the Holy Spirit to convict and to save those who are encountered and served. Meanwhile, we can seek to live a life that honours the Lord, loves and serves others, and, when presented with an opportunity, declares that Jesus is Lord of our life.

Yes, pastors are called to serve, as are all who come into a dynamic love relationship with Jesus Christ. Whom are you called to serve?

Let me say a special word about marketplace leaders. These women and men have influence and thus special opportunities to convey God’s love for the city. God has called and empowered business leaders to partner with pastors to impact every segment of our cities.

Let’s put an end to silos in our ministry and our thinking. Let’s work for one church in unity (John 17:17-21), using the gifts of apostolic leaders, pastors and priests, teachers and prophets, intercessors and entrepreneurs!

We can all be men and women of influence in our communities, people who choose to live and work in such a way that others are compelled to notice and be blessed. It is already happening now in cities around the corner and around the globe.

God is not doing a new thing. He is moving by His Spirit as He always has. People of all cultures and capacities are hearing and acting upon His word. Church people are again serving as the face of the local church, not just when they are doing church-sponsored activities, but wherever they go. **FT**

I have often argued  
Christians should not  
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church before inviting  
them into their home.

**GERRY ORGAN** of Greely, Ont., is a marketplace minister in Ottawa on behalf of One Way Ministries ([www.onewayministries.ca](http://www.onewayministries.ca)), an organization that exists to invest in kingdom leaders and promote unity and health in the Church. He previously served ten years as executive director of Christian Business Ministries Canada.



## Strength in Meekness

What to do with the anger that saps strength.

**M**y grandmother was great, but she had that special mother-in-law gift of raising my mother's blood pressure. A well-timed comment about cooking or childrearing would leave my mom stammering and defensive.

As a teenager I would walk by and whisper, "Water off a duck's back, Mom." She came to understand my code – *Let it go. Nana doesn't mean anything by it, and we know you're a good wife and mother* – and my whispers usually helped. But now I wish I had known to say, "Roll it onto God, Mom."

Psalm 37:5 tells us to "commit your way to the Lord." Translated, this verse says something like, "Roll onto Jehovah thy way." At certain family dinners that means passing the gravy and "rolling" the need to defend ourselves, as well as our more serious needs and concerns, onto God.

Jesus was quoting Psalm 37:11 (KJV) when He said, "The meek shall inherit the earth," and it turns out the whole psalm is a primer on meekness. I have always been a little overmeek (reticent, shy, too deferential). So when I read the Bible and find the meek congratulated, I'm delighted.

But there's a catch. It turns out only two people in Scripture are described as meek – Moses and Jesus. So meekness likely has little to do with timidity.

If meekness isn't weakness, what is it? The word has an association with domesticated animals, specifically beasts of burden. At first blush this etymology doesn't thrill me. I don't particularly aspire to be oxlike. But when I think about it, an ox at the plough is not weak but extraordinarily strong. The key, though, is that his power is harnessed and directed. Perhaps meekness is strength submitted to an appropriate authority.

Shortly after I began writing this column, I found myself in rare conflict with a friend. At first, I thought my anger was giving me strength, bolstering my courage so I could deal with the issues. But the anger soon betrayed me, sapping my energy and compromising my ability to act according to wisdom and divine direction. It's only as I have turned my hurt and the overwhelming urge to prove I'm right over to God that I've begun to be able to respond (and sometimes resist responding) from a place of holy, rather than human, strength.

Psalm 37 is all about strength in meekness. It deals with

trusting God to be God, and with not trying to do His job. The meek, for example, don't repay evil for evil. They rely on God for justice (vv.1-3). Several verses mention that the meek don't fret. And the meek let God provide their hearts' desires rather than trying to manipulate people and circumstances to get what they want (v.4).

How much energy do I expend trying to secure provisions, control outcomes and manage people's perceptions of me? Psalm 37 tells us the meek give that labour up. They trust God's claims that He will provide, protect and defend, and in so doing free up resources for putting their hands to God's plough. It's a good plan.

But here's the thing: I would be fine with rolling my burdens onto God if I were guaranteed resolution. There's a joke that describes the effects of playing a country song backwards – your spouse returns, your dog is resurrected and your truck starts working again. I wish that surrender to God worked the same way.

But faith isn't like that. The biblical witness is that circumstances often get more challenging, not less, when your way is committed to the Lord. So why roll it onto God if "it" (the need, circumstance, quarrelsome friend or critical in-law) isn't necessarily going to get fixed?

There are stories about prisoners in Nazi camps who were made to move heavy boulders from one end of a field to the other, only to carry them back again. Many of the men were eventually driven mad, not by the backbreaking nature of the work, but by its futility.

It isn't the experience of being misunderstood (or suffering or poverty) itself that will undo us, but rather the sense we are enduring hardship to no good end. That's why the Apostle Paul emphasized that we do not labour in vain (1 Corinthians 15:58). We discover there is no wasted effort or pain because there is nothing God cannot redeem.

I have a choice. I can wear myself out pushing the boulders of my life around my prison yard. Or I can be meek and roll those burdens onto God. I'm not sure exactly what Jesus meant when He said, "The meek shall inherit the earth," but I've certainly discovered that this world is a better place when I roll it off my shoulders and into His hands. **FT**

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**CAROLYN ARENDS** published a previous version of this column in her e-book *Theology in Aisle Seven: The Uncommon Grace of Everyday Spirituality* (Christianity Today International, 2012), available at [www.carolynarends.com](http://www.carolynarends.com). Hear more from singer, writer and speaker Carolyn Arends at this spring's Women Alive conferences in Grande Prairie, Alta., and Waterloo, Ont. ([www.womenalive.org](http://www.womenalive.org)). Find more of these columns at [www.theEFC.ca/WomenAliveFT](http://www.theEFC.ca/WomenAliveFT).



## God and My Job

What's the right way to juggle mundane work and God's Kingdom?

**T**he conversation at the restaurant breakfast table was blunt. A group of men were looking at the last 11 verses of Matthew 6 and wondering how to “seek first the Kingdom of God.”

What does it mean to trust our day-to-day needs will be supplied by a heavenly Father? Can we really live that out? Not easily.

“I don't really think about church stuff at my job,” commented a computer programmer. “Does that mean I'm serving wealth, not God?”

From there the discussion soared – or sank, depending on your point of view. No one volunteered to quit his job and hit the road in search of Christian volunteer service opportunities. We agreed what we call work is essential to human well-being, but that the money it generates should not be the driving force of our lives.

Is how we spend our time a fair indication of our priorities? By that yardstick we had to recognize our money-making activities certainly do rank high – higher than church, family time, explicit Christian ministry, and even higher than sleep.

So, how do we “seek first the Kingdom of God” when we're basically just occupied with the stuff of daily living? Even when we're not working, we keep plenty busy with all kinds of good and wholesome activities – shopping, preparing food, eating, visiting friends, recreation, exercising, listening to music, reading books, watching movies and so on.

How do we seek or serve God when we're not actively thinking about God stuff? When we're occupied with the mundane affairs of life on Earth? When Kingdom stuff just doesn't register?

### When Is God Most Real?

Somewhere in the midst of this discussion I dropped the question, “When is God most real to you?” The answers were telling. “In times of crisis,” replied one. “When I'm very tired and feeling helpless,” said another. “When a child is born or someone dies.”

We cringed to realize our awareness of God tends to fade when things are just grooving along nicely. It's not unusual to take good things for granted, and to become more appreciative when our needs are harder to satisfy.

We're most thankful for food when we've been hungry for a season, more grateful for good clothes when we've lived in rags. Comfort is most precious when it comes in the aftermath of great torment, money most valuable when it relieves desperate poverty, and community most welcome in the wake of deep loneliness.

Life's more demanding moments force us to recognize the limitations of our humanity, and feel most strongly the spiritual impulses of our souls. “Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?” (Matthew 6:25). These are the moments when the immediate concerns of life fade into the big picture of cosmic reality.

And so we do well to ask ourselves, *What is real? What is good? What is lasting? What should I do?*

How Christian spirituality illuminates everyday life is a huge topic. But a good starting point is to realize life is most worth living when it's not all about ourselves. Life is most worth living when it leaves room for the Spirit and takes profound interest in the welfare of others.

Our little breakfast club even picked up a glimmer of insight that God's presence and blessing does not depend on our immediate mental attentiveness. Our emotions, actions and natural reactions also reveal a great deal about who we are, who we are becoming and whom we serve.

“But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matthew 6:33, NRS). We want to believe it. Lord, help us in our unbelief. **FT**

Life is most worth living when it's not all about ourselves. Life is most worth living when it leaves room for the Spirit and takes profound interest in the welfare of others.

**DOUG KOOP** is a Winnipeg-based writer and spiritual health specialist. Find more of these columns at [www.theEFC.ca/BlessedIsTheMan](http://www.theEFC.ca/BlessedIsTheMan).



## Looking for Signs of God

What can we find in creation, history, Scripture and human experience?

**T**he great essayist Frederick Buechner wrote in one of his books that “God does not sign his sunsets.” Buechner, an ordained Presbyterian minister born in 1926, has struggled most of his life with doubt and depression. Buechner’s life was forever altered by the suicide of his father when Fred was just ten years old. It is no surprise that themes of loss and darkness pervade his sermons and novels – but amazingly there is an even greater recognition of the signs of God’s presence. Given a God who does not sign His sunsets, many people legitimately ask where to find signs of His existence and care.

Of the classical signs for God, my personal favourite is the teleological argument, the proof from design. Atheists often brag this age-old proof has been disproven by Darwin and modern evolutionary theory, but they’re not even close to being right. Yes, William Paley’s famous argument from the watch to the watchmaker has had to be refined, but the evidence for the fine tuning and extravagant complexity of our bodies, our planet and the universe has become overwhelming.

To get a sense of the power of design, let me ask you to find out for yourself the answer to three questions: How fast do hair cells in your inner ear vibrate? How many capillaries are there in the human body and how long are they if stretched out? How many nerve fibers in the human optic nerve?

We can hear, breathe, and see because God has done breathtaking feats of engineering design in the hair cell, capillary and optic nerve. The fine tuning of the human body confirms the Psalmist’s declaration that we are “fearfully and wonderfully made.”

The same holds true if we look wider to the fine tuning needed for human life to be sustained. On these matters some great guides include John Lennox, the Oxford mathematician, Stephen Meyer (see his *Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design*, HarperOne, 2009), Alister McGrath (*A Fine-Tuned Universe: The Quest for God in Science and Theology*, Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), and Francis Collins (*The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief*, Simon & Schuster, 2006).

Christians are divided on the topic of evolution, and I will leave that important debate to another column. But

for now we can say the argument from design is shared by all Christians, whether young-Earth creationists (Ken Ham and Kurt Wise), old-Earth advocates (Hugh Ross), intelligent design theorists (Meyer, Phillip E. Johnson and Michael Behe) or theistic evolutionists (McGrath, Collins and Denis Lamoureux).

The common ground here is the necessity of God as source, whether on the origin of life, the evolutionary processes at either a micro or macro level, or life’s meaning. Atheistic evolution has no ultimate explanatory power, a fact that led the famous cosmologist Allan Sandage to Christian faith.

Beyond the creation order God also shows up in our experiences. Granted, some of life’s darkest moments can suggest the reality of Satan and demonic powers. However, that is not the whole story since God appears in the delightful dramas of our lived experiences. His Spirit brings us into peace, meaning, happiness and joy – the last of these being the theme of C. S. Lewis’s famous autobiography.

Stories of dramatic conversions point to God. One person recently told me of a dream that instantly led her to Christ. Another mentioned an experience of speaking in tongues that was absolutely liberating. God answers prayer, brings healing to broken bodies and spirits, offers grace to sinners and even gives strength to endure life’s unbearable tragedies.

One example of God’s grace is in the life of Dawn Smith Jordan. If you saw a picture of her, you would assume this former Miss South Carolina has it all made. However, Jordan’s path to beauty queen came after the kidnapping and murder of her sister Shari in 1985. God was with Shari in her last moments and with her sister and family as they endured her loss.

Buechner’s most celebrated fictional character is Leo Bebb, a bumbling evangelist of sorts. Bebb is not known for his academic skills, so when asked about the ontological, cosmological or teleological arguments for God, he is reluctant to comment. Bebb does say, “Well, Jesus believed in God. That’s good enough for me.”

Buechner knew full well that God’s best sign is given in Jesus of Nazareth. Yes, the heavens and the earth declare God’s glory, and our experiences are signs of God’s presence, but the ultimate sign from God was given in the manger, by the Sea of Galilee, on a cross and at an empty tomb. **FT**

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**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](http://www.theEFC.ca/ReligionWatch).

## Seeing God Differently: A Fresh Look at Our Unchanging Father

**Author: Eddie Chu**  
**Word Alive Press, 2013.**  
**184 pages.**  
**\$18 (e-book \$8.79)**

Perhaps you, like me, feel embarrassed by God.

I'm not talking about the God I know and love. I'm talking about the god I see portrayed as a fragile prude – so offended by my least offence that He is going to send me to hell.

It's made me reluctant to

share my faith when the starting point is asking a person to accept that they are a *sinner*. Unfortunately I thought the Bible taught this as the only way.

So did Eddie Chu, a management consultant from Toronto (now living in Ottawa). But something puzzled him while reading the Scriptures. He had been taught that Adam and Eve's sin had caused God to end their close relationship and kick them out of the Garden of Eden. But Genesis 3 seemed to imply that God was still looking for a relationship, and that Adam and Eve were the ones who broke it off, hiding from God when He came to have His usual visit with them.

That started him on a journey that led to this book. Chu read the Scriptures with fresh eyes and concluded that, yes, He is ultimately the judge, but He *leads* as a loving father drawing us back into relationship.

Chu decided to literally go back to school to ensure what he was discovering was theologically sound. He completed the core requirements of a master's in theological studies at Tyndale

Seminary in Toronto and used every opportunity to bounce his discoveries off his professors. They affirmed his findings were biblically well grounded.

Perhaps you are thinking, *But what about...?* referring to a Scripture text. Much of this book deals with resolving those "what about" questions.

–Les Lindquist

## Questioning Your Way to Faith: Learning to Disagree Without Being Disagreeable

**Author: Peter Kazmaier**  
**Wolfsburg Imprints/Word Alive, 2013. 136 pages.**  
**\$11.54 (e-book \$4.03)**

For many, the biggest questions of life are intellectual barriers that must be removed before genuine faith in God becomes possible," states Peter Kazmaier in his preface.

He then asserts that faith and experiment are complementary, not contradictory, and uses analysis, logic and precise language to dismantle many of these barriers.

This is an apologetic for a 21st-century audience. Kazmaier writes with realism and humour, avoiding stereotype, jargon and emotional overlay. His work as a scientist at Queen's University is evident in his objective discussion of issues. His skill as an author makes this small volume eminently readable.

The context is a conversation between two university science students. Both come from nonbelieving families. Al's search for God began as adolescent rebellion. Floyd, a self-avowed atheist, has been

shaken in his beliefs by the funeral of his grandmother where a letter was read in which she affirmed her faith in God and in Jesus. (*Questioning Your Way to Faith* is actually a prequel to the publisher's 2012 release *The Halcyon Dislocation*, a sci-fi fantasy which involves Al and Floyd.)

The dialogue begins with Floyd's statement to Al, "I'm pretty sure you're a Christian ... yet you don't seem like a 'nut job.'" The two characters speak candidly throughout, sometimes with considerable passion.

This book has value for all Christians. It deals with questions and issues prevalent in our culture and frequently mouthed

as arguments against faith, and it provides thorough, thoughtful responses.

Perhaps even more important than the intellectual content is the way it models honest, respectful conversation. A study

guide is included.

–Bonnie Beldan-Thomson



## The Quest: Christ Amidst the Quest

**Author: Lyman C.D. Kulathungam**  
**Wipf & Stock, 2012.**  
**272 pages.**  
**\$32 (e-book \$9.99)**

How does Christ relate to the world's religions? Lyman Kulathungam tackles a big question in this book. A native of Sri Lanka, he is the intercultural dean emeritus of Master's College and Seminary in Peterborough, Ont. He suggests that to be human is to embark on a quest, which he defines as "a search for life's meaning, an attempt to get out of the predicament one feels that he or she is in."

After laying a conceptual framework, he aims to decipher the nature of the aspirations religious people express, and determine how Christ relates to the quests of eight faith communities. The reader who wades through this theoretical material will benefit from what follows.

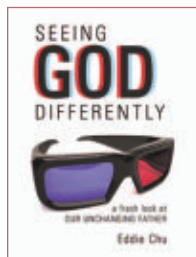
Kulathungam devotes a chapter to the following "typical examples of the human religious quest:" Confucianism, Taoism, Shintoism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Islam and Aboriginalism. However, readers hoping for a typical book on world religions, comparative religions or Christian apologetics will have to look elsewhere.

His thesis is that Christ can satisfy the religious quest because of the uniqueness of His salvific mission, His personhood and the means by which one can appropriate what He offers. Kulathungam's approach is nonjudgmental because, he says, "All fall within the saving work of Christ and the ambit of His grace."

A chapter on Judaism would have been welcome but, as Kulathungam points out, it "needs a different conceptual framework." Perhaps he'll take up this task in a sequel.

If, as Kulathungam suggests, humans are "thirsty for a better quality of life both here and hereafter," then Jesus Christ, God's "one and only Son," is well equipped to satisfy such a quest in a shrinking global village.

*The Quest* can serve as a college or seminary textbook, but will also appeal to the layperson interested in relating Christ to the world's major religions. –Burton K. Janes





## Heaven's Prey: A Redemption's Edge Novel

Author: Janet Sketchley  
Choose NOW Publishing, 2013. 265 pages.

\$15.66 (e-book \$1.05)

**T**he storm that 46-year-old Ruth Warner braves to attend her weekly prayer meeting is a perfect opening to this debut novel by Nova Scotia native Janet Sketchley. Ruth's husband Tony can't understand why she would go out on such a night to pray for Harry Silver, the serial killer who abducted then murdered their beautiful niece Susan.

But Ruth's nightmares of Silver's destiny without salvation drive her, especially now that he has escaped from prison and other Susans may be in danger. Little does Ruth guess, when she stops at a convenience store on her way home, who will soon be in Silver's clutches.

*Heaven's Prey* is suspense at its most gripping. In it Sketchley makes us face our worst nightmares in the company of a depraved man with no compassion, seemingly no conscience and a deep-rooted hatred of God and everyone associated with Him. At the same time we delve, through flashbacks, into Silver's past, following his rise to stardom on the NASCAR circuit even as his addiction to pornography spirals him into a world of obsession and lust.

Sketchley's vigorous prose places us squarely in each

scene, whether it's tied up in an isolated Nova Scotia cottage or careening around racetrack obstacles in this scene: "Danger came from what he couldn't see.... The tire rubber would delaminate in long strips and flail his chassis to bits."

Though the subject matter is edgy, Sketchley avoids gratuitous disturbing description. What comes through in this bite-your-nails tale is the possibility of redemption. God, the tireless pursuer intent on capturing even the worst of sinners, is the real hero of this story. Discussion questions at the end of the book help readers debrief and make sense of what they've just lived through. At press time there's a free sample chapter of the book at [www.choosenowpublishing.com](http://www.choosenowpublishing.com).  
—Violet Nesdoly

## How to Talk to a Skeptic: An Easy-to-Follow Guide for Natural Conversations and Effective Apologetics

Author: Donald J. Johnson.  
Bethany House, 2013.

272 pages.  
\$16.99 (e-book \$9.99)

**A**lthough the president of Don Johnson Evangelistic Ministries lives in Southern California, he was born in Saskatchewan. His new book stands out among many others dealing with apologetics in that it does not focus on apologetic arguments. Instead it revolves around how to have productive conversations with skeptics.

Johnson begins by building a framework for fruitful conversations. Many evangelistic conversations go wrong

because the Christian has the wrong expectations or goals. Johnson helps the reader to begin well.

He goes on to outline what skeptics need to know about God. He goes right for the questions skeptics have, issues such as the reason for biblical rules, and the nature of heaven and hell. It's obvious his material does not come from a philosophy textbook, but from real-life conversations.

The book includes explorations of the God hypothesis as well as questions about sex and hypocrisy. These topics could easily be very abstract and yet the author keeps his responses firmly in the context of conversations with real people.

Readers looking for lists of arguments to win debates will be disappointed here. But those looking for practical ways to improve faith conversations with skeptical friends and family should find the book they have been looking for.  
—Stephen Bedard

## Called to Be Saints: An Invitation to Christian Maturity

Author: Gordon Smith  
IVP Academic, 2014.

256 pages.  
\$27 (e-book \$9.99)

**T**he tendency in evangelical circles to summarize the Christian life in terms of whether the believer has prayed the "sinner's prayer" is a serious concern (well, for me at least, as a pastor). If all you have to do is "accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour," we can seem to be making decisions, not disciples. Gordon Smith would agree.

In fact, he would say this leads to what he calls "therapeutic deism," rather than an involved Trinitarian Christian faith, where we think, *Just say*

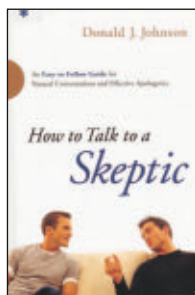
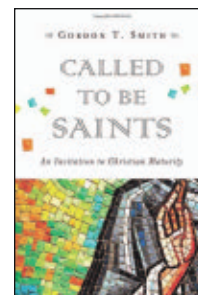
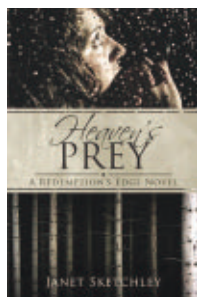
*the prayer and wait for heaven. There is not much to do in between.*

The New Testament has a different approach. The goal of Paul's proclamation is to present everyone mature in Christ (Colossians 1:28). Theologically speaking there is more than being declared righteous externally through our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1). There is still an internal process that all believers go through. We are to participate in that transforming walk in union with Christ (Colossians 2:6).

Smith sees four dimensions to Christian maturity – biblical wisdom (sapiential holiness), being active in the work we are called for (vocational holiness), loving relationships (social holiness) and intentional, affectionate joy (emotional holiness).

Although Smith is theological in his approach, he does not leave us hanging in the air without any practical suggestions. There are two evangelical institutions where his view of Christian maturity can be developed – the local church and Christian higher education. He ends the book by giving us his vision as to how these two transformative agencies can recalibrate to advance Christian maturity.

Smith makes us rethink where we are going in our attempts to make mature disciples who participate in the total Christian life, as opposed to a mere sedentary posture in a Sunday morning service. However, if we pick up his ideas, it will be a long road ahead for us.  
—Pye Chew



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## Will Canada Be the Next Sweden?

An academic perspective suggests religion may wither away.

Recently I served on a panel at the University of British Columbia on the future of Christianity in Canada. Predicting such a future seems like a waste of time. Who will remember, let alone care, what we said on such a panel? Yet such an exercise can have value as we plan our next steps. Here's a summary of what I said.

People practise religion for two main reasons. First, they use religion to get something else they want. They go to church to please their spouse or to find one. They attend synagogue because their ethnic community expects them to do so. They go to the mosque to strengthen business partnerships or shine up their public image. And on a broader scale religion is used as a rallying point for a political cause (such as nationalism) or a legitimization for a quite different motive (such as seizing the lands and fortunes of enemies). So religion is practised instrumentally – to get something else.

Second, religion is practised intrinsically. People want what the religion itself offers: contact with God – or with gods, bodhisattvas, magical forces or whatever. What is available to them on the mundane plane of life isn't sufficient. Religion enriches their existence, explains it better or provides comfort when normal coping patterns fail.

In Canada today the first motive for religion has almost vanished. Perhaps you can gain a social good by religious practice in some small towns in the Maritimes or some southern Manitoba Mennonite communities – but almost nowhere else.

The main exception is in some immigrant communities where religion is still a badge of belonging and a crucial sector of the social network. But the longer immigrants live in Canada, the less religion plays these roles. The children and grandchildren generally don't stay in the faith.

What we have left in Canada is religion for its own sake. The forms of Christianity that focused on activism, small-scale charity, wholesome activities for the young people on a Friday night, pleasant aesthetic experiences on a Sunday morning, and so on have nearly disappeared, in the United Church and other versions of social Christianity in particular.

What are left, and certainly what are thriving, are forms of Christianity that offer a considerable God quotient, a

spiritual experience that transcends the secular horizon, teachings you can't otherwise get from *The Globe and Mail* or the CBC, and ethics sturdier than those purveyed by *E!* or *People*.

People turn to religion only if they have a good reason. The instrumental reasons are gone with the wind. No wonder in our panel discussion we noted how low church attendance is in the one place in Canada most focused on the here and now, on sensual pleasure and self-fulfillment – Vancouver. No wonder church plants come and go here with dismaying rapidity.

Yet it's also interesting that the churches that thrive here are full of people between 18 and 35. The older demographic (35–60) is much less in evidence. Those older ones are the people who have somehow been able to succeed in

Vancouver's punishing real estate market and construct a lifestyle they like. They don't go to church. Why should they?

But the younger adults – those the economy is not welcoming, who carry debts they fear they can never pay off, and who are searching for a meaningful life in a world that seems indifferent to their aspirations – they're in church.

Are we church leaders properly addressing their needs? Or just anesthetizing these hungry searchers with an hour or so of lively music, group solidarity and undemanding sermonizing?

Canada has gone many decades now without a major disruption – war, depression, natural disaster, plague. It's been easy for us to coast along and not think much about the Big Stuff. No wonder our churches continue to shrink.

Scandinavia has some of the lowest church attendance in the world, and of course the peaceful, prosperous "Norden miracle" nicely fits the pattern. Why should they bother with religion? So they don't.

The challenge for Canadian churches remains what it has always been – to connect with the felt needs of our neighbours. Are we giving people good enough reason to attend worship instead of hitting the ski hill or attending soccer practice? Good enough reason to commit time and money to church life instead of some other perhaps more enjoyable and rewarding society?

If we aren't, then predicting the future of Christianity in Canada isn't hard to do – short of a surprising, and shocking, work of God. **BT**

It's also interesting that the churches that thrive here are full of people between 18 and 35.

**JOHN STACKHOUSE** teaches theology and culture at Regent College, Vancouver. Find more of these columns at [www.theEFC.ca/ChristAndCulture](http://www.theEFC.ca/ChristAndCulture).

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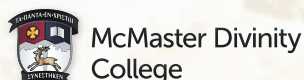


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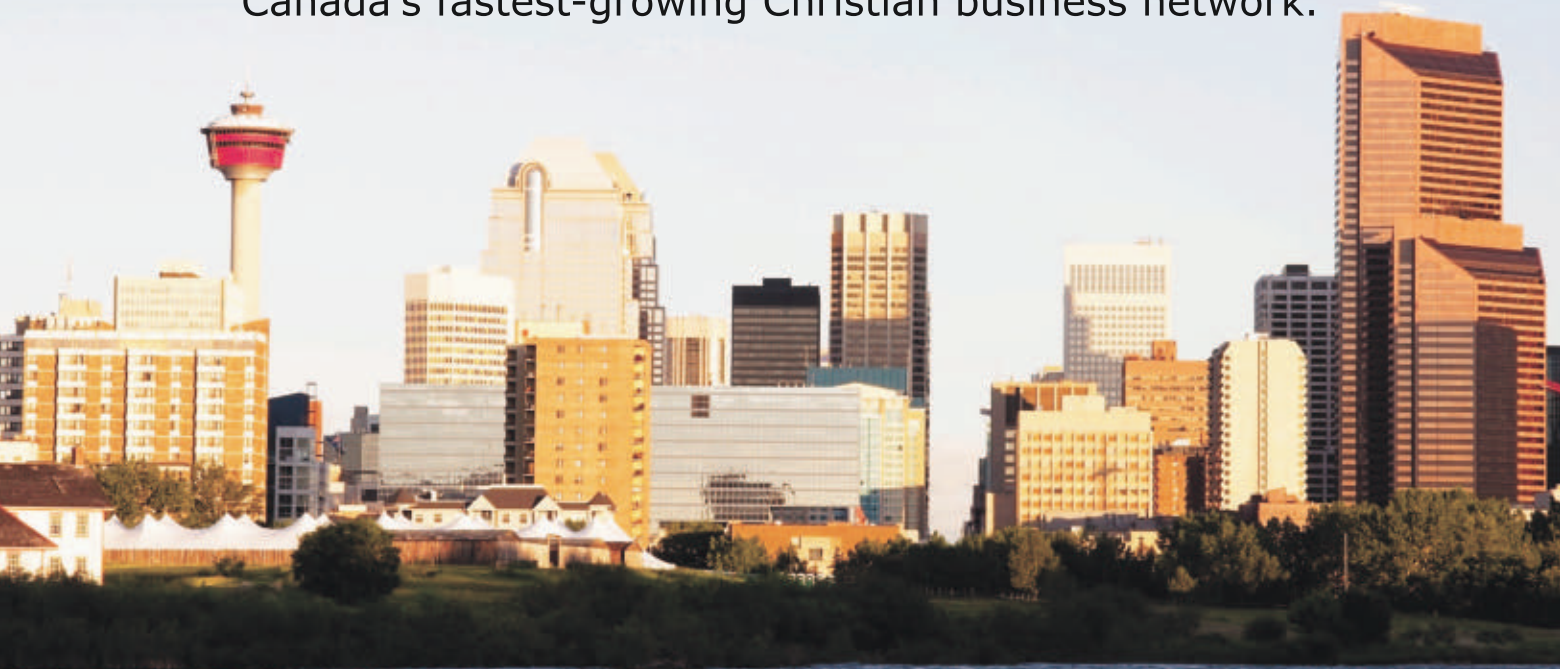
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# ON THE EDGE

Our society has a tendency to ostracize the disadvantaged, pushing them farther out onto the fringe. We often forget that these people bring us closer to God

## J A M E S R E I M E R

ON THE EVOLUTION OF HIS CAREER AND HOW HIS FAITH HELPED HIM GET THERE. PG.6

issue **2**  
JANUARY/  
FEBRUARY 2014

\*ALSO IN THIS ISSUE: A SIT DOWN WITH  
**CRAIG GROSS**  
YOUTH SPOTLIGHT  
THE RETRO REVIEW  
A NEW CHALLENGE

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Photo by: Moussa Faddoul

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# words from the editors



When you look at the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, you see a constant emphasis on love. He taught us not to judge, to put others above ourselves and to act with compassion and humility. He came and ate with the downtrodden, forgave those who wronged Him, and died for the world. He died for you and me, for those our society has abandoned, our culture mocks, and our leaders ignore. Imagine if we could look at those people as God does. To see beyond the ego, image, and lies, under the insecurities and behind the walls built by fear and mistrust to see that underneath, the people on the fringe are no more broken than we are. They are people created by God and none are more worthy of His Love and forgiveness.

In this issue of *LIA* we are looking at those who have lived and worked with people on the fringe. From Toronto Maple Leaf's goaltender James Reimer - who tells us about his life of faith on and off the ice - to a 15-year-old girl whose search for spiritual fulfillment led her to West Africa, we are reminded that all are equal before God.

*LIA* began with our mission to empower Christian youth to live out love through the Love Movement. Our *Take Action Video Series* shines a light on the true nature of God's Love in order to educate and dispel more selfish notions of that Love. We also encourage young people to find new and inventive ways of putting love in action in their community. When they do, we want them to share their experiences and inspire others to keep the love moving. They may find themselves featured among our special guests in a future issue of *LIA*.

-Benjamin Porter and Joel Gordon; editors in chief of *LIA*



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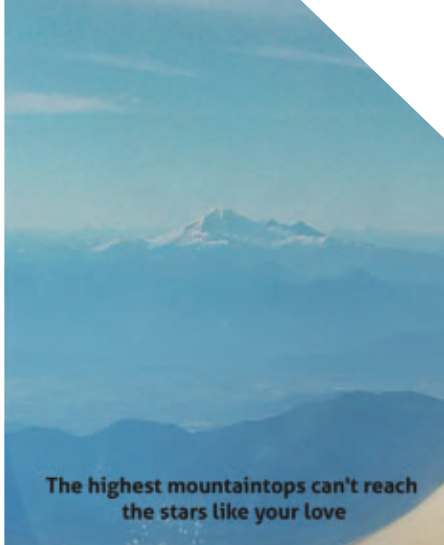
# LOVE IN ACTION PHOTO CONTEST



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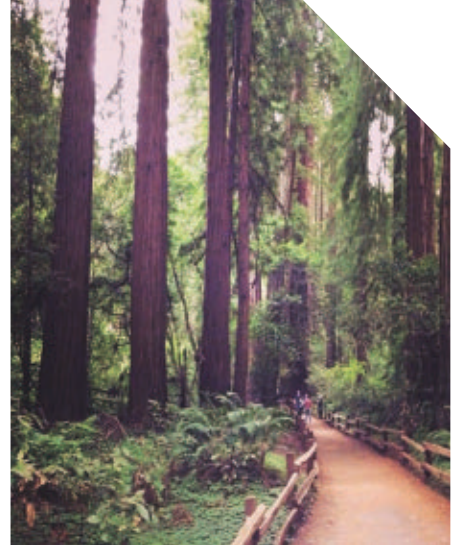


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BY KIERSTYN MARLOW



**ON THE DOCK**  
BY STEVEN DUNN



**BUTTERFLY**  
BY CHRIS NURSE

# UNMASKED WITH JAMES REIMER

written by: **MARK FISK**

From the outdoor rinks of his childhood to the biggest market in hockey, the Leafs' goaltender tells us about the role his faith played.



Photo by: Moussa Faddoul

James Reimer has come a long way since growing up in small town Manitoba. After his time as a junior in the Western Hockey League (WHL) and his professional beginnings in the ECHL (formerly the East Coast Hockey League) and the American Hockey League (AHL), Reimer landed a permanent position in net for the Toronto Maple Leafs. Though the journey has tested him mentally and physically, Reimer handled it all gracefully with the support and guidance of Hockey Ministries International (HMI), an organization founded to meet the spiritual needs of the hockey world. HMI has been with Reimer from the start, seamlessly joining

his passion for the game with his faith. Ben and Joel sat down with Reimer during the off-season to talk about HMI, his faith, and his hockey career. Below is an edited excerpt from their conversation.

**LIA:** James, what is it about Hockey Ministries International that you appreciate?

**James (Jms):** I have had nothing but great experiences with them from when I was a camper to when I was a counsellor. But now, one of the things I appreciate most is probably their willingness to help. I feel like in almost every league I've been in since junior, the organization has been there too. Sometimes, I'd be going to different barns and seeing different teams and there would be a chaplain who would pop in to encourage me, say "hi" or offer some food. They're a great organization...

**LIA:** Why in the world does someone become a goalie?

**Jms:** Well most people have a choice but unfortunately I didn't - or maybe fortunately now. I have an older brother and if I wanted to play, it was either be goalie or play by myself.

**LIA:** So talk about your youth hockey experience, what was that like?

**Jms:** It was good. I didn't really start playing hockey until I was twelve. Before that, I was just playing on the outdoor rink with my brother, his older friends and some of my friends. After that, I started playing minor hockey in the small town of Arborg. It was a good experience and luckily, from there I was drafted to the WHL. Now here I am.



**LIA:** When did you realize that you were pretty good at this?

**Jms:** I don't know, that's a good question. I think when I got drafted to the WHL, maybe that was the first time I thought that this could go somewhere, but at the same time I don't like to take things for granted. I don't like to look too far ahead so whenever I get those thoughts I try to stuff them back down. I just work hard and do what I can in the moment.

**LIA:** Talk about your very first game playing for the Leafs

**Jms:** It was exciting. That was definitely the most nervous I've been for any game in my career. It felt like a long road, playing in the ECHL for a year and then the AHL for a year and a half. When I got that game, I was told a day before and immediately I started to feel the butterflies in my stomach. I remember not being able to sleep the night before so a pregame nap was pretty much out of the question, let alone a meal. I like to eat, so not being able to says a lot about how nervous I was. I was also praying a lot and asking God to be with me.

But when the skates touched the ice, all the nervousness, all the fear and doubts just kind of slipped away.

I was focused and confident out there and we won. The team played great.

**LIA:** What is your favourite part about playing in a professional hockey league?

**Jms:** Getting to live your dream. Obviously, there are some tough times and sometimes it's work but when it comes down to it, you are playing the game you love. I feel incredibly blessed to be able to do that. Everyone has their dreams – their childhood dreams. I remember my grade one yearbook said, "What do you want to be when you grown up?" and I said, "I want to be a professional hockey player." That's my favourite part: just being able to play the game I love every day.

**LIA:** You mentioned Hockey Ministries International and when you were a camper you were a goalie. Did you receive some good instruction at the camp?

**Jms:** Yeah, my first camp at HMI was the first time I received any real goalie instruction. The guy who was heading it that year, and still is, is Karl Friesen. He's pretty much a hockey legend in Germany. He taught me the fundamentals of being a goalie so I guess it all started with him.

**LIA:** Then you went on and became a counsellor. What was that experience like?

**Jms:** Different than being a camper, that's for sure. It's a little more stressful trying to get kids who were all juiced up on candy from the tuck shop to bed. It was a really rewarding to be with the kids and teach them about Christ and also teach them on the ice. It was a lot of fun to be there and I hope they carry that experience with them.

**LIA:** How important is your faith now that you are living here in Toronto?

**Jms:** It's huge. I can honestly say that I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for Christ. I know that throughout my career there have been so many times when He has had a hand in it. As far as playing for the Leafs, it's such a big market and there's a lot of pressure, so I don't think I would be able to stand on my own. I realize that everything that I have is a blessing and a gift from Him. I can't take credit for anything and that really keeps me on the straight and narrow.

**LIA:** The story of Peter and Jesus walking on the water seems to really resonate with you. Why is that story so significant to you?

**Jms:** I like it a lot because I feel it fits so well with where I'm at. On the back of my mask I have Matthew 14:31, from the story when Peter goes to walk on water. He sees the waves and starts to sink so Christ grabs him and says, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" I like that verse a lot because it's scary to step out on the waves in the crashing sea and storm, yet to Christ it is nothing. I love that concept and I feel like it's applicable to my life. When things are tough and everything seems like it's crashing down on me, I know that it is nothing for Him – that He can reach out and

grab me. Knowing He has that strength is a big thing for me.

**LIA:** Do you have a memorable experience that you can reflect on involving Hockey Ministries International?

**Jms:** One memorable experience I had was during one of the first times I came to Toronto and was trying out for the AHL team. It looked like I was going to make it but unfortunately the next day I got sent down to the East Coast. That was one of the more trying times of my career. But the great thing about HMI is that they set me up with a chaplain that was already with the team down in the East Coast and I remember talking with him a lot, just sort of working through the process of being sent down. The support that was there and the fact that there was someone to meet and greet me was definitely a memorable experience.

**LIA:** What do you say to people who have big dreams?

**Jms:** Follow them. God gives you dreams for a reason and in the Bible it also talks about how He will grant you the desires of your heart. Not necessarily if you want a million bucks – He might not give you that – but if you have the desire to help people, to play hockey, be a business man, a vet, you name it, He will help. If that's your dream, you should follow it with all of your heart and if it is not meant to be, it is not meant to be. In my opinion you'll never know unless you put everything into it. Trust God with your dreams, pray for them, ask for wisdom, talk to people around you and see if it makes sense. But, if you're serious about it, you have to go into it wholeheartedly. Don't hold back and see where God will take you.



From Left: Ben Porter, James Reimer, Joel Gordon and Paul Allen

Photo by: Moussa Faddoul



# SOCIALLY ACTIVE



**LOVE MOVE MENT** The Love Movement  
November 3 near Toronto

Hey Guys The Love Movement here watch out for us each day this week with brand new content and brand new articles, verses and songs. Check in each day to experience the expression of God's love.

**LOVE MOVE MENT** The Love Movement  
August 6

Love Movement in Honduras!



**LOVE MOVE MENT** The Love Movement  
September 18

#loveinaction photo submission from Mercy Ships – Following the 2000-year-old model of Jesus, Mercy Ships brings hope and healing to the world's forgotten poor.



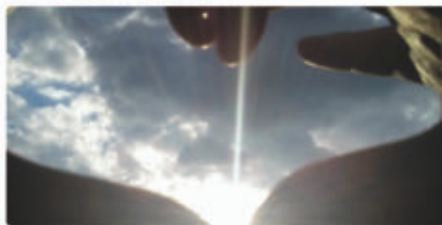
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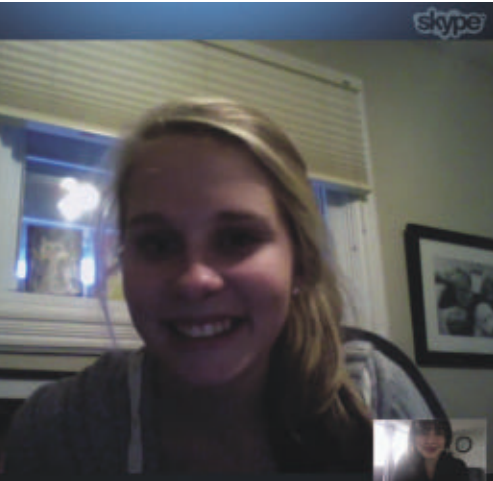


**Nicole Shaw SAYouth** @NicoleShaw2012 21 Sep  
#LOVEINACTION Full uniformed SA Cadet Daniel Rowe takes a minute to help bring in customers at our youth carwash!  
pic.twitter.com/ZQpnCizHR8  
Retweeted by Love Is Moving TV



# THE GREATEST ADVENTURE

written by: **CHRISTINA HELVADJIAN**



**Questions.** At every age and during every phase in life, one never stops asking questions.

At 15, Holly Stiller of Port Perry, Ont. began to ask questions that delved deeply into her spiritual life. "I had been asking myself, what should Christianity really look like in action?" She had no idea that the adventure she was about to embark on would help her answer this question. She vowed to keep her Love Movement Curriculum nearby where she would read, write and reflect on her answers daily. In late September, Holly travelled to West Africa on a mission trip with Samaritan's Purse and their Operation Christmas Child program to distribute shoeboxes. The shoeboxes were filled with knick-knacks like tennis balls, hair elastics, school supplies, and small toys. The concept is simple: everyone who receives a shoebox is invited to attend a Bible class called "The Greatest Journey." There they are taught about Jesus and have the opportunity to allow Him to enter their lives. Holly says

that about a third of these children chose to take the class. "One boy that we talked to told us that now that he knows Jesus, he likes to play with his friends more. It was really neat to see that the shoeboxes gave these kids an opportunity to learn about Jesus."

**"I had been asking myself, what should CHRISTIANITY really look like in ACTION?"**

In her blog, Holly writes about how she felt as she began to experience life in Senegal. "Loving others can hurt sometimes. On our trip to Senegal, we were sometimes in really rough areas. At times, I found myself not wanting to interact with the kids because it was hard to see how difficult their lives are. But when I

talked to them, they brought me so much joy. I saw that kids really are the same all around the world. They like to tell stories, make jokes, and laugh at the goofy white girl trying to dance like an African." We then had a discussion about the uneven distribution of wealth in the world. "Although our lives are essentially easier than a lot of the people in Senegal's are," Holly says, "I think that there are some things that they have that we could learn from." She quotes Matthew 6:21: "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Check Out Holly's Full Story:  
<http://hollystiller.wordpress.com>

To learn more about "Operation Christmas Child" visit:  
<http://www.samaritanspurse.ca/operation-christmas-child.aspx>



# -Love Pin Action-

written by: **CHRISTINA PORTER**

As members of the Love in Action community, let's continue on our quest to spread God's Love by making our mark on the pin and re-pin world.

## HERE'S HOW WE DO IT:

On your own Pinterest page, pin an active idea for showing love.

Use the descriptor "lovePINaction".

Re-pin the ideas that interest you!

We'll re-pin your ideas to our lovePINaction Pinterest page

Try the ideas featured on our page.  
Search: "Pinterest/lovemovement/lovePINaction"



## -Featured Idea - 12 STEPS OF INTEREST INVESTMENT

Often we're preoccupied with satisfying our own interests. Here's an idea that will get you engaged with the interests of others.  
Materials needed: a poster board, a marker, a table, two chairs & an open mind.

### HERE'S HOW:

*Step 1.* Contact a local nursing home or retirement facility to OK the following project before proceeding.

*Step 2.* Create a sign (being as creative as you wish) with the following message: "Teach me something."

*Step 3.* Designate an amount of time to do the following:

*Step 4.* Sit at a small table in one of the facility's common areas. Pull up a second chair on the other side of the table and display your sign nearby.

*Step 5.* Wait in your spot for someone to approach.

*Step 6.* When you're asked what you're doing, say you are interested in learning something new. It could be a fact, a skill, a trick, a game or anything else.

*Step 7.* When people approach, be sure to introduce yourself and ask their names. Make small talk to gauge their willingness to participate.

*Step 8.* Once they have taught you something, thank them and ask for a picture with them.

*Step 9.* With your photos, make a collage labelling the items learned and pin it to your Pinterest page. Put in your descriptors #lovePINaction. Be sure to include any tips you have to make this idea work.

### EXTENDING THE CHALLENGE

*Step 10.* Revisit the facility, repeating steps 4-8 until you start to get regular visitors at your table.

*Step 11.* Choose one (or more) of these regular visitors and ask if they'd like you to start visiting them one on one.

*Step 12.* After you develop a friendship with that person(s), write to [info@lovemovement.org](mailto:info@lovemovement.org) and tell us about it. You may be featured in a future issue *LIA*.

# Lighthouse in the Red Light District

written by: **STEVE NORTON**

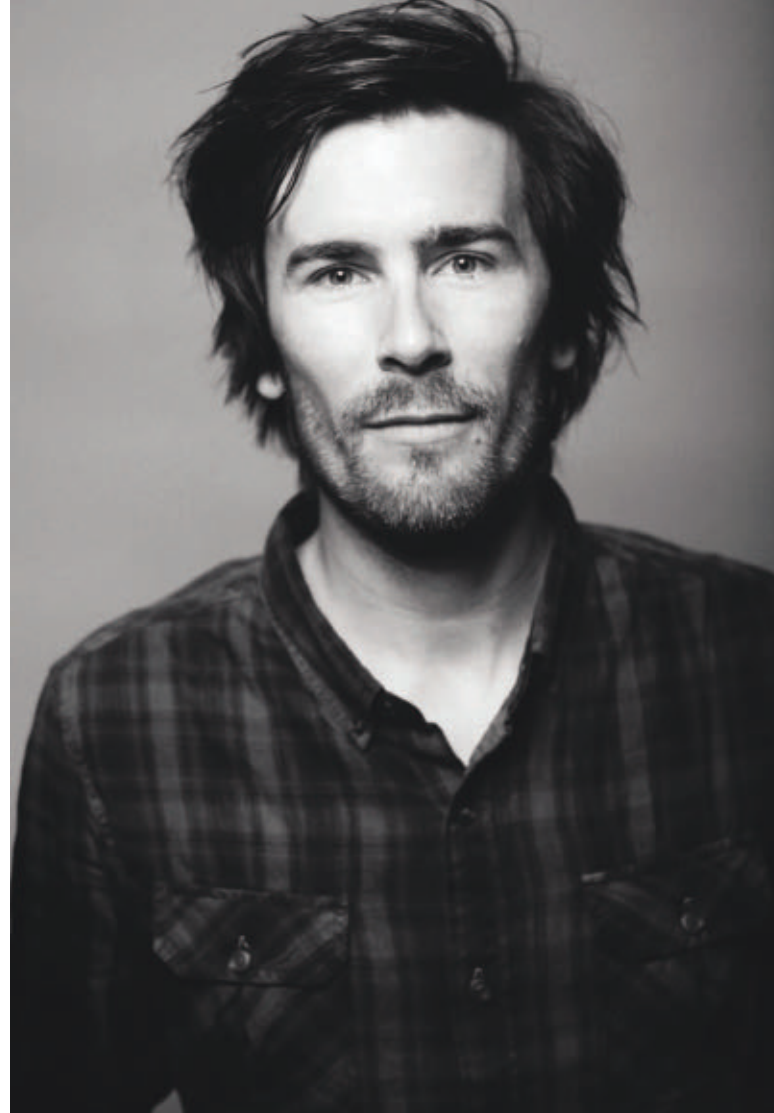
Author **Craig Gross** realizes that there is a great misconception about those who work in the sex trade.

"The misconception tends to be that these are 'fall-aways' or uneducated, drug and alcohol addicted people who have lost touch with reality, life and especially God," he begins. "[Most] of the people we've met are much like anyone else – they have hopes and dreams and their jobs do not define them."

As one of the founding members of XXXChurch.com, Gross has been actively ministering to those in the sex trade since 2002. Despite his continued efforts to do so, Gross must still remind people that many of their assumptions about those who work in the industry remain unjustified.

"While yes, we do know that just like any other group of people, some are addicted to drugs and alcohol and some may be uneducated but the majority of the people we have met are quite the opposite," Gross says. "You wouldn't believe how many women we meet who are pastors' daughters or had an upbringing in the Church. That is always a shocker to people but we see it on a regular basis."

Since beginning more than 10 years ago, XXXChurch has expanded their ministry dramatically. Starting out with a simple booth in the middle of a pornography expo, they now offer practical help to people of all ages struggling with sexual addictions. They do



so through their website (including their innovative X3 accountability software), mentorship programs for those transitioning out of the sex industry and an abundance of other resources. Without question, Gross is amazed how God has helped their ministry grow over the years.

**“...they have HOPES and DREAMS and their jobs do not define them.”**

"Our mission was to hand out Bibles and engage in conversations with love and without criticism in hopes of sharing the Gospel," Gross recalls. "We now have a network of over 60 ministries nationally that are available to workers in their cities. [We have partner ministries that are] going into strip clubs and brothels sharing the Gospel through love in action... We don't just hand out a Bible and that's it. We're here for the long haul if we are allowed and invited into a person's life."

“ We see broken people everyday. We have to **BELIEVE** that God is bringing them to us for **hope** and for **healing**. ”

This desire to walk with people along their journeys has allowed Gross and his team to foster healthy, long term relationships with sex trade workers that actively and practically demonstrate the Love of Christ. (Incidentally, “Jesus loves porn stars” is one of their more popular slogans.) By offering hope to the broken and frequently unloved, XXXChurch has established themselves among those in the industry as a legitimate example of Jesus.

“Most of the industry workers we meet are happy to see us,” he says. “They recognize that we are different than the protestors who scream and shout messages of hatred and hell at them.”

Interestingly, while the response from those in the sex industry has been very positive, Gross also feels that their relationship with the local church has been an area of unexpected challenge.

“We have received more positive feedback from the industry than we have the Church. The Church has come a long way since we started in 2002 but there is still much opposition, even if that opposition comes in silence. It cannot go unsaid, though, that we have had some amazing support from churches worldwide that are onboard with our message.”

Gross says he’s continuously amazed by how God has used them to affect those who work in the sex trade or are burdened with sexual addiction.

“When we set out to deliver the Gospel through action we never know what the outcome will be...” he says. There are times when we least expect it that we hear from an industry girl that we consistently reached out to at conventions... or we receive an email from a wife

thanking us for what we do because her husband has found healing and their marriage has been restored to a new level after an affair or years of porn use.

“We see broken people everyday. We have to believe that God is bringing them to us for hope and for healing.”

Are you looking for help with sexual addiction or interested in how to get involved in their ministry?  
Please visit their website at [XXXChurch.com](http://XXXChurch.com).



# ELYSIUM (2013)

written by: STEVE NORTON

*Starring Matt Damon, Jodie Foster, Sharlto Copley*  
*Directed by Neill Blomkamp*  
*Rating: 3.5 out of 5*

“Would you like a pill?”

In a world broken by disease, hunger and lack of resources, these pharmaceutical ‘solutions’ are little more than token offerings. Taken from Neill Blomkamp’s highly anticipated sci-fi actioner, *Elysium*, the above quote reveals a lack of consideration for those who suffer and highlights the central conflict of this film. When the disinterested parole robot offers a pill to soothe ex-con Max Da Costa’s (Matt Damon) nerves, it provides a glimpse into a deeply ingrained attitude.

Set in the year 2154, *Elysium* envisions a world divided by financial barriers. While the wealthy enjoy life on Elysium – a space-station utopia orbiting the earth and outfitted with apparently unlimited resources – the rest of the population is left to suffer amid the planet’s rubble and disease. Living among the masses is Max, an ex-con who’s looking for a fresh start. However, after an industrial accident leaves him with only a few days to live, he realizes his only chance of survival is the healthcare technology on Elysium. As a result, Max is forced to revisit a life of crime so that he can earn his “ticket.” After the assigned “job” goes awry, Max becomes a fugitive and his search for wellness becomes a mission that could bring down the system.

Heavily influenced by the recent Occupy movements, *Elysium* raises the question of economic fairness. As the wealthy maintain their life of luxury orbiting the earth, the demand for proper healthcare continues to increase among the restless earth

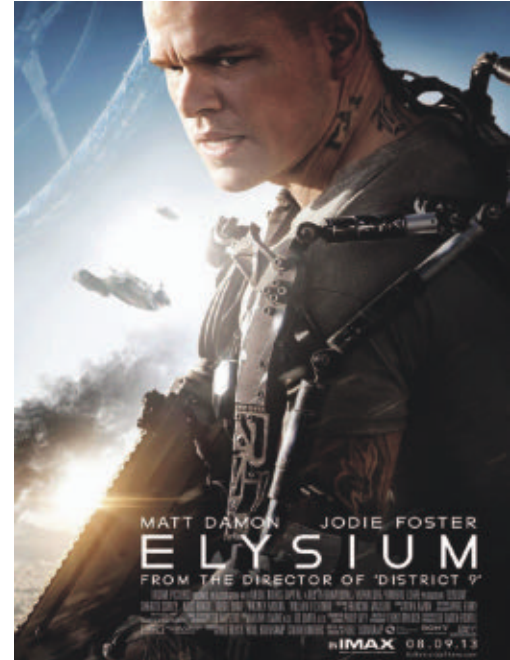
population. Disease is rampant and hospitals are overrun. Violence and crime are everywhere. But Blomkamp wants the audience to sympathize with the people rather than sit in judgment of them. Although *Elysium*’s earth has been ravaged by criminal activity, one recognizes that much of the behavior has been driven out of desperation. Here, the blame lands squarely on the ‘haves’ – not the ‘have-nots.’

On the other hand, the majority of the super-rich are not portrayed as particularly evil either. Even though many of Elysium’s resources are produced on the back of the rest of humanity, the wealthy often aren’t aware of what’s happening. They want to preserve their way of life, but not necessarily exploit the less fortunate. As a result, they remain content yet distant, ignorant of the devastation that lies below.

This conversation elicits thoughts of Christ’s conversations about care for the less fortunate. Scripture references such as Matthew 25 command us to feed and clothe the less fortunate and Jesus’ seemingly endless healings of the sick and blind point to humanity’s spiritual calling. From the moment Jesus established the foundation of his Kingdom, He has called for us to live in a manner that brings healing through love rather than continued pain and suffering.

By following Max’s transformation over the course of the film, Blomkamp reminds the viewers that much of the responsibility for change rests with the viewers themselves. Are we willing to help create change? Do we recognize that our lives have meaning in the world? In the same manner that Jesus calls for justice in

## RETRO REVIEW



His Kingdom, he also commands us to be active participants in His plan. Although Max’s plan primarily stems from his own desire for healing, he also recognizes that he holds the keys to the Kingdom himself and must take action in response.

In the end, *Elysium* certainly delivers in the area of sci-fi action but it also does more than that. Blomkamp’s metaphor contains shades of Jesus’ teachings. Though the film speaks of a world divided by suffering, it also serves as a reminder that Christ invites us to a world healed by wholeness. *Elysium* challenges us to decide whether we will seek to be an advocate for change or remain silent.

After all, through Christ, we have the power to “override their whole system.”

*Elysium* is now available on DVD, Blu-ray and digital download.



## LOVE'S MISSION written by: BENJAMIN PORTER

I worked for more than five years with those who have mental health issues, addictions, disorders, and diseases. They've been from different faith and cultural backgrounds and many of them hated me during my time at the Salvation Army Gateway men's shelter in downtown Toronto. It was here where God revealed to me that those who claim the name of Christ must do for those people as Christ does. We are all made in the image of God and are called to love not only our neighbours, but also our enemies.

Dion Oxford was the director of the Gateway men's shelter for more than 10 years. He is now the new director of Mission Integration for the five Salvation Army shelters in Toronto. He is a mission strategist and here is what he has to say about love.

### **How have you experienced God's Love in your life?**

There are literally thousands of stories I could share, but there is one that stands out. It is related to my health. As many know, I have multiple sclerosis and a few years ago there was an experimental surgery offered in Costa Rica. The issue was it cost \$16,000. After praying, I sent a message to some of my closest friends and in less than 24 hours, the money was raised. The story does not stop there. What was even more impactful was when the homeless community that was connected to a local church heard I was in need. They took up an offering among themselves and came and gave me a little baggy with \$73.27. Most gave out of the little they had – what they could afford to give. They said to use this money for a good meal in Costa Rica. That's God's Love in action.

### **What is the craziest experience you've had showing God's Love to someone in the homeless community?**

Again there are so many crazy stories, but the one that comes to mind is of a man named Bobby. When I had the opportunity to start the Gateway shelter, I hired a number of homeless people to help me in designing its mission and structure. Bobby was one of them. Years later, he went through a rough season. His addiction and a number of other choices brought him to a place where he became very angry. He took out much of his anger on me. He would frequently drop in at the shelter and sit down with me and threaten my life. He was a big guy and easily capable of hurting me. One day he went to the parking lot and bashed in my car window. I was very fearful but through prayer all I could think to do was show him love. When he would drop in, I would tell him that I loved him. Eventually, Bobby came to a place where he apologized and thanked me for loving him. We remained friends until he passed away. God's Love is bigger than mental health issues and addictions. It was a privilege to have been in a situation where I could show that Love to those in desperate need.

Check out what Dion Oxford shares in the Love Movement's Take Action video series at:  
[http://bit.ly/LM\\_Dion\\_Oxford](http://bit.ly/LM_Dion_Oxford)

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