

Faith Today

To Connect, Equip and Inform Evangelical Christians in Canada

MARCH/APRIL 2014



Now available
for your
Android or iPad

Evangelical in Quebec – What's That Like?

**The FT Interview:
Ambassador Andrew Bennett
on Religious Freedom** p. 52

**How to Make Your Church
Disabled Friendly** p. 55

**Hollywood Takes the Bible to
the Big Screen Again** p. 49

**Leaving Home: A Journey From
One Church to Another** p. 31




RETIREMENT: NOT AT THIS PACE!

FaithLife Financial is a reliable not-for-profit insurance provider that helps people build solid financial plans based on Christian principles. *The earlier you start saving, the more you'll have in the future to enjoy during the retirement years.*



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

 facebook.com/faithlifefinancial |  twitter.com/faithlifefin



20% DISCOUNT FOR CANADIAN STUDENTS AT LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

We have increased our Canadian Discount from 15 to **20 PERCENT OFF** tuition, room and board, and fees! Discover why so many Canadians call Liberty home. Visit www.LibertyU.com/CanadianAdmissions.

Liberty provides quality academics taught from a biblical worldview. Our distinguished faculty are committed to teaching and mentoring students in their field of interest.

For the student-athlete or sports enthusiast, we also have 20 NCAA Division I athletic teams and 32 Club Sports.

To speak to an admissions counselor call **(800) 543-5317** or email international@liberty.edu. Reference promo code **R25133** when you apply.

BECOME A CHAMPION. APPLY TODAY!

LIBERTY
UNIVERSITY.

Training Champions for Christ since 1971

Church Protection Plus clients have

THE ADVANTAGE

- Premium **Savings** ✓
- Unparalleled **Coverage** ✓
- Innovative Insurance **Solutions** ✓
- Risk Management **Expertise** ✓
- Valuable Board **Resource** ✓

It's our privilege to serve the insurance needs of over 6000 churches and charities across Canada.

ANNOUNCING...

Travel Insurance for Global Missions



- Customized Travel Medical Insurance
- Medical and Security Evacuation
- Kidnap Consulting Indemnity
- Worldwide Liability Coverage
- Exclusive TravelTracker™

*Protection, Confidence, Security
for Organizations, Leaders, Travellers*



1-800-640-0933 • churchinsurance@robertsonhall.com • www.robertsonhall.com

ROBERTSON  HALL
INSURANCE

church protection 

S E R V I N G C H U R C H E S A N D C H R I S T I A N C H A R I T I E S S I N C E 1 9 7 2

Contents | Faith Today

March / April 2014



PHOTO: DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

Features

- 18** **Being Evangelical in Quebec** by Jenna Smith / In a province unlike any other, Evangelicals are carving out their personal and communal identities.
- 25** **How Canadian Christians Are Caring for the Dying** by Patricia Paddey / Insights on bringing comfort and providing palliative care.
- 29** **Forgiveness for Murder Saves Dozens** by Karen Stiller / An Abbotsford man unleashed a wave of change by forgiving his sister's murderer.
- 31** **Leaving Home** by Karen Stiller / A painful and marvel-filled journey from one church to another.
- 49** **Coming to a Screen Near You** by Jeff Dewsbury / Christian film critics reflect on upcoming mainstream movies about Noah and Jesus.
- 52** **The Faith Today Interview With Andrew Bennett of Canada's Office of Religious Freedom** / Bennett discusses why it's important for Canada to speak out against religious persecution.
- 55** **How to Welcome People With Disabilities Into Church** by Karen Stiller / Expert advice on thinking, speaking and acting to improve the welcome at your congregation.

In Each Issue

- 7** **BEHIND THE SCENES** / Interviews That Serve You by the editors
- 8** **FAITH FORUM: LETTERS AND MILESTONES** / Prostitution Law; Openness and Insight; Leadership on Abortion
- 10** **KINGDOM MATTERS** / Canadian Woman Reaches Roma Children; Pastors (and Chicken Manure) Star in Unlikely Documentary; Alpha Youth Film Series
- 14** **THE GATHERING PLACE** / Where's the Threat? by Bruce J. Clemenger
- 15** **NEWS FROM THE EFC** / Prostitution Law Reform; Loyola Intervention at Supreme Court; Euthanasia Case Appealed; EFC Vice-President in Israel
- 16** **Q&A** / Leah Kostamo, Cofounder of A Rocha Canada
- 17** **ACTIVATE: CHANGE YOUR WORLD** / Religion, Culture and Education in Canada by Don Hutchinson
- 33** **LINK CHARITY CANADA INC.** / Advertising Supplement
- 59** **A CHURCH YOU SHOULD KNOW** / Moncton Wesleyan Church by Stephen Bedard
- 61** **HEMORRHAGING FAITH** / How a Generation Leaving the Church Is Actually Propelling It Forward by Matt Wilkinson
- 63** **CANADIAN WOMEN OFFER STRONG LEADERSHIP** / Advertising Feature
- 68** **GOD AT WORK IN DENOMINATIONS** / We Need More Light by David Rowley
- 69** **HISTORY LESSON** / The Little-Known World of Girl Evangelists by Kevin Flatt
- 70** **BUSINESS MATTERS** / Developing My Influence for Christ by Joe MacDonald
- 71** **WOMEN'S COLUMN** / When Women Start Saying No by Sheila Wray Gregoire
- 72** **BLESSED IS THE MAN** / Why Men Avoid Doctor Visits by Doug Koop
- 73** **RELIGIONWATCH** / Clarity on Hinduism by James A. Beverley
- 74** **BOOKS & CULTURE** / Book & Music Reviews
- 76** **GLOBAL VILLAGE** / Does AIDS Still Matter? by Debra Fieguth
- 77** **THE NETWORK** / Classified Ads
- 78** **CHRIST & CULTURE IN CANADA** / More of the Same? by John G. Stackhouse Jr.

Cover Photo: WWW.GLOWIMAGES.COM

ONLINE ONLY



Love In Action youth magazine, issue #3

Start reading at www.faithtoday.ca/LIA.



PHOTO: JENNIFER IACOB



MILE TWO
DISCIPLESHIP
SCHOOL

APPLY NOW FOR
SEPTEMBER 2014

Mile Two is a new 8-month discipleship school focusing on biblical study, experiential learning, and seeking God. Our mission is to develop disciples of Jesus who are compassionate, self-sacrificing and absolutely committed to pursuing Jesus in every area of life.

email: miletwo@prov.ca
fax: 1.204.433.7158
toll-free: 1.800.668.7768

www.MileTwo.ca

BIBLICAL STUDY

Study the Bible in-depth and learn from teachers who model the life of a disciple of Jesus in their everyday life. Mile Two students will develop a biblical worldview, and find answers to questions about faith and the Bible.

URBAN MINISTRY

Mile Two is committed to learning beyond the classroom. Ministry in a variety of urban settings within the city of Winnipeg, provides students with the opportunity to translate the study of scripture into a vibrant experience of obedient discipleship. Mile Two students will engage in meaningful service. Each student will be placed in a urban ministry for the entire eight months, becoming a part of the community in which they serve - building relationships, and making an impact.

EXPERIENCE ISRAEL

Walk the land that Jesus walked! An essential component of Mile Two is a trip to Israel. Students will gain a new perspective on the Bible as they experience the land and the culture with all their senses. Scripture will come alive in a new way and students will gain deeper insights about God's Word.



Interviews That Serve You

Asking the right questions of the right people on your behalf.

It was right down to the wire to schedule the interview with Ambassador Andrew Bennett of Canada's Office of Religious Freedom. He was travelling the week before our interview and committed to a busy schedule after that, but he graciously made time for us just before our deadline.

As his newly created government position reached its first anniversary, we thought it important to check in to see how the work is going. Religious freedom is something Evangelicals watch carefully, even in Canada – maybe especially in Canada.

You'll find Ambassador Bennett was careful, and rightly so, not to comment on internal Canadian politics. But we have to admit the Quebec Government's proposed Charter of Values was on our minds as we spoke to him.

Which brings us to our cover story on Quebec, a province we all know is more secularized and post-Christian than the rest of Canada, full of remarkable challenges for its relatively tiny evangelical community.

We asked an up-and-coming Quebec writer Jenna Smith to sketch what it's like to live out your faith in the Quebec context. Her own life experience helped her to ask just the right challenging questions as she interviewed a variety of thoughtful Quebecers.

We're having the entire package translated into French

to help further the discussion (see www.faithtoday.ca/Quebec).

That controversial Charter of Values is also tackled head on in this issue by Bruce Clemenger, president of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) and publisher of *Faith Today*.

Across the page from Clemenger is more information related to Quebec – an interview with Pierre Bergeron, newly hired to co-ordinate the EFC's activities in *la belle province*, plus a news item about the EFC's response to Quebec's proposal to legalize euthanasia.

As always, we welcome your thoughts in response to these articles as well as the other features on upcoming Bible movies, caring for the dying, welcoming people with disabilities in church – and all the rest.

With your input we'll keep asking the right questions of the right people on your behalf – even when the right people are hard to reach – so that all of us can benefit. **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.

Faith Today

Vol. 32 No 2

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

Senior Editors: Bill Fledderus and Karen Stiller

Associate Editor: Stephen Bedard

Production: Robert Robotham Graphics

Advertising Manager: Brian Shephard

Marketing: Gina Waugh

Distribution: Anita Kwan

Senior Writers: Jeff Dewsbury, Debra Fieguth, Alex Newman, Patricia Paddey

Copy Editor: Janet Dimond

Printing: Printed in Canada

Founding Editor: Brian C. Stiller

Founded: 1983

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

Proud sponsor of: www.christianity.ca

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

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

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

TO COPY AN ARTICLE: *Faith Today* grants permission for any article to be copied for use in a local church provided no more than 500 copies are distributed freely. Such copies may also note:

"Call 1-866-302-3362 x236 for a free sample issue." Educational institutions should contact www.accesscopyright.ca for a copying licence. Republishing a *Faith Today* article in another publication requires permission from our editorial office.

TO ADVERTISE: Contact Brian Shephard, advertising manager, at 905-481-4275. Email address: ads@faithtoday.ca. May/June 2014 ad deadline: April 13, 2014.

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

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

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

Prostitution Law

Re: Kingdom Matters (Jan/Feb 2014)

I appreciated “Canadian Film Tours to Ignite Prostitution Discussion.” It mentions the differences in approach in different countries in Europe and the implications for Canada. I receive a weekly blog from Jeff Fountain on various topics related to the impact of the gospel in Europe. In February he dealt with how various countries in Europe handle human trafficking and prostitution. This update would be beneficial to our discussion here in Canada. Read it at www.schumancentre.eu/2014/02/

stopping-demand.

Thanks for your work on behalf of the evangelical Church in Canada.

Howard Moore
Oshawa, Ont.

Openness and Insight

Re: The FT Interview With Rev. Dawn McDonald (Sep/Oct 2013)

I appreciated Dawn McDonald’s comments in the interview. While I have not had a great deal of experience with homosexuality in my years of ministry, I recognize the question about how the church should respond to those wrest-



ling with same-sex attraction or a gay lifestyle is becoming an increasingly prominent one.

Reading the interview led me to read and benefit as well from Dawn’s story on the Zacheus website.

Thank you Dawn for your openness, insight and wisdom on this troubling question.

Gord Martin
Waterloo, Ont.

Leadership on Abortion Issue

Re: Why Is It So Hard to Talk About Abortion in Canada? (May/June 2013)

Thank you for the article about abortions by Alex Newman. The issue is controlled by a majority of the population who is very determined to silence any opposition to the Canadian status quo.

We need leaders who will rise up and give voice to the

Milestones

APPOINTED

Harry Fernhout as executive director of **Christian Studies International**, a charity that helps Christian faculty serve stints at universities in developing and former communist countries. Dr. Fernhout was previously president of The King’s



SUPPLIED PHOTO

University College in Edmonton and the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto. He succeeds the late Harro Van Brummelen and acting director Wendy Helleman.

Harry Fernhout

RENAMED

One Hope Canada

is the new name for Canadian Sunday School Mission, also known as CSSM Ministries, a charitable network of 40 camps and 17 local churches known for Native ministry and itinerant evangelism. It’s headquartered in Winnipeg with seven provincial offices across Canada.

PARTNERED

SIM and **Asian Access** have entered into a strategic ministry partnership to plant, strengthen and partner with churches and missionaries in Japan. John Denbok is executive director of SIM Canada,

based in Scarborough, Ont. He explains. “Asian Access will lead the vision and field management in Japan, while SIM Canada will mobilize, train, manage member care and finances to achieve a mutual goal of launching a hundred church multiplication networks.” Asian Access is based in California and has an office in Delta, B.C.

NOMINATED

For best contemporary Christian/gospel album of the year at the Junos, Canada’s mainstream music awards: *Search the Heavens* by Fraser Campbell; *Jordan Raycroft* by Jordan Raycroft; *Heart* by The City Harmonic; *Lost & Undone: A Gospel Bluegrass Companion* by The High Bar Gang; and *Trees* by Tim Neufeld. The award will be announced and given March 30 in Winnipeg.

POSTPONED

The 2014 General Assembly of the **World Evangelical Alliance**, planned for Seoul, South Korea, in October. The WEA holds these assemblies every six years, convening the 129 national alliances and fellowships for spiritual discernment, corporate business and leadership training. “Internal divisions among the evangelical community” required the postponement, according to the WEA.

MOVED

The office of **Project Ploughshares**, the ecumenical peace centre of the Canadian Council of Churches. After more than a decade in uptown Waterloo, Ont., this spring it is returning to its 1976 birthplace: Conrad Grebel University College at the University of Waterloo. Donations from the Mennonite Savings and Credit Union have enabled Grebel to establish the MSCU Centre for Peace Advancement, where Project Ploughshares will be an anchor partner alongside Grebel graduate students, peace organization startups, artists, musicians and visiting scholars.

RESIGNED

William Raccah as president of **Alberta Bible College**, a Calgary school affiliated with the Christian Churches/Churches of Christ with 130 students and seven full-time faculty. Raccah was appointed in 2012, and Rob Pittman before him in 2010. A presidential search is ongoing.

APPOINTED

Doug Blomberg as acting president of the **Institute for Christian Studies**, a Christian graduate school in Toronto with roots in the Christian Reformed Church. He succeeds co-presidents Tom

thousands of children silenced by abortion each year.

May Alex Newman and others continue to provide such leadership.

David Shantz
Ville St-Laurent, Que.

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

and Dawn Wolthuis, who left just one year after they took on the role.

Bob Kuhn as interim president of **Trinity Western University**. A presidential



PHOTO: WWW.TWU.CA

Bob Kuhn

search is ongoing to replace Jonathan Raymond, who served seven years in the position. Trinity Western is a Christian institution based in Langley, B.C., with more than 1,500

students enrolled in 42 bachelor's degree programs and another 600 in 16 graduate programs.

LAUNCHED

A school of business at The King's University College in Edmonton, building on its existing bachelor of commerce program, starting September 2014. New additions include up to six more accounting and finance-related courses, a new course called Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Business, and a fourth full-time commerce professor. Those pursuing their accounting designation will now be able to complete their studies at The King's.

Create OPPORTUNITY for Ministry to ENGAGE

Powerful tools for management of:

Church Information Event Registration
Camp Registration Web Content & Design

SUNERGO
systems for MINISTRY

Connecting Your Team with
the People They Serve.



Ministry Solutions that Reach, Enable, Inform & Connect

CALL US AT
1.866.688.6265 (EXT 3)

VISIT US AT
Sunergo.net



POWERED BY **NCOLMINISTRIES**

Canadian Woman Reaches Roma Children



PHOTO: JENNIFER IACOB

Mihaela, age 7, participates in the programs Break the Cycle Romania offers.

After attending MissionFest Toronto in 1998, 18-year-old Jennifer Iacob from Uxbridge, Ont., set out for a one-month mission trip to Romania to help abandoned infants and children in hospitals and orphanages.

"I knew that it was a project I would be able to help with in a very tangible way, and so a few months later I found myself on a plane bound for Eastern Europe," Iacob recalls. Her "short-term" trip would turn into a decades-long journey to

help the shunned Roma children in the country's capital of Bucharest.

Commonly referred to as "Gypsies," the Roma have a reputation – deservedly or not – in Bucharest for participating in illegal activities such as drug trafficking, pickpocketing and street scams. As a result Iacob says Roma children are often rejected by the rest of the community.

"Can you imagine how it must feel for people to ignore you, to look through you like you don't exist, or to move away because you have come too close and they don't want to risk touching you? How can we expect a child to succeed when even the local school's principal states that they don't want any more 'Gypsies' at their schools?"

After her first month in Romania, Iacob felt God urging her to do more. "I simply couldn't return to Canada and go on with my day-to-day life. I felt God calling me to return to Romania and so I went back for what I thought would just be 1 year. The people and the country captured my heart and 1 year has transformed into 14 (so far)!"

Now married with two young sons, Iacob continues to devote her life to Bucharest's

Roma children through her "Break the Cycle" mission (www.breakthecycleromania.com), which is administered by The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. This year will mark the start of a new after-school program to assist the children with homework and provide encouragement and mentorship in their schooling. The program is critical to combat low grades and discouragement, which quickly lead to early school abandonment. Close to 100 Roma children are eager to participate in the program, however with minimal manpower there is room for just 20.

Iacob and her husband Raz distribute warm blankets, hats, and mittens to the numerous Roma children and their families who squat in abandoned storefronts and garages. They also provide food packages several times throughout the year and help register the children for school. With an annual budget of only \$50,000 raised solely through Iacob's speaking engagements, family, and friends, money is scarce, says Iacob.

"We've had some big successes, but I'd rather talk about the small ones. Simply making a child smile when on the surface it seems this child has absolutely nothing to smile about – that is success," she says. "When a mom finally understands more about the love of God as she looks upon her own child suffering in a hospital bed and is comforted, when a group of teenage girls who had dropped out of school in Grade 3 decide they want to go back to school – that is success. When you offer love, when you offer hope and it is accepted – that is the biggest success of all." **FT**

–Julie Fitz-Gerald

Pastors (and Chicken Manure) Star in Unlikely Documentary

A new documentary offers a compelling look at Abbotsford, B.C.'s homeless population and challenges Christians to be more involved in lives of the homeless.

The Chicken Manure Incident tracks the response of pastors Ward Draper and Jesse Wegenast of 5&2 Ministries, who became spokespeople for the homeless after the City of Abbotsford dumped chicken manure on a makeshift homeless camp last June. 5 & 2 Ministries is a Christian outreach that focuses on homeless



and underserved populations of Abbotsford, Langley and Aldergrove, B.C.

Filmmaker Kevin Miller, who also wrote and directed the controversial 2012 documentary *Hellbound?*, followed the manure story as it developed, interviewing Abbotsford's mayor, police officials and members of

the homeless community.

The 44-minute film shows the event through the eyes of those who experienced it, he says. "It captured a side of this story that nobody has seen."



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BILLY GRAHAM ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

Franklin Graham accepts a Toronto Maple Leaf jersey during a recent kick-off for the 2014 Festival of Hope to be held Sept. 12–14 at Toronto's Air Canada Centre. More than 730 pastors and Christian leaders gathered in Toronto for the launch.

Alpha Youth Film Series – 20,000 Teens and Counting!

In just 90 short days, Alpha's new Youth Film Series reached over 20,000 teens across Canada – a number quickly multiplying, according to the organization. Launched in September 2013, the series is a fresh tool for a well-established ministry to engage Canada's youth and encourage discussion about life's big questions. The series consists of 12 episodes filmed worldwide in cities like Vancouver, London, New York and Jerusalem. Dynamic co-hosts Jason Ballard and Ben Woodman present the 25-minute episodes in an engaging manner high school students can easily relate to.

There are 850 courses running in the first three months alone, well above the 500 Alpha had hoped for. "I think teens want safe environments to discuss the big questions of life and doing so with their peers is really important," explains Shaila Visser, national director of Alpha Canada. "The excellence of the film series gives your average Christian teen confidence to invite their friends along to process their questions. It was really designed for non-Christians and new Christians as an evangelism or outreach tool."

The idea for the series was ignited three

years ago when Ballard approached Visser to discuss an exciting project that had the ability to reach youth globally. As youth alpha director for Alpha Canada and director of Campusfire Conference, an organization devoted to seeing student-led prayer groups established in all Canadian high schools, Ballard was well versed on what teens were searching for. "We were being asked for years if we would film a youth Alpha, but it wasn't until Jason Ballard came along and met with me and said, 'God put this on my heart,' that we really started to dream, pray and strategize about how to actually do this," says Visser.

Choosing Woodman as Ballard's co-host was a no-brainer. Their on-screen chemistry is unmistakable and the longtime friends from Port Coquitlam, B.C., are united by a common passion for evangelism, particularly with teens. "They're funny, they're creative, they're engaging and teens just love them," explains Visser. "They're already

The series was filmed worldwide in a variety of cities and locations.



PHOTO: ALPHA MINISTRIES CANADA

being stopped in Starbucks and in malls by teens asking for their picture."

In 2014 Alpha Canada's Youth Film Series will launch worldwide, with translations underway for Spanish and Asian markets. The 12-episode series and 3 training sessions are free to anyone interested in running the 8- to 10-week course, with details available at www.youthalpha.ca. "We're hoping to see it expand around the world with the goal of over 5,000 courses worldwide by next year. It's Alpha's delight to provide this resource free to the local church to encourage evangelism," says Visser. **FT**

–Julie Fitz-Gerald

He adds the film came about accidentally while he was in the process of doing a video profile of Draper. Set to forceful music, the film explores what Draper calls a "disconnect between the Church's mandate and reality."

When the chicken manure event happened, Draper immediately called on Abbotsford's largely evangelical community to advocate for the homeless. "It was a perfect time to engage the community, but there wasn't much in the way of church response. It was really disappointing," says Draper.

"The way the homeless are treated here and in the rest of Canada is a human rights issue. It's getting worse and not improving," Draper says. While the film is critical of the faith community's response to the chicken manure incident, Miller says it's not

about pointing fingers.

"The film can educate certainly, but I hope it will impact people on a heart level. It's bringing it back to the understanding that Jesus call us to love," he says.

Draper hopes it will challenge Christians to step out and practice true discipleship.

"Get in a soup line and serve there. When you're there, just go talk to somebody. Do something that connects you to the brokenness," he says.

Proceeds from *The Chicken Manure Incident* will go to 5&2 Ministries. The film is available for rent or purchase on Vimeo (www.vimeo.com/ondemand/8335/83536451). **FT**

–Renée Joette Friesen

Photography Exhibit Offers Hope of a Second Chance to Parolees

I Steve, a former inmate who served 23 years for carjacking, became a Christian in prison after reading a Bible.



PHOTO: LIFE2

A new photography exhibit offers a glimpse inside the lives of several Canadian parolees as they adjust to life after prison. The Life² photo exhibit (www.lifesquared.ca) is the brainchild of filmmaker Mark Power of Edmonton, who became intrigued by the idea after working as a Christian mentor to former prisoners.

He quickly realized how difficult it was for parolees to integrate back into society. Many had made commitments to turn their lives around, but they faced the stigma often associated with ex-convicts. "How are people supposed to start over if no one is opening doors for them?" he says.

Power is a production supervisor at the North West Centre for the National Film Board of Canada. Outside his day job he founded Give of Yourself, an organization that seeks to create awareness around the issues of justice, homelessness and suicide. Life² is one of the first projects to come out of the organization.

"As an artist I didn't want to do something that felt self-absorbed or self-promoting," Power explains. "I believe God wants us to take what we are good at and find a way to love people with those skills. When I love people, that is me loving God."

He paired 7 former inmates with 7 professional photographers to document their lives. The exhibit features 35 photographs with text from the parolees offering reflections about their journeys. Some write about regrets while others express gratitude that they escaped their former lifestyles. In addition Life² offers visitors the opportunity to meet the parolees and ask them questions. The result is a compelling look at the power of second chances.

"I need to hear the stories from the men and women in these photographs because I need the inspiration myself," Power explains. "Through their stories I've come to understand how even the most devastating of setbacks can be spun into something amazing."

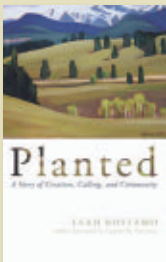
Steve, one of the parolees featured in the exhibit, is a former inmate who served 23 years for carjacking. He became a Christian in prison after reading a Bible during an extended stay in isolation. When he was released and began rebuilding his life, he discovered how difficult it was to find steady work as an ex-convict. Steve says he hopes the exhibit will help people realize everyone has the potential to change.

"What a person is today doesn't mean that's what he will be in 15, 10 or even 5 years from now," he says. "People can change. There is hope and redemption in life."

It is this idea of a new start that the photo exhibit conveys. "Themes of redemption and forgiveness are powerful elements that audiences can connect to," Power explains. "Evangelicals look at what we're doing and call it a ministry. The secular crowd calls it a movement. All I know is that we are loving people and amazing things are happening."

Catch the Life² exhibit at The King's University College in Edmonton beginning March 31. The college will feature several events coinciding with the exhibit in the coming months. **FI** —Belinda Elliott

New Book Traces History of Canadian Christian Environmental Movement



In *Planted: A Story of Creation, Calling, and Community* (Cascade Books, 2013), author Leah Kostamo (www.leahkostamo.com) describes her personal passion for the environment while giving a first-hand account of her work with A Rocha — an international Christian organization committed to environmental stewardship.

While the book has a definite appeal for environmentalists, Kostamo hopes it will "broaden people's imaginations for God's creation."

"We are living in this disengaged world. We're not in touch with being earthly creatures," she says. "I hope people will take a closer look at where they are planted."

The book playfully recounts how Kostamo and her husband helped start A Rocha's first Christian environmental centre in Canada, now located in Surrey, B.C. Kostamo tackles tough issues like shopping addiction and "tampering with creation's web," but manages to turn what could be a heavy read into charming stories that educate and inspire.

"The stories flowed. I find more didactic writing a little boring. I wanted to give people information, but not in a dry way," she explains.

Kostamo writes that some ten years ago A Rocha was denied a booth at a mission conference because it was not considered a Christian mission. Today the perception has changed as people have become increasingly aware of their role as stewards of God's creation, she says. "Creation care is a gospel issue. Most Christians care about the environment, but some are slow to embrace the environment."

Part of her desire to write the book was to encourage people to view "caring for creation out of joy and hope, rather than fear and reactionary thinking," which she says results only in short-term environmental solutions. "We are connected to God's earth, and (creation care) is about theology, wonder and worship. If it's not rooted in that, it's not going to last."

The book explores how to care for creation "in a way that's not too big or too scary or impossible," Kostamo says. "It doesn't mean turning your entire backyard into a garden. It's about living a more whole and holistic life." **FI** —Renée Joette Friesen

See this issue's Q and A (page 16) for more with Leah Kostamo

Paul Brandt has found more success in the Canadian market than in the U.S.



Canadian Country Star Continues to Rise

Paul Brandt is the most awarded male country music artist in Canadian history. His success flies in the face of how experts instruct artists to be successful, and his latest offering *Just As I Am* sees Brandt return to his gospel roots.

Brandt was raised in a Christian home outside Calgary, Alta. In 1994 he signed a Nashville record deal with Warner/Reprise Records and went on to sell over a million albums. Brandt returned to Canada and in 2001 launched his own Brand T Records as an independent artist.

Most Canadian artists are forced to head to the bigger American market just to make a living. Not only has Brandt found more success in the Canadian market than he ever did in the U.S., but being independent has given him the freedom to record songs he feels he can stand behind and even cross genre, something difficult to do with a traditional record company. His fall 2012 release *Just As I Am* is a gospel recording of the songs he grew up singing a *cappella* in church.

"This was a really important album for me. This is the music I was raised on. It's what I base my life on. These are the roots of country music," said Brandt from his Calgary-area home office (a.k.a. the barn).

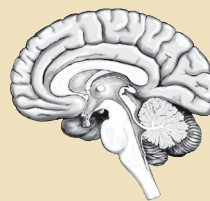
"Rather than be a Christian country music singer, I want to be a country music singer who's a Christian," says Brandt. *Just As I Am* features some of country music's greatest talents, and Gordon Mote, of Gaither Homecoming fame, produced it. "I'd like people who are gospel music fans to know this album was a dream come true for me. Putting this project together was a lot of fun and they'll probably hear their favorites."

At the recent 2013 Covenant Awards, Brandt was nominated for five awards and came home with three: country/blue-

Noteworthy

Historic Church Shipped From Nova Scotia to Louisiana

Three years after Nova Scotia's All Saints Church closed, the 200-year-old structure is set to be moved to Louisiana, more than 3,200 kilometres from its original home. Louisiana Church, a Southern Baptist congregation, expects to have the building assembled and running in time for Easter Sunday. The small wooden structure was first erected by children of United Empire Loyalists in 1814.



risk of depression because of family history, according to a new study. Parts of the brain's outer layer, the cortex, were thicker in study participants who said religion or spiritual-

ity was important to them, possibly conferring resilience to the development of depressive illness. "Our beliefs and our moods are reflected in our brain, and with new imaging techniques we can begin to see this," said Myrna Weissman, one of the authors of the study.

Number of Christians Killed for Their Faith Doubled in 2013

Reported cases of Christians killed for their faith around the world doubled in 2013 from the year before according to Open Doors, a nondenominational group supporting persecuted Christians worldwide. Open Doors documented 2,123 martyr killings, compared with 1,201 in 2012. There were 1,213 such deaths in Syria alone last year. "This is a very minimal count based on what has been reported in the media and we can confirm," said Frans Veerman, head of research.

WVC Online Devotional



An online devotional by World Vision Canada features Canadian Christian leaders from diverse settings reflecting on faith and child labour around the world. Bruce Clemenger, president of the EFC, and Geoff Tunnicliffe of the World Evangelical Alliance are contributing writers, along with Regent College professor John Stackhouse, a *Faith Today* columnist.

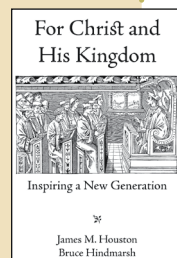
Spirituality May Help Protect Brain

Spirituality may offer some protection for the brains of people with a higher

Resources

- *Uncovering Missions Fest* by Richard Dodding (MFI Publishing, 2013). Traces the birth and development of Missions Fest in Vancouver, a huge annual conference which for over 30 years has been calling churches to a renewed effort and emphasis on missions. www.missionsfestinternational.org.
- *For Christ and His Kingdom: Inspiring a New Generation* by James Houston and Bruce Hindmarsh (Regent College Publishing, 2013).

Two presentations from the first National Forum on Christian Higher Education (in Edmonton in 2012). Hindmarsh argues intellectual and spiritual integrity are essential to transmitting the faith between generations. Houston argues a full understanding of the person of Christ is necessary to prevent Christian education being reduced by secular influences. **FT**



grass album of the year, album of the year and artist of the year.

He has been nominated at the Covenant Awards before, and even won for a single track and his Christmas album, but winning this year seemed to make him a part of the Christian music scene. "It felt really great to get the support of the GMA [Gospel Music Association] community. There's so many reasons I wanted to put this [album] out, and to get that pat on the back was pretty sweet,"

says Brandt. "For me, it's about following what God's put on my heart... We all have that God-shaped hole, and music was created to worship. I play the first few notes of "Convoy" or "Alberta Bound" and people raise their hands like it's a church service. It's all music I'm hoping He'll use to point people toward Him in some way." **FT** —Lisa Hall-Wilson

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



Where's the Threat?

Religious symbols don't compromise the secular nature of governments in Canada.

When government representatives wear religious symbols or headdresses, does that threaten the secular nature of governments in Canada? The Government of Quebec argues it does. It has proposed a Charter of Values that would bar government employees – from teachers to judges – from wearing conspicuous religious symbols or clothing on the job.

The response to this proposal is starkly different within and outside Quebec. The majority of Quebecers seem to favour it (with the notable exception of those in Montreal), while the majority of other Canadians are opposed. Why do so many support the proposal? What threat does it address?

In Canada governments are secular. Although some debate what “secular” actually means, most agree governments should treat people of any faith (or no particular faith) fairly and equitably. Governments should not be biased toward or against individuals because of their religious beliefs.

Historically this meant our governments were nonsectarian – no one church or Christian tradition (or, more recently, any world religion) should be privileged or have special status. Nor should adherence to a religion disqualify someone from government protection, services or employment.

Today people of all faiths are to be accommodated and free to engage in the public square and work for governments if they so choose. Religious belief should not be a barrier to full participation in Canadian society.

Although the issue raised by the Charter of Values is not religious belief but dress, the two are not so easily separated. The concept of freedom of religion has historically recognized that religious belief and practices are intertwined. Both the expression of beliefs as well as the beliefs themselves deserve protection.

Admittedly, not every activity that flows from a religious commitment should be tolerated – take human sacrifice, for

example. Extreme and damaging practices are reasonably limited in a free and democratic society.

So, what about religious dress? What threat does it pose that would warrant restrictions?

There is no evidence a government employee wearing religious clothing is more likely to discriminate unfairly. In fact, someone who visibly self-identifies with a religious tradition would more likely take extra care not only to be fair, but also to be seen to be fair.

Perhaps more context can help explain the perceived threat. Most traditions of Christianity, which have so dominated Canada's history, do not require distinctive clothing or symbols, so restricting their wear would mainly affect people of non-Christian faiths who are, by and large, more recently immigrated to Canada.

Religious garb, then, reminds all of us of the changing character of Quebec and all of Canada – increasingly diverse in religion and culture. While this diversity might make some Canadians uncomfortable, it is not a threat to the fair and unbiased operation of government. On the contrary, such garb on government functionaries demonstrates the nonsectarian approach is indeed working.

Perhaps we need to look elsewhere to understand some of the angst over religious clothing. Could it be that, in a country with so many freedoms, some Canadians feel threatened by those who have chosen a faith that prescribes public dress or behaviour?

We live in an age of secularity, as Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor calls it. Ideas such as transcendence and the sacred are no longer seen as being necessary to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, or to peace, order and good government. Faith is seen as optional, and is only tolerated if it does not challenge how we choose to live out our lives or how we manage our lives together in society. Canadians today are committed to individual autonomy, to freedom of choice. Our self-image is understood to be an expression of individual sovereignty.

So it seems that in Canada today, transcendent beliefs are coming to be seen as a threat that challenges popular ideas of secularity and individual autonomy.

In such a situation our nonsectarian heritage can serve us well. A truly nonsectarian approach would seek to accommodate those who affirm the current views about secularity and autonomy, but not allow these commitments to trump other (religious) worldviews in shaping how we organize public behaviour in a religiously plural society. **FT**



Together for influence, impact and identity

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

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

Prostitution Law Reform

The EFC delivered its proposal for reform to Canada's prostitution laws to the prime minister and ministers of justice and public safety in December. Read the EFC's proposal at www.theEFC.ca/OutOfBusiness.

The proposal is timely because, just 11 days later, the Supreme Court of Canada released its decision in the *Canada v. Bedford* case, a case in which the EFC intervened. The *Bedford* decision gives the government one year to replace Canada's prostitution laws. In February 2014 the Government of Canada began inviting public input on the reform of Canada's prostitution laws. The online consultation is open until March 17, 2014. Learn more at www.theEFC.ca/Bedford-Decision.

Loyola Intervention at Supreme Court

The Supreme Court of Canada has approved the EFC's application to participate in the *Loyola High School v. Attorney General of Quebec* case as an intervener. The case, scheduled to be heard March 24, addresses issues of institutional religious freedom in education. Details at www.theEFC.ca/Loyola.

Euthanasia Case Appealed

Last October the EFC welcomed the *Carter v. Canada (Attorney General)* decision by the British Columbia Court of Appeal affirming Canada's prohibition against euthanasia. However, in January the Supreme Court of Canada agreed to hear an appeal of the case, probably on October 14, 2014.

The EFC intervened in the case at the Court of Appeal and will apply to intervene at the SCC. The Court of Appeal's deci-

sion stated that only Parliament is constitutionally empowered to consider changes to Canada's law prohibiting assisted suicide and euthanasia. Details at www.theEFC.ca/Carter.

EFC Vice-President in Israel

EFC vice-president Don Hutchinson was in Israel in January for meetings with evangelical leaders in Israel and the West Bank. Hutchinson also travelled as part of the Canadian delegation that accompanied Prime Minister Stephen Harper on his first official visit to the State of Israel.

Outgoing Letters

The EFC sent an open letter to Members of the National Assembly of Quebec on Bill 52, An Act Respecting End-of-Life Care, in February. The EFC asked MNAs to vote against the bill, which would require euthanasia be provided upon request to any adult person with a Quebec health card. The EFC letter expressed concern for Quebec's most vulnerable citizens and called MNAs to instead support increased support for palliative care centres.

The EFC also sent a letter to a provincial law society supporting Trinity Western University's proposed law school. Several of these societies, for example the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society, have announced they intend to review whether to permit TWU graduates. **FT**

Events to Help You Learn and Grow

Visit theEFC.ca/calendar to learn about worthwhile events near you, and to post and promote your own major events. Promise Keepers, World Vision, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and other groups have multiple events on the calendar for March and April. There's also a national disability conference, a provincial home educators conference, an Edmonton fine arts conference and more. New events are added every few days.

Meet the EFC Staff: Pierre Bergeron

As part of the 50th anniversary celebrations at The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, *Faith Today* is introducing an EFC board member in each issue. But we'll take a break this issue to introduce a new employee instead, the EFC's Quebec director, Pierre Bergeron.

FT: Tell us a little about yourself.

PB: I was born and raised in Quebec, and French is my mother tongue. I was ordained in The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC), and my wife and I have been in ministry for 40 years. I consider myself blessed for having experienced a variety of ministry opportunities ranging from pastoring, church planting, leading the PAOC churches in Quebec and the Collège Biblique-Québec, to serving as a prison chaplain. Also I was the first Pentecostal chaplain in the Canadian Armed

Forces since the Second World War, and it was my privilege for 17 years to serve with some of Canada's bravest sons and daughters as their military chaplain. In 2013 I retired from the military.

FT: What's your role at the EFC?

PB: It was a great privilege to step into this part-time opportunity of being the Quebec Director for the EFC and support the French Evangelical Church in Quebec. For the next several months, I'm meeting with denominational leaders to assess what God is doing within the various denominations, ministry organizations and seminaries.

FT: What is your hope for the Church in Quebec?

PB: My passion is to see a strong evangelical voice in the province. I see a brighter



PHOTO: MIKE GUILBAULT

Pierre Bergeron

future in that we are willing to work in closer unity as members of the Body of Christ. Particular denominations and ministries have received gifts and developed an expertise in various ministries where we can and must complement each other. We need each other for the cause of Christ. The

Alliance évangélique du Canada, as the EFC is known in French, can be a great platform to promote what God is doing, build relations of trust, encourage greater networking and partnerships among evangelical denominations that will influence the building of a strong Kingdom identity.

FT: Thank you, Pierre. God bless you in your ministry. **FT**

Leah Kostamo, Cofounder of A Rocha Canada

Leah Kostamo is cofounder and storyteller of A Rocha Canada, an organization that engages in scientific research, environmental education and conservation projects, inspired by God’s love.

What is the mission that drives your organization?

Since our early days A Rocha’s touchstone verse has been Psalm 24:1 – “The Earth is the Lord’s and everything in it.” We’ve always seen ourselves as a bridge spanning the Christian and environmental communities. We’ve had the same message to both audiences, but with different emphases. To the Christians we’ve said, “The *Earth* is the Lord’s.” To the environmental community, “The Earth is the *Lord’s*.”

How do you view A Rocha’s relationship with the Canadian evangelical community?

The evangelical church is our tribe, if you will. We see ourselves as an outworking of the evangelical faith which teaches us that God was in Christ reconciling all things to Himself (Colossians 1:20).

Have you seen changes in the past ten years in how the Church is responding to environmental concerns?

Definitely! When we first began about 13 years ago, I think many churches viewed “the environment” as a fringe concern. But now with statements like those included in the Lausanne Movement’s Cape Town Commitments (for “urgent and prophetic ecological responsibility”), the Church is recognizing we can’t truly love God and our neighbour without looking after our neighbour’s air, soil and water.

How do you disconnect from your work at the end of the day?

Ironically, the best way to disconnect from my work in



PHOTO: BROOKE MCALLISTER

“When we first began about 13 years ago, I think many churches viewed ‘the environment’ as a fringe concern.”

creation care is to reconnect with creation by going for a walk through the woods or to the beach.

Who are your heroes?

My kids. They teach me every day how to live with joy.

What book has impacted your work the most in the last while?

Wendell Berry’s new book *This Day: Collected & New Sabbath Poems* (Counterpoint, 2013). Berry’s grace-filled Sabbath poems play on themes of faith, work, land and family. Nearly every poem brings me to tears,

and makes me want to live and work with integrity and authenticity.

What is your best leadership advice?

Be thankful. Be joyful. Be humble. And then people will naturally follow. 

Religion, Culture and Education in Canada

By Don Hutchinson

Legislating a particular educational philosophy is a mistake. The professional practices of graduates should speak for themselves.

The EFC is preparing to head into the Supreme Court of Canada for the 25th time on March 24 for the *Loyola High School v. Attorney General of Quebec* case.

Loyola High School is a private Catholic school for about 750 boys in Grades 7 to 11. It has been directed by the Jesuits since its founding in Montreal in the 1800s. Its alumni include many prominent Canadians, including Georges Vanier, former governor general of Canada; Jean Vanier (his son), founder of L'Arche; comedians Don Ferguson and Roger Abbott of the Royal Canadian Air Farce; Juno award-winning musician Sam Roberts; current Minister of Finance Jim Flaherty and a host of other politicians.

While many Canadian high schools might lay claim to a similar roster of famous Canadians, few do so proclaiming that all instruction takes place framed by a distinctly Christian perspective. That's why it was a shock to Loyola when Quebec's Minister of Education denied the school's request to teach the course content of the new ethics and religious culture program from the Catholic perspective for which the school is known.

Loyola was already offering a similar course in ethics and world religions, and had been for years. But the Ministry of Education was clear. Ethics and religion could not be taught in a Catholic school from a religious perspective. In essence, for a couple of hours each week this Jesuit school was being told to pretend it's not Catholic, deny the Catholic perspective on ethics and promote all religions as being equal.

The Government of Quebec requires its secular version of the province's religious heritage and its religion-free version of ethical decision making be taught to all elementary and high school students

in the province, including students in homeschooling and private Protestant and Catholic schools.

In Canada's constitutionally described "free and democratic society," the right to "freedom of religion" is guaranteed. The EFC believes this means such a course needs to make room for instruction in an environment that accepts and agrees with the religious beliefs and educational choices of parents and students.

On the other side of the country, Trinity Western University was granted approval to establish a law school by the Federation of Law Societies of Canada and the British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education. So start the school, right? Wrong.

Several lawyers have complained to their provincial law societies (the professional organizations that govern the practice of law) that TWU grads will have an antigay bias and should not be permitted to practise law.

This isn't about course content or academic qualifications. TWU law students would be graduating from a school that has a curriculum approved in the same manner as every other Canadian law school.

This is about an antireligious bias that perceives Christians as not being able to practise law in accordance with the rules of professional conduct to which every lawyer in this country is subject.

I am and have personally met hundreds of Canadian lawyers who are Christians. There are more. We believe all people are made in the image of God. We believe in sin. We believe in redemption – a blood-stained cross, an empty tomb and a poured out Holy Spirit.

We also believe discrimination against



PHOTO: FRED CHARTRAND

Don Hutchinson

people because they are gay or heterosexual, Christian or Jewish, is wrong. In fact, while that commitment is secured in our faith, it is also required in our professional practice.

Over a decade ago, the EFC intervened before the Supreme

Court to combat a similar antireligious bias when the British Columbia College of Teachers refused to recognize graduates of TWU's school of education.

Back then the court concluded that the freedom to adhere to religious beliefs and practices while attending TWU is to be respected, noting there was no evidence TWU's training of teachers would foster discrimination in the classroom.

The court noted the rules of conduct of the teachers' association would govern practice as a teacher, but could not prevent education in a Christian environment that complied with academic requirements.

The same has held true for graduates of TWU's nursing school, business school and seminary programs. Academic standards govern education. Professional standards govern practice.

The EFC hopes to not have to go back to court on TWU's already approved law school, but we're willing to do so.

A fair understanding of Canadian religion and culture needs to recognize the presence of religion in culture. What is Canadian culture if not free, democratic and accepting – even if not always necessarily agreeing. **FT**

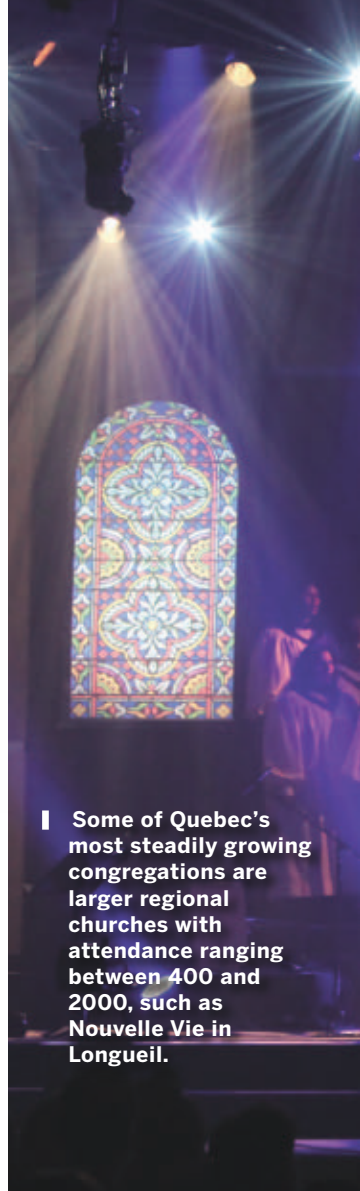
DON HUTCHINSON is vice-president and general legal counsel with The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada and director of its Ottawa Centre for Faith and Public Life. He blogs at www.theEFC.ca/activateCFPL. Please pray for our work. You can also support it financially at www.theEFC.ca/donate or toll-free at 1-866-302-3362.



Being Evangelical in Quebec

In a province unlike any other – at a time in Canada’s history when everything is up for grabs – Evangelicals are carving out their personal and communal identities.

By Jenna Smith



Some of Quebec’s most steadily growing congregations are larger regional churches with attendance ranging between 400 and 2000, such as Nouvelle Vie in Longueuil.

It is Sunday night in downtown Montreal. I am at a C2C church-planting training event focused on equipping and mobilizing the Church in Quebec. Evangel Pentecostal’s reception hall is packed to the brim with pastors, church planters, members of congregations and church leaders.

We have all experienced our fair share of meagre crowds at Christian events in this city, but tonight people around me seem surprised and impressed at the turnout. New church-planting movements like C2C and Transforme Québec – whose vision is to see 25,000 new churches in Quebec over the next 40 years – are making waves within evangelical circles.

It is a unique and challenging time for the religiously minded in Quebec. Politicians argue about the wording of the Charter of Values in the National Assembly. Radio-Canada reports one Catholic parish closed its doors every week in 2013. Human rights groups and media note a rise in acts of racism against religious groups, namely Muslims.

One thing is for sure: religion is on our minds.

In Quebec cities like Mascouche, Shawinigan and Sherbrooke, new evangelical church plants are chock full of young francophone families. Last November Radio-Canada featured a two-part news report on the launch of Église évangélique baptiste de Shawinigan-Sud, with nothing more than, “Why are people going to evangelical churches?” as its main inquiry. That people – particularly young people – would begin to openly practice their faith is still an enigma in the eyes of larger Quebecois society.

And as the French-speaking evangelical movement enters its fifth decade here, it remains a very small but increasingly more visible movement – even if Quebec still demonstrates malaise toward the presence of religion in the public sphere.

Nothing demonstrates this better, of course, than the recent Charter of Values.

The Charter

Bill 60, otherwise known as the Charter of Values, is the talk of Canada. The bill among other things proposes to limit wearing

overt religious symbols, such as the hijab, large crucifixes or turbans for employees of the State, including personnel in government offices, health-care and daycare workers, teachers and university professors.

For Evangelicals whose faith does not require them to wear any overt symbols or religious garb, the debate is more philosophical than practical. Linguist Anicka Fast considered the implications of the bill at a Mennonite Brethren conference on the Charter last year: “There is a question of visibility... we [Anabaptists] have always believed that a strong vision of the Church means that the community will distinguish itself visibly by specific practices [baptism, for instance]. And we have always cherished our freedom to criticize the State and existing structures, all the while refusing to simply resign ourselves to strictly ‘private spiritual matters,’ believing that Jesus Christ is Lord of all the cosmos.”

Even if religious clothing is not an issue, the bill could be viewed as the State interfering in an individual’s right to express his or her own chosen faith and to live it out in public life. And for a movement as young and as little recognized as the Quebec evangelical one, this could matter in ways difficult to predict.

Beer and the Bible in Rosemont

If you find yourself in the Montreal francophone neighbourhood of Rosemont on a Wednesday evening, wander upstairs at the Gainzbar, a stylish urbanite’s restaurant. You will find a group of university students and young adults who meet over a pint of beer and conversation on all matters of theology, faith and the Bible.

These are the children of the children of Quebec’s Quiet Revolution. Their parents turned Quebecois society on its head in the



PHOTO: SIMON DUGUAY

mid-1960s during a cultural upset that would forever change the course of our province's history. The Quiet Revolution introduced language protection laws, radically reduced the province's steep illiteracy rates and initiated a mass exodus from the Roman Catholic Church. Some of that exodus went on to populate the first French evangelical churches of Quebec.

The 20- and 30-Somethings that fill the Gainzbar every Wednesday are part of the first generation of French Quebecois who were raised in evangelical homes and churches.

Their ex-Catholic parents converted to born-again Christianity during what is referred to as the "réveil" [the awakening] of the '70s and '80s. This particular group has taken a break from formal Sunday morning worship in exchange for this community gathering they have called "Echad." It is – for all intents and purposes – a church launched by Simon Nadeau in 2009. Nadeau is a second-generation Evangelical. His Catholic mother converted in a Pentecostal Church in the early 1980s.

Nadeau has felt a disconnect between being Evangelical and being Quebecois.

"Truthfully, I don't think I had much contact with Quebecois culture growing up. I didn't listen to our music, didn't read our books," he reflects. "My identity was predominantly evangelical, which at the time meant more American even though I went

to church in French. All the music I listened to was Christian American. I worked on changing that as I became an adult. I was afraid that if I embraced my Quebecois culture, I would lose my religious identity. But this needn't be the case."

He and his community are trying to relearn faith in everyday life. "At Echad we look a lot at questions of incarnation – what it means to incarnate Christ in culture and in life. We try to do this without pretension."

Their gatherings focus around what they call horizontal sermons, group discussions led by speakers rather than listening to a preacher. Once a month they host a nonreligious get together, like a concert or charity fundraiser, void of all religious symbols and subjects, in an attempt to be inclusive toward non-Christians. While Echad has opted to shed the framework of traditional church, Nadeau points out the good they have inherited from their evangelical upbringing. "My childhood church demonstrated sincerity. They organized charitable works and lived out fraternity and community. It's just that we chose an alternative framework to live out our values and to study the teachings of Christ," he says.

Echad is attempting to build a community somewhat on the fringe of mainstream Evangelicalism, which is in and of itself on the fringe of mainstream culture.



The community believes they may succeed in bypassing the reactions, stupor and aversions so many Quebecois seem to feel toward organized religion. They view themselves on a spiritual quest.

"Relationships come first," says Nadeau. "I feel that right now the larger evangelical movement is blinded by numbers. I'm a little sick of that. I think it would be more important to have a Church that is stripped of arrogance, but just wants to love its people." They are trying, he says, to "create a church that reflects our identity as Quebecois, one that rejoices in our culture – this is what I would love in the future – to have a church that fully basks in being both Quebecois and Christian. A Church that is recognized for what it stands for, not for what it stands against."

The Only Evangelical in the Class

Noémie Jean-Bourgeault, 27, is a professional artist and second-generation Evangelical. She remembers being the only one among her classmates who wasn't Catholic. "It was a bit strange" she says. "I wasn't baptized and wasn't confirmed like so many other kids, and yet I was the only one of my friends who went to church on Sundays!"

Jean-Bourgeault joined Youth With a Mission Quebec when she was 18 and has been on staff ever since. "I was raised in the Church, but I had to leave Quebec to discover my faith. I was in England when I really began learning and thinking about the Kingdom of God. There is so very little written on the subject in French!" she remembers.

"What I love about Kingdom theology is that it is inclusive

– it looks for the glorifying of God in every sphere of life. In the evangelical faith I was raised in, everything was about salvation. You're in or you're out. But with the Kingdom, I could finally begin to reconcile my life and identity as a Quebecoise with my faith."

Jean-Bourgeault has observed evangelical trends in Quebec come and go. "I know there are wonderful people and wonderful things happening in churches," she sighs. "But the strategies of numbers strike me as missing the point. I have also met a number of church leaders and planters that don't seem to love Quebec. Like they're here out of obligation. Ministry has to be motivated by love."

She fears some evangelical attitudes in Quebec may cause more harm than good by discounting the uniqueness of Quebec culture and the long-lasting impact of a painful Church history.

"You can't come to a people saying Jesus saves and not take into account their religious heritage, their history, values and the collective wounds of the people. Our roots are very import-



PHOTO: WWW.MINISTEREVIVRE.COM

Jean-Sébastien Morin says that most denominations right now are in a shortage of leadership.

What It's Like to Be an Evangelical in Quebec

By Jocelyn Olivier

The percentage of Evangelicals in Quebec is very low – probably less than one per cent of the population consider themselves born-again Christians. It's a mission field. As soon as you cross the border, you see a big difference.

I happened to be in Ottawa last week for a concert and just to see Christian radio and posters, it's a different world. You just don't see that in Quebec.

A lot of people in Quebec just don't know what an evangelical church is.

It's a different approach. If you go into the States or the rest of Canada, if you speak about the church, about God and about the Bible, people know what you are talking about. They have a background of going to church when they were young, or of their family going to church.

As for Quebec we start from before that, especially when we do a special event with visitors and new people. We start by thinking they have to be touched first, then they have to become Christians, then disciples. We start a step back than if we were elsewhere in Canada.

We start by explaining to them what an evangelical church is before even starting talking about the Bible and Jesus.

Once a month we have a special Sunday morning especially for new people. We start by explaining what our church is doing in the community by things like helping the poor. Then we start opening the Bible. But even that is very touchy, because here in Quebec you have to separate your com-

munity work from your church. Our community work is done under a separate entity.

We as a church decided not to get involved in the Charter of Values discussion. We don't know all the details. Sometimes in those kinds of situations we just can't win. If we take a position or say something, it's not that easy. We're 3000 people in our church, so in our midst you can have pro-Charter and anti-Charter.

It's politics in a sense. We try to stay away from that.

The most important thing for Christians in other parts of Canada to know about being an Evangelical in Quebec is that this province is different from the rest of Canada. It's a mission field. I know there are a lot of Christians across Canada who have a heart for Quebec, and for French people.

Sometimes they want to help. The best way to help people in Quebec is to get connected to a church there. And work with them. Sometimes we've seen money be thrown here and there with good heart and good motive, but sometimes not with a plan. Or people coming here and trying to plant a church with a different language and a different culture. Our church works with Haiti, but we trust the locals there. They know their people and their country. **FT**

JOCELYN OLIVIER is associate pastor of Nouvelle Vie, a large evangelical congregation in Longueuil, on the southeast edge of Montreal.



ant.” Jean-Bourgeault speaks of barely healed wounds of clergy abuse, corruption, and oppression by a Roman Catholic Church that walked hand in hand with the State.

But according to this young Evangelical, Catholicism also gave Quebec a value system, an education and health system, and a historical identity rich and valuable and cannot be easily dismissed. “I conciliated my faith with my cultural identity when I rediscovered the religious heritage of ancestors. I think that part of the answer for Evangelicalism in Quebec is to at least change one’s mentality towards this heritage.”

SUPPLIED PHOTO



Noémie Jean-Bourgeault observes that evangelical trends in Quebec come and go.

A Complicated Place to Be an Evangelical

Jean-Sébastien Morin is a Baptist pastor from Saint-Constant, a city in southwestern Quebec. He is a university teacher who converted to Evangelicalism through the witness of his stepfather. Morin has written extensively for the evangelical community of Quebec. His book *Nous croyons en Dieu: La foi évangélique pour tous [We Believe in God: Evangelical Faith for Everyone]* (Éditions Ministères Multilingues, 2009) is addressed to newcomers and nonbelievers, and presents basic theology contextualized to Quebec’s cultural norms and mores.

English. This is not always problematic, but the danger arises when the only resources we have on missiology and evangelism are written by American authors. It is completely incompatible with our culture.”

At 31 Morin is one of the youngest pastors in his denomination. In the Union d’Églises baptistes francophones du Canada, 46 per cent of the denomination’s financing comes from out of the province, 1 in 4 current pastors will retire in the next 5 years, and salaries for pastors, says Morin, remain low. He views his own denomination, and the larger evangelical scene in Quebec, as struggling. “More churches would be alright, but I would be especially concerned with seeing healthy churches first and foremost,” he says.

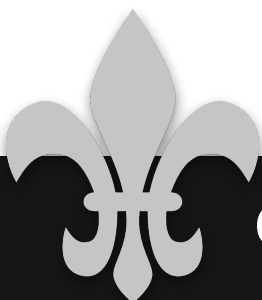
Healthy churches are not in abundance, but they do exist. Some of Quebec’s most steadily growing congregations are larger regional churches with attendance ranging between 400 and 2000, such as Nouvelle Vie in Longueuil, Carrefour Chrétien de

**PARLEZ-VOUS
FRANÇAIS ?**

**STUDY
FRENCH**

in a Christian context

Learn the language with Christian professors who have trained over 1000 students for the past 60 years.



Québec

819.823.8435 www.wol.ca/quebec

Word of Life Bethel

**FRENCH
IMMERSION**

**STUDY
the
BIBLE**

on a French campus

Combine Bible and French classes to live a unique immersion experience, learning the language and learning about God and His plan for your life.



la Capitale in Quebec City or Église Urbaine Axe 21 in Magog. These evangelical churches are considered successful not only because of their numbers, but also because of strong reputations, stability, and strengthening partnerships within and outside the evangelical community. They have well-tuned Sunday morning gatherings, a diversity of social services offered to the community, good marketing and viable, long-term resources.

They Are Here to Stay

The success of the large church model in secular Quebec may surprise some, but not Pierre Bergeron, Quebec director for The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. "I don't think we should opt for one all-encompassing model. People are different and will be attracted to different types of churches," says Bergeron. "The spirit of God will move through a variety of movements and styles and gatherings."

He is acutely aware of the challenges facing the broader evangelical Church in Quebec. "Jean-Sébastien's [Morin's] diagnosis is accurate," he says. "Most denominations right now are in a shortage of leadership, and I am especially

concerned for small churches outside of urban centers. I am also concerned that we don't have enough pastors in the 35-50-year-old age bracket," says Bergeron, "which means we are headed towards a dangerous gap in between the retirees and the up-and-coming generation of pastors, who are all about 20-25 years old. They're very young."

Observers point to the especially difficult time the evangelical Church experienced in the early 1990s in Quebec. The *réveil* was over. The church in Quebec keenly felt the impact of being a minority. Church growth slowed, and so did the amount of future leaders heading into ministry.

If there is one thing Evangelicals agree on in Quebec, it's not easy to lead.

"We treat our pastors the same way we treat our politicians," says Morin. "At the first sign of dissatisfaction we vote them out. We are divisive. I would be willing to bet that most francophone churches in this province have lived some form [of] division in the last 30 years."

Bergeron concurs. "It's a leftover from the Quiet Revolution. We don't like being told what to do because we have a

What It's Like to Be an Evangelical in Quebec

By Iignes Zina Oukil

I was born in Rouiba, Algeria. I immigrated to Canada – to Calgary – when I was eight. Later on, at 16, I did something that changed the course of my destiny – I gave my life to Christ.



PHOTO: KATRINA KAUSTINEN

I Iignes Zina Oukil

When I neared the end of my high school year, I felt God calling me to Quebec. I carried a fairy tale-like perception of what Montreal would be like.

I did not foresee the reality that would ensue.

I quickly realized that the reality of being a Christian in Quebec was, by far, very different from in Alberta. In the beginning I was not

well read on the meaning of the word "denomination." It had never occurred to me what that meant. Very often individuals tried to box and classify my belief in Jesus. I think Christianity is very fragmented here, and surprisingly not just in the eyes of the secular, but in Christians alike.

There is a need to know what kind of Christian you are through denominations.

However, the biggest shock for me was my exposure to the Arab population that I was for the most part isolated from in Calgary.

The culture shock I lived through in Quebec deepened my understanding of who I was and where I was prior to Canada. I reconnected with my roots in a way I know I would never have been able to if I stayed in Calgary.

I also realized there is an estrangement present when you happen to be Algerian as well as Christian like me.

When non-Christian members of the Arab community learn my father is Muslim, but that I have chosen a different path,

the judgement is obvious.

In the summer of 2012 I was taking a class and on the first day, because the group was relatively small, the professor decided to have the class undergo a round of introduction. By the end, those who were listening and watching knew I was originally from Algeria and might have noticed the cross dangling off my neck.

Sure enough, someone had not only noticed and listened, but decided to take action. The next week I was approached by an Algerian classmate. He didn't find it appropriate that I was a Christian because of my Arab heritage, and had DVD material as well as books on Islam with the goal of rehabilitating me. He was aggressive and would follow me to the subway after class, promoting Islam. I felt disrespected and panicked. After sharing my situation with my pastor, three men from my church were sent to drive me home from school and to address the situation.

Shortly after, the problem was solved. I was never approached again.

Though being in Montreal has felt at times like being on a roller coaster, I have to say that these experiences, among many others, have deepened my understanding of God's love and provision at the most desperate of times.

My church, The Living Room, has been an amazing source of support through almost every season of my Christian walk. They have provided me with unmatched grace and love that can only stem from a spiritual family. I couldn't be more honoured to be walking alongside some of the most amazing people I know as I march forward, expectant for the next door to open. **FT**

IGNES ZINA OUKIL is majoring in communications and political science at Université de Montréal.

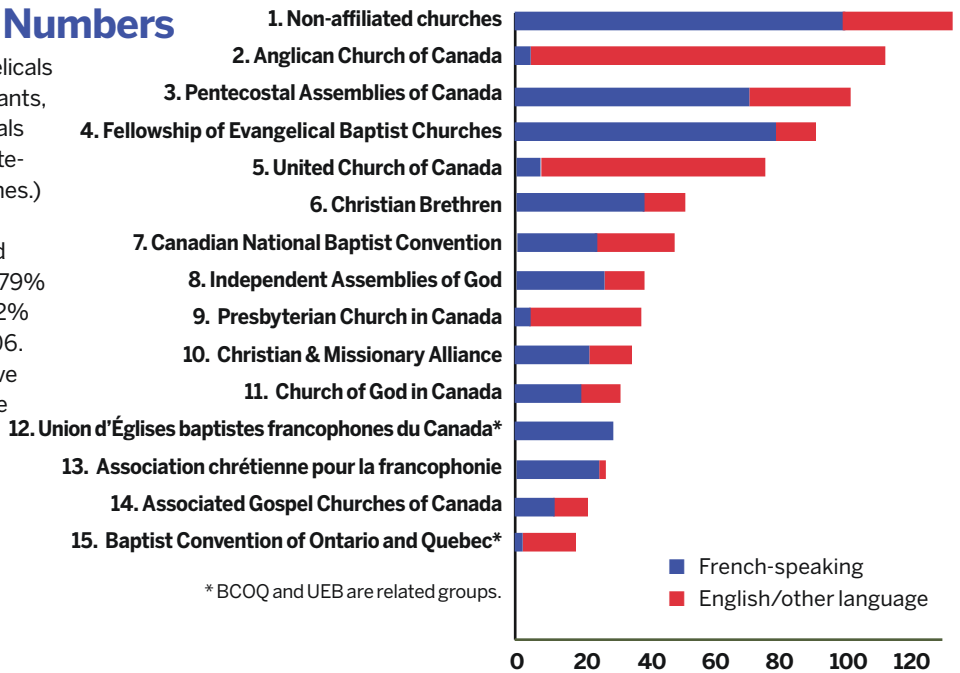
Quebec Churches by the Numbers

Quebec included roughly 190,000 Evangelicals and another 157,000 “mainline” Protestants, according to 2009 statistics. (Evangelicals were defined as those who attend Baptist, Pentecostal, Mennonite, Salvation Army, etc., churches.)

Those 2009 statistics totalled 580 French-speaking Protestant congregations (56%) and 438 English-speaking. In comparison roughly 79% of Quebecers spoke French, 8% English and 12% predominantly spoke another language in 2006.

Among the Protestant denominations active in the province of Quebec today, the biggest are generally familiar names (see graph at right).

Sources: Top 15 list: *Répertoire Chrétien* (Christian Direction, 2013) and denominational websites. Statistics from 2009: Jason Zuidema, ed., *History of French-Speaking Protestantism in Quebec*, Brill, 2011. Statistics from 2006: Jean-Pierre Corbeil, Brigitte Chavez and Daniel Pereira, *Portrait of Official-Language Minorities in Canada – Anglophones in Quebec*, Statistics Canada, 2010.



collective memory of an oppressive church. It's our way of correcting the past.”

Bergeron though is adamantly hopeful for the future. “We are seeing more interdenominational partnerships than ever before. Churches are opening up towards one another and working together. And there is a resurgence of new leadership

amongst young people.” He hopes that little by little Evangelicalism in Quebec will step out of the shadows and be more accepted by mainstream culture.

“Fifty years ago many Evangelicals were not even permitted to be military chaplains in Quebec. That has changed. And there are a number of community organizations run

BETHANY COLLEGE

Brayden Bachelor of Arts in Christian Studies
Church Leadership & TESOL

Your PROGRAM

Nurturing disciples and training leaders to serve

bethany.sk.ca

La Parole de Dieu donne la vie ...

mais seulement lorsqu'on peut la comprendre.

Chez Wycliffe, nous servons les minorités linguistiques partout dans le monde en favorisant la compréhension de la Parole de Dieu au moyen de la traduction biblique, tout en encourageant l'alphabétisation, l'éducation et le développement des communautés.

WYCLIFFE
L'AMOUR DE DIEU. UN LIVRE OUVERT.

Association Wycliffe pour la traduction de la Bible au Canada
1-800-747-2622
francais.wycliffe.ca
francophone@wycliffe.ca



Documentary Explores Quebec's Complicated Relationship With Religion

As a contribution to a larger reflection about Quebec's religious past, Noémie Jean-Bourgeault is co-producing *l'Heureux Naufrage* (The Fortunate Shipwreck), a 50-minute documentary directed by Guillaume Tremblay discussing the ins and outs of the value system bequeathed to the Quebecois people by their Christian history.

The documentary features interviews with some of Quebec's most renowned figures, including Oscar-winning director Denys Arcand, singer Ginette Reno and CBC journalist Pierre Maisonneuve.

Openly recognizing that present-day Quebec has a very hard time discussing matters of faith and spirituality, this piece pushes forward the dialogue to a point where certain of the



PHOTO: WWW.DESIGNPICS.COM

interviewees opened up about "the spiritual void" they feel inside. To hear the symbolic figureheads of francophone secular culture admit this much is astonishing, to say the least.

If nothing else *l'Heureux Naufrage* is a courageous artwork proving that even

if Quebecois are without practice, they are not without reflection. The documentary is set to be released in 2014. **FT** -JS

by evangelical entities that are gaining recognition by local governments." Bergeron strongly feels that for the Church to meet its future head on, leadership development in francophone circles will need to be a priority. That must include French leadership training resources, he says.

The Fork in the Road

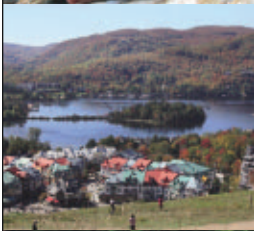
This May *l'Heureux Naufrage*, a documentary exploring Quebec's religious past, will be released.

Solange Lefebvre is an anthropologist and theologian from l'Université de Montréal who appears in the film. She says, "Our biggest novelty is the choice that is before us. We can opt for a spiritual path, we can opt for a religious one or

we can opt for a nonreligious one. But the option must be made. This is the hardship of modernity - we have a certain anxiety of having to make this choice. There is beautiful liberty in it, but also a great burden."

A beautiful liberty and a great burden. Lefebvre refers to much more than being an Evangelical in Quebec with her prophetic words. But they do fit. **FT**

JENNA SMITH was born and raised in Montreal and is the director of Innovation Youth, an inner city ministry for children, teens and families in the heart of the city. Her first book *A Way: The Story of a Long Walk* will be released in May 2014 by Urban Loft Publishers.



Capernwray Québec Bible School and Conference Centre École Biblique et Centre de Conférences Capernwray Québec

Declaring Christ as Life

Proclamer le Seigneur de la vie

Discipleship, Evangelism & Intensive Bible Training for full time service, regardless of occupation

Bursary for Quebec residents. English/French Language Opportunity!

Bourse disponible pour les résidents du Québec

Opportunités d'utiliser le français et/ou l'anglais

Located minutes from renowned ski hills

Ski Passes included!

Bilingual Retreats

Volunteer Opportunities available



CAPERNRWAY QUÉBEC

16710 Route 335 Chertsey QC J0K 3K0 Canada

Toll Free in North America 1-877-882-1361

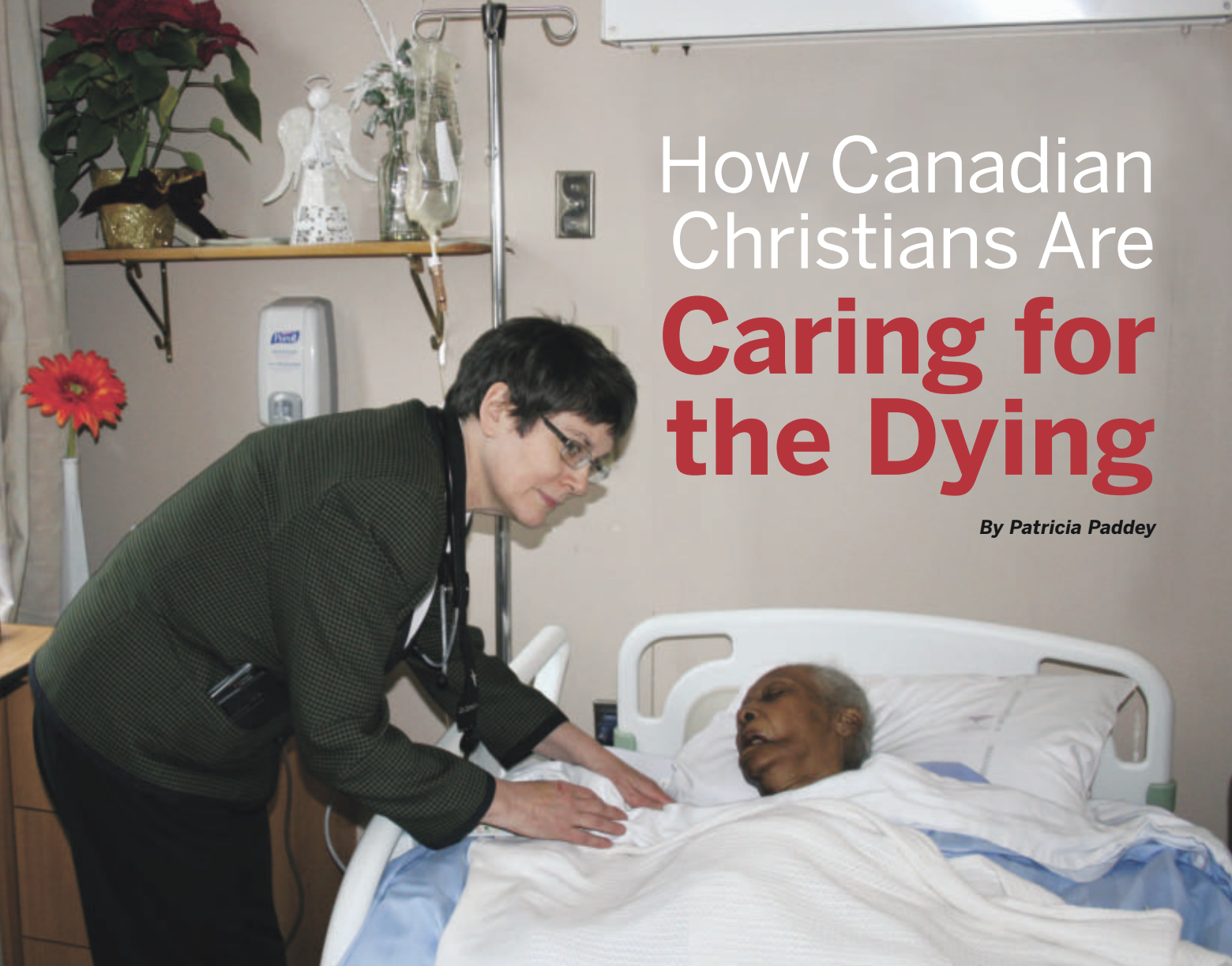
450-882-1361

www.capernwrayquebec.ca



How Canadian Christians Are Caring for the Dying

By Patricia Paddey



SUPPLIED PHOTO

■ **Salvation Army officer Dr. Beverley Smith ministers with a patient. Throughout history the Church has been in the vanguard of caring well for people at the end of life.**

“Into the darkness we must go. Gone, gone is the light.”

—Lyric from Steve Bell’s “Gone Is the Light” by Gord Johnson

Whenever I hear the phrase “death with dignity” – and I’ve been hearing it a lot lately as our country has debated euthanasia and assisted suicide – I think of my father’s dying.

Dad had no medical interventions designed to hasten his death. And while the palliative drugs minimized his physical suffering, I know he did suffer. In a different way, so did all those who loved him as we witnessed his life ebb. It’s the worst kind of ache and exhaustion to provide around-the-clock care for someone you love, knowing they’re slipping away. There’s nothing you can do about it, except to offer ice chips

when their mouth gets dry, cool cloths when their forehead gets clammy, and just enough morphine at just the right intervals to keep them comfortable.

But it’s also an immense privilege. And in helping to give that kind of care to my father, I witnessed the dignity that permeated the final days of his life.

It was 14 years ago – on February 29, 2000 – that my father breathed his last. He was 70, old enough to have lived a full life, but not so old that he’d lived all he wanted, or all that we wanted him to live. I felt a little bit cheated when he died.

I also felt gratitude. Dad had a good death, if death can ever be described that way – in his home, in a hospital bed in the living room, my mother at his side. She was holding his hand.

After almost five torturous months

in hospital, battling to regain his health and strength following surgery for colon cancer, my dad learned his bones were full of the disease. Knowing there was no treatment that would make him well, he wanted to go home to die. So my mother, my three siblings and I became his care team 24/7, supported by extended family, visiting palliative care workers, VON nurses and his doctor. Two weeks after being carried home by ambulance to live out whatever days he had left, he was gone.

Even now, heaviness settles in my chest whenever I recall that time, a heaviness that makes it just a little harder to breathe. But there is also a feeling of calm assurance. His dying had dignity. My family’s care for him – and the care of the team that supported us – helped that to happen.

“A designation of ‘palliative’ opens the

doors for more care,” says Dr. Cornelia Mielke, the family physician in Hamilton, Ont., who visited my father at home during the last days of his life. “I’m not under any illusions that [the palliative care system] is perfect. But there is help available, and when people look for it they can find it.”

When my mother determined to take my dad home from the hospital, she sought help in the form of a physician willing to make house calls. Dr. Mielke seemed heaven sent. I remember the day she took several minutes to sit with us, looking at family photos of my dad. I had felt compelled to introduce her to the man he’d been, not just the frail patient he was, and she honoured that.

“Did I really do that?” she exclaims, surprised, when I express gratitude for her kindness in lingering over those photos all those years ago. A professing Christian, Dr. Mielke says, “I think it’s so important to acknowledge the person beyond the diagnosis.”

Dr. Mielke’s gift of time and compassion taught me that sometimes care for the dying means caring for those who love them, whose lives have been turned upside down by a terminal diagnosis. Casseroles dropped off by church friends, visits from the pastor, and supportive phone calls during the stressful months of my father’s illness were all welcomed reminders he was loved. And so were we.

* * * * *

“People’s needs, though expressed differently, remain beyond the strict-ly physical.”

–Dame Cicely Saunders, Christian, nurse, social worker, physician and founder of the modern hospice movement

As those who believe life is a gift given by God, that all human beings are created in God’s image, and that we are called by God to love one another, it’s not surprising Christians are often on the front lines of compassionate care when someone is dying.

Dr. Beverley Smith – a Salvation Army officer, family physician with a focused practice in palliative care, and assistant professor in the division of palliative care at the University of Toronto – says that throughout history the Church has been in the vanguard of caring well for people at the end of life.

Hospices, which provide physical, emo-

Palliative Resources

The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada offers the 2012 background paper *Palliative Care and End-of-Life Therapies*, among other resources. www.theEFC.ca/ResourcesOnEuthanasia

The Canadian Association for Parish Nursing Ministry website includes a comprehensive list of books, videos, fact sheets and other resources. www.capnm.ca

Room 217 Foundation offers therapeutic music resources suitable for use across the life span, as well as music designed specifically for end-of-life care. www.room217.ca

Canadian Virtual Hospice provides information and support on palliative and end-of-life care, loss and grief. Offers resources, discussion forums, articles and helpful information on topics ranging from the physical symptoms that accompany dying to the physical changes that occur to a body after death. Videos demonstrate a range of practical how-to topics including how to administer medications and how to make a bed with someone in it. www.virtualhospice.ca

The Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association is the national voice for hospice palliative care in Canada. Advancing and advocating for quality end-of-life/hospice palliative care in Canada, its work includes public policy, education and awareness. Offers links and resources tailored to the needs of family caregivers, spiritual advisors, personal support workers, doctors, nurses and others. www.chpca.net

Advance Care Planning offers guidance, resources and tools helpful for preparing and planning end-of-life care. www.advancecareplanning.ca **FT**

tional and spiritual care for people in the final stages of terminal illness, date back as far as the 4th century “when Christians in Europe provided care to the sick and destitute,” according to the website of the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association.

But modern-day palliative care also has a strong Christian connection. It came about “because a young lady [in England] called Cicely Saunders had an incredible conversion experience in university,” says Smith. “[Saunders] came to know Jesus Christ personally, and set out to obey His guidance.” Building on already established traditions of religious care, Cicely Saunders wound up defining the principles for – and creating – modern hospice care, ensuring pain relief, maintaining dignity, and enhancing the remaining period of the dying person’s life, however brief.

Today countless Canadian Christians care for the dying in meaningful ways, whether as individuals, families or through institutions. In *choosing* to walk through the valley of the shadow of death, these caregivers demonstrate reverence for life. In doing this, they make a lie of the notion that the surest way to secure death with dignity is to legalize euthanasia and assisted suicide, or as the Quebec government labels it, “medical aid in dying.”

Janice Buck is both a parish nurse at Cobourg Alliance Church in Cobourg, Ont., and national co-ordinator of parish nurse ministries for her denomination, the Chris-

tian & Missionary Alliance in Canada. She’s helped to care for four terminally ill people in her congregation over the last eight months. Parish nursing is not “hands-on nursing,” she explains but “health-focused spiritual care. You bring all of your nursing experience to the role, combined with spiritual and pastoral care.”

Parish nursing arrived in Canada just over two decades ago, and the ministry is growing for good reason. “Parish nurses can do a lot that pastors don’t have the time for,” says Buck. “They [pastors] typically can’t sit with someone for three or four hours. I’ve sat in emergency or hospital rooms with people for up to ten or 12 hours,” she adds.

Buck feels honoured to help care for the dying. “It’s just that it’s a very intimate part of their life,” she explains, “and to be welcomed in to share, that feels like a very sacred time.”

In the small Eastern Ontario town of Perth, the O’Dacre family also provides care at the end of life. They operate a funeral home, and they’re supporting an initiative to bring a hospice to their community. Janey O’Dacre and her husband John both worked as nurses who provided palliative care prior to entering their present field, one Janey describes as offering “death care.”

“Our focus is supporting families with end-of-life decisions,” she explains. “But we’re not just there for families when there is a death. We know exactly what it’s like to be caregivers to the dying too, how emo-

PHOTO: VERA KURANJI



SUPPLIED PHOTO



PHOTO: BONNIE BURGESS



Prayer is a large component of the spiritual care provided to those with life threatening illnesses. Clockwise from top: Vera Kuranji, Bonnie Burgess and Donald Shields.

tionally, spiritually and physically exhausting it can be to be in that role.”

They look forward to the day when local families who can't tend to dying loved ones at home can select hospice care, rather than hospitals or long-term care facilities.

On the West Coast, Maj. Margaret Evans, 61, has spent her entire career caring for people at various stages of their life journey. Currently the executive director of Sunset Lodge in Victoria, B.C. (a Salvation Army residential care facility for people needing complex care), she previously gave leadership to Rotary Hospice House (owned and operated by The Salvation Army in Richmond, B.C.). Evans has been

present at dozens of deaths, and says ministry in end-of-life care is a special calling.

“It's a sacredness,” Evans explains. “You are the hands and feet of Christ. It's God who gives you what you need to minister.”

Asked to share theological insights she's gained through caring for the dying, Evans says that God is the same, yesterday, today and always. “Christ never changes. In birth, living and at the end of life, God is the same... Whatever our losses, He is with us and He's with us as caregivers to be able to be who the dying person needs us to be at the time.”


As co-ordinator of spiritual and religious care at Markham Stouffville Hospital in Ont., chaplain Donald Shields is

part of a palliative care team that cares for anywhere from ten to 15 patients at a time. He agrees that providing spiritual care to the dying “is a calling.”

“Everybody looks at us and says, ‘Your life must be hard.’ It's not. I think we're given a measure of grace that lets us stand in the gaps with an individual.”

He speaks philosophically when discussing his work, interpreting the Great Commission as involving “incarnational theology.” But he speaks practically when asked what makes a good death. “People die the same way they live,” he says. “We have this fantasy that the end of life comes, and all the dots will be connected and everyone will gather

a SAYLORS BROTHERS film
NARRATED BY NATALIE GRANT




VEIL OF TEARS
HOPE IS ON THE WAY.

FREE
International Church Simulcast
MARCH 26 – 31
www.Lifeway.com/VeilofTears
**FOR
SMALL GROUPS
AND CHURCHES**

View the trailer on the website
and start sharing it with your
friends on Facebook, blogs or
other social media sites.

VeilofTearsMovie.com



GOSPEL FOR ASIA

around the bed and sing *Kumbayah*.”

But it doesn't always work out that way. Death is death, and dying can be painful. Says Shields, “There’s a profound sadness when people die, and it doesn’t matter if they’re 100 or 50 [years old].”

It’s an often-cited fact that psychological pain at the end of life can be just as great – or greater – than any physical pain. And sometimes, Shields says, people need help getting over their anger.

Vera Kuranji has helped many people get over that kind of anger at the end of life. A Canadian citizen born in Serbia, she returned there in the early ‘90s with her husband as missionaries sent by the Christian & Missionary Alliance in Canada.

Eight years ago she felt compelled to launch a hospice ministry. In a country with poor publicly funded health care and poverty-level pensions, a terminal illness can devastate a family. “The needs are so great,” says Kuranji. “Dying can become a very lonely, lonely place.”

Each day she visits from four to five families, offering friendship, sharing spiritual hope, and addressing practical needs. “Some people need wheelchairs or crutches. Some need diapers or medicine or hygiene items.” Funded entirely by individuals who have heard about her efforts and believe in what she is doing, Kuranji’s hospice ministry has cared for 2,000 dying people and their families to date.

Whether here in Canada or around the globe, in hospitals and hospices, long-term care facilities and private homes, Canadian Christian nurses and doctors, orderlies and housekeepers, pastors and parishioners, social workers and psychologists, friends and family members who are motivated by their faith in Christ bring comfort to the dying.

Why? Perhaps it’s because believers hold the conviction that this life is not our own. As God’s gift we acknowledge life is sacred, so sacred that even *waning* life has value and ought to be honoured and protected. That does not mean it must be artificially prolonged. But neither should it be artificially hastened.

* * * * *

I’ll forever be grateful for the privilege of helping to care for my father during his last days. As his life ebbed, he continued

to communicate love for his family, and to receive the love we offered through our care. That exchange of love was a final, precious and intimate gift.

And when he died, we found solace knowing that we would see him again, and that we had eased his final journey. In blessing my father, we had been blessed.

I learned recently that the blessing extended beyond our family. When I spoke to Dr. Mielke for the first time since my father died, she shared that that day remains etched on her memory too. “And that’s not the norm for me,” she said.


“That afternoon ... it was a busy day. It was one of those days that you’re fully booked, and you have no time, and the waiting room is full, and you’re just hoping you can get home for dinner,” she recalled.

“In the middle of that, there’s a call that someone has passed away, and of course you have to go and pronounce them. At that point, you stop and think, *OK, how am I going to manage the rest of my day?*”

“My staff is good about rebooking things,” she said, “but what they can’t manage is [the turmoil that’s] happening inside of me.”

Arriving at my parents’ home, she described being struck by the contrast between her own thoughts and the scene that greeted her. “You were all so relaxed,” she said. “You were sitting around. You were thankful. There was a sense of rightness. There was a sense of gratitude. There was a sense of ‘this is ok,’ rather than anger or fear, which is what we see a lot of the time.” At this, Dr. Mielke paused, remembering.

Then she added softly, “That honestly ministered to *me*.”

Sometimes, it seems, God can use ministry to the dying to minister to the living as well. 



SUPPLIED PHOTO

■ **“A designation of ‘palliative’ opens the doors for more care,” says Dr. Cornelia Mielke.**

PATRICIA PADDEY is a senior writer for *Faith Today*

Forgiveness for Murder Saves Dozens

An Abbotsford man unleashed a wave of change by forgiving his sister's murderer.

By Karen Stiller

“**W**ould it be possible for me to have a word with the accused?”

That was the bold question Roy Comrie, a retired SIM Canada missionary from Abbotsford, B.C., asked a South African detective chief inspector just minutes before the trial of his sister's murderer was to begin.

The question would set off a ripple that would build into a powerful wave washing through Comrie's family and an African jail full of hardened criminals.

To most people Comrie's request might seem foolish. His sister Sheila was brutally raped and murdered in 2008 in her South African home. The evidence was stacked sky-high against the accused, Chris Mnguni, who sat in a section of a prison where even chaplains are not permitted to enter.

“When the young man was caught by the police, then we began to pray for him. Our prayer was actually, ‘Lord, send somebody else to see him.’ We were in Canada, he was in Africa,” explains Comrie.

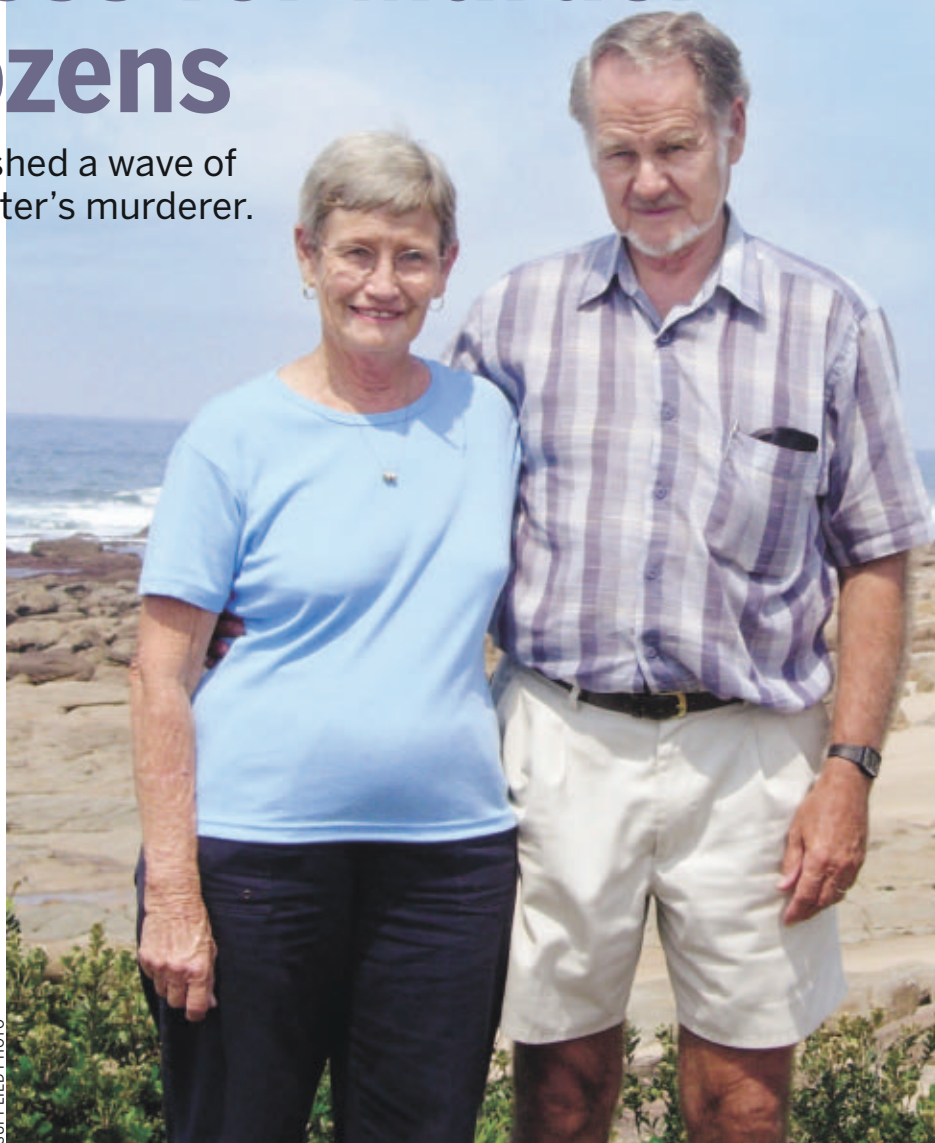
But later Comrie realized a speaking engagement would bring him within ten minutes of the prison where his sister's murderer had recently been transported. “We realized no one had been able to see him. We put him on our calendar. We were just saying we were available to the Lord.”

Asking to sit in a room with his sister's murderer was “a stupid question,” Comrie admits. And the initial response – “Impossible!” – should have come as no surprise.

After all, to allow time for the meeting the defence lawyer would have to agree, the prisoner would have to agree, every word would have to be recorded and the judge would have to be late.

But, amazingly, Comrie was granted his request.

He asked because he wanted to tell



■ Roy Comrie with his sister Sheila.

Chris Mnguni, “I forgive you.” And to share a story he believed could change Mnguni's life.

Thirty years earlier Comrie had been an SIM missionary in Zimbabwe. He and his wife had walked the deepest valleys of horror – and climbed through the rocky terrain of forgiveness – after nine missionary friends and their four children were brutally murdered. The victims, including a three-week-old baby, had lived a mere ten kilometres down the road from the Comries.

What imprinted on Comrie, as deeply as the sight of the murder scene he remembers clearly to this day, was the forgiveness

and grace offered to the head of the gang who was captured – by one of the victim's mothers.

She stayed with the Comries and told them, “I feel I am the most privileged mother in the world to have been called to give my daughter as a martyr for Jesus Christ.”

The gang leader Gary Hove became a Christian through that gift of forgiveness and is now in full-time Christian service. He pledged to seek out his old gang members and share the gospel with them. He did, and eight of them became Christians. Seven have joined him in full-time mission work.

Comrie had lived this story, participated

in the mercy offered then, and the miracle of changed lives. Now he wanted such a story for Chris Mnguni.

He got all that and more.

When he met with Mnguni on that day in the prison, he told the account of Gary Hove's horrible crimes and then told the story of his transformed life in Christ.

Mnguni listened. So did the legal team assembled around the two men.

"It's a very vivid story, a graphic story," says Comrie. "When I looked up at the detective chief inspector, he was crying. It was with deep gratitude to God that I realized the privilege of it all."

Comrie gave the prisoner a Bible. "I knew that God was moving. I felt my weakness very, very deeply at that particular time."

Later that day Mnguni pleaded not guilty to the charge of murder, even though he had clearly said, "I'm sorry," to Comrie earlier that day.

But the story did not end there. Neither did Comrie's courage in asking bold ques-

tions in risky places.

In a subsequent trip back to South Africa, Comrie and a chaplain showed up at the prison where Mnguni was now serving his sentence for Sheila's murder. Against all

“Forgiveness is just such a basic in our Christian life. If we ever try and do it in our own strength, it doesn't work.”

the rules (again) Comrie met face to face with the man – and realized he was in the presence of a changed person who had declared Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour and had been reading his Bible.

The encounters between Comrie and Mnguni – all of them done on a wing and a prayer – continued.

Mnguni has shared the gospel with his fellow prisoners, many of whom have begun the process of turning their lives around.

A chaplaincy program that once lay dormant at this prison has reignited,

thanks to Mnguni's conversion and Comrie's persistence.

"The fact is that in the economy of God, Sheila's murder was somehow allowed, and in the mercy of God, this wonderful fruit has emerged, not just in Chris [Mnguni]'s life, but in the life of a hundred other murderers now who have come to faith in Jesus Christ," says Comrie.

"When you look at that kind of outcome, you just say, 'Glory to God.' It's not about us, it's all about Him.

"Forgiveness is just such a basic in our Christian life. If we ever try and do it in our own strength, it doesn't work. But if you know that God is in it, that it's all of Him, I believe these ripples will go on.

"We are espousing a biblical principle that, when it's not just spoken but lived out, it will change lives."

Two years ago Chris Mnguni changed his plea to the charge of murdering Roy Comrie's sister to guilty. **FT**

Karen Stiller of Port Perry, Ont., is a senior editor at *Faith Today*.

THE NEW
HOPE TV
Canada's National Faith Station
Inspirational Uplifting Empowering

WATCH
JOYCE MEYER
Daily at 8PM Central (9PM Eastern)
& Sunday 9PM Central (10PM Eastern)

Christian programming for every day living
www.hopetelevision.ca

Bell 591 | Rogers 174 | MTS Winnipeg II | Shaw Winnipeg II | or check your local listings



Leaving Home

A painful and marvel-filled journey from one church to another. *By Karen Stiller*

PHOTO: WWW.DESIGNPICS.COM

There was a terrible rainstorm on the Sunday my husband resigned from the Anglican church he had served for nine years, and relinquished his license as a priest with the Anglican Church of Canada.

It was one of those hot summer-day storms that brew up in one corner of the sky. Then the clouds lower a thousand feet and boil over. I was walking my dog, sorting through everything that had happened so far on that dramatic and emotional day.

Soaked to the skin, I ran home in case I was struck by lightning – because it would look very bad indeed if the priest’s wife was struck by lightning on the very day he walked away from years of ministry.

That crazy thought was the first of many on a journey that took us out of the denomination Brent had loved and joined as an adult – into the waiting arms of the Anglican Network in Canada (ANiC), a new expression of Anglicanism in Canada.

Was it about *the* issue? Yes and no.

Our congregation – a mix of liturgy-loving Evangelicals and “cradle Anglicans” – had been grappling with the issue of

same-sex blessings for a while, carefully charting the direction taken by the Diocese of Toronto.

My husband, like many “conservative” clergy (and I use quotation marks on purpose, for these labels usually fit like a bad suit), felt that where the ship sailed on this one mattered greatly.

Perhaps ironically it was his very identity as an Anglican – someone who knows they are deeply connected with others around the world – that made him care passionately about what was happening in our national church, and not just zoom in on our individual congregation.

Which would have been a lot easier.

Brent’s leaving had to be sudden and immediate – at least at that time – because of the acrimonious nature of the relationship between the two Anglican denominations, the threat of lawyers and lawsuits, and the tussling over buildings going on across Canada.

In the letter he read to the congregation – first combed over by lawyers – he gently invited people who were interested to come to a meeting about creating an

alternative Anglican congregation in the area, an ANiC church plant.

People felt sad, angry, relieved, upset, betrayed and exhilarated. Our phone rang off the hook. I began to answer it gingerly, not knowing what I would find on the other end.

Many joined us in the ANiC plant.

Many did not.

Friends surprised us. Friends dismayed us. I guess we dismayed them.

Those who came along astonished me with their courage. Those who didn’t, I miss to this day.

Kind people said Brent was brave. We knew better. It was the people who came along who were the real brave ones.

It amazed me that we found ourselves (us, so normal and nice!) in the middle of a church split – because that is what it was – no matter how we try to dress it up in a nicer outfit.

It was a sorrow to me, to us. I had to trust both my husband and my God like never before.

In the early days, as people I loved both came alongside and dropped away for good, I read a psalm each night in bed



SUPPLIED PHOTO

■ New Song Anglican Church is in the process of transforming an ugly duckling building in Port Perry.

to beat back the darkness. I grieved for the people this move had hurt. I struggled with whether I even had the right to mourn, when it was us who had put this move into motion in the first place.

I experienced the camaraderie and community of our fledgling congregation in a way that was beautiful.

And I bumped up against cold shoulders in grocery stores.

One person who loves Jesus very much gave me a cold stare over the potatoes. I wanted to give a dirty look back. And that shamed me.

I realized then that I was a little bit angry too. At them, for not coming along, for not believing and agreeing it was the right thing to do, for not trusting my husband – for not making this easier for *me*.

Why, oh why, does it always have to

be so painful and embarrassing to grow spiritually?

It has been almost three years since the day of the storm.

Our congregation, New Song Anglican Church, purchased the ugly duckling building in town. We pulled up royal blue carpet and laid down sturdy wood floors. We broke through concrete walls to create large windows.

We bought an old communion table from a church that was closing down, and painted it a new colour.

We set up comfortable chairs, and with God's grace they are filling.

I had an accidental coffee the other day with the woman of the cold potato look from our old church.

We were both in the same café, waiting for people who didn't show.

I forced myself on her, basically. And by God's amazing grace, and with just enough time gone by, she let me. **FT**

Karen Stiller of Port Perry, Ont., is a senior editor at *Faith Today*.


REDEEMER

A Christian University in Hamilton, Ontario

“I know the world can be transformed. Redeemer is helping me see that while I can't do everything, through God's grace, I am doing what I can do now to facilitate change locally and globally.”

-**Brent McCamon** International Studies Major,
Windsor, Ontario

READ MORE at MyRedeemer.ca/Brent



Link *Charity* Canada Inc.

Providing a link between...donors and charities
Gift Planning...*simplified*

**Charitable
Giving Tools**

Meet Our Charities

Meet Donors Just Like You

Welcome to Link Charity

Who is Link Charity?

If we had a dollar for every time someone asked us this question, we would be able to sponsor several children a year.

To be honest it is a tough question to answer.

We are different than most charities

We are not providing clean water, or saving children from illness and abuse, or providing food for the hungry, or relief in disaster. We do not evangelize, or church plant, build schools or send out missionaries. But, because of what we do, all of the above and more can be done with a greater impact and sustainability. In essence, we provide financial and management services in the area of Gift Planning to our member charities and their donors so that they can do the work God has called them to do.

*"I believe Link Charity uses sound investments and appreciates low overhead to provide the most to the Christian community. I am exceptionally pleased with Link Charity and will continue to refer others to their services."
Lester F., Port Huron, ON*

We are like a Co-op

We work in cooperation with our member charities. Link Charity supplies the resources and expertise, while the member charity provides the donors and the need. All our member charities have a voice in the direction and planning of Link Charity as they represent the membership at our annual meeting as well as make up our board.

We are donor driven

We work with donors to provide simplicity, expertise and low cost tools that enables them to give away more to their selected charities than they originally thought. We take the time with the donors and the charities they represent to ensure their wishes are fully met.

*"Link Charity is a champion for gift planning and a passion to raise money for God's Kingdom that provide a tool box of instruments that encourage, enable and provide a donor with no excuses to give."
Erwin van Laar, SIM Canada*

Link Charity

Canada Inc.

We are generous in our giving

God has blessed us with a wise and foresight thinking board that has maintained an investment pool that produces a better than average annual return, that in turn allows us to give away above average gifts to hundreds of charities every year.

As you go through these pages, whether you are a donor or a charity, I hope you will catch the vision of the Apostle Paul who said,

Link Charity's Advantages

Exceptional Gift Planning Track Record

➔ Link Charity provides over \$5 million annually to over 500 Canadian charities.

Superior Investment Returns

➔ Link Charity's 12 year (2001-2013) annualized average rate of return is just over 8%, thus providing more to both the donor and the charity.*

*Past results are no guarantee of any future results

Simplicity of Use

➔ Link Charity provides easy to use tools and quick answers to many complex gift planning and estate needs.

*"Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God."
II Corinthians 9:10, 11*

In 2013,
Link Charity
distributed
\$6,200,000
to 522
charities

Our 2013 - 2014



Across Borders for World Evangelism
(519) 690-1009
www.abwe.ca



Bridges to New Life Society
(250) 448-6975
www.BridgesTNL.org



Crossroads Christian Communications Inc.
1-800-265-3100
www.crossroads.ca



Eurovangelism
1-866-630-6301
www.eurovangelism.ca



Global Recordings Network Canada
(905) 574-8220
www.globalrecordings.net/ca



GOSPEL FOR ASIA
1-888-946-2742
www.gfa.org



1-800-323-3747
www.intouch.org



Evangelistic Association of Canada
1-800-293-3717
www.billygraham.ca



Christian Medical and Dental Society
Christian Medical and Dental Society, Canada
1-888-256-8653
www.cmdscanada.org



FREEDOM NETWORK CANADA
freedom begins with a school
1-888-592-2238
www.dalitfreedom.net



EMMANUEL
INTERNATIONAL CANADA
1-866-269-6312
www.eicanada.org




The Gideons
INTERNATIONAL IN CANADA
1-888-482-4253
www.gideons.ca



1-800-871-0882
www.intercedeinternational.ca



(416) 444-7020  **Canada**
www.jewsforjesus.ca

Link Charity Family



Maranatha Evangelistic Association
1-877-632-7770
www.meaworldwide.org



One Lord. One Life. One Calling.
1-800-784-7077
www.omscanada.org



Open Doors
Serving persecuted Christians worldwide

Open Doors Canada
(905) 636-0944
www.opendoorsca.org



Operation Mobilization Canada
1-877-487-7777
www.omcanada.org



Partners International
1-800-883-7697
www.partnersinternational.ca



Pentecostal Holiness Church of Canada
(604) 583-5551
www.phcc.ca



PMI
Peoples Ministries Inc.

1-888-269-6085
www.thepeopleschurch.ca
www.livingtruth.ca



PRAIRIE
To Know Christ and Make Him Known

Prairie Bible Institute
1-800-661-2425
www.prairie.edu



SAT-7 Canada
(416) 855-7777
www.sat7.org



Reach Beyond
(formerly HCJB Global)
1-888-354-4252
www.hcjbglobal.ca



The Voice of the Martyrs

1-888-298-6423
www.persecution.net



SIM Canada
1-800-294-6918
www.sim.ca



1-800-461-3503
www.wol.ca

Link Charity's members are the heartbeat of Link Charity. We are proud to work with them and their donors to provide more support for God's Kingdom.

Members

1-800-387-8146

Becoming a Member Charity

Gift planning is a long-term strategy that could be the missing link to a charity's sustainable mission. Unlike fundraising that meets the needs of the day-to-day operations in frequent yet smaller amounts, gift planning can provide large strategic amounts over a longer period of time.

Link Charity will partner with your charity to provide the necessary knowledge and tools to help your charity successfully engage your donors to consider gift planning.

Benefits of Being a Link Charity Member

1. Dedicated expert advice to you, your donors and your staff in areas of planned giving and estate planning.
2. Low to no cost marketing tools to help in your promotion of planned giving.
3. A voice on decisions and plans for Link Charity as a representative vote at our AGM, and potential Board member.
4. Higher than average return on investments for your donors.

"Link Charity is a service for our donors, in simplifying their planned gifts with one gift and one receipt, yet benefiting as many registered charities in Canada as desired. With most donors giving to multiple charities, the opportunity to set up a letter of direction for giving to a list of charities from a bequest or a Gift annuity is a great asset. Link Charity provides a professional and efficient conduit for your planned gifts."
Doug Braaten, Operation Mobilization

As a member charity with Link Charity, you have access to all the resources and guidance you need to succeed in the gift planning world. It is like having a gift planning professional on your staff at a fraction of the cost.

"In Touch Ministries has been a member of Link Charity for approximately 14 years. A considerable number of our supporters have taken advantage of these services. We have received many reports from our donors saying, "I don't know what I would have done, if I had not gotten involved with Link Charity."
Art Brooker, In Touch Ministries



Contact Steve Weir to discuss how Link Charity will benefit your ministry.

steve@linkcharity.ca

Meet George and Helen



George and Helen are your typical retired couple in Canada. George is 73 years old and has been retired for the past 10 years after 37 years at the Ford Plant as a plant foreman. Helen is 72 years old and spent most of her days raising their four children while occasionally working as a music teacher at a private school.

They have a modest home that they have lived in for more than 40 years. They are very active volunteers at their church and with at least five charities doing whatever they can to relieve the burden of work.

Their four children are married and they now have nine grandchildren. Their family is spread out across the country, so every summer they have a reunion at the family cottage.

At the last reunion they struck up a conversation about their plans for their inheritance and how it should be divided. All the children agree that they have been well blessed in their adult life and so much of the discussion was centered around George and Helen's charitable work.

Following this meeting they met with Link Charity to discuss their goals, needs, desires and wants.

They want to provide enough for their children and grandchildren but also want to leave a sizable gift to charity. Their goal is to achieve a 50/50 split between family and charity.

George and Helen's net worth:

- \$225,000 RRIF
- \$65,000 Shares
- \$490,000 House value
- \$120,000 Insurance cash value
- \$100,000 GICs

Let us share with you George and Helen's incredible story of gift giving success both for them and their favourite charities.



George and Helen..

Bequest Services

The first thing Link Charity recommended is to update their 15 year old will and assign their wishes to each of their children. It was also recommended to make Link Charity the residual beneficiary of their estate. A Link Charity Letter of Direction was also provided to give direction as to how they wanted their charitable portion of the estate divided.

'In Kind' Stock Donation

Link Charity showed George and Helen how donating their shares 'in kind' to Link Charity has eliminated any future capital gains tax burden as well as receiving a charitable tax receipt now. Their church was in need of some capital funds for a large youth wing being built. George and Helen decided to donate the stocks to Link Charity, have them sold and give the proceeds to their church as an anonymous gift.

Life Insurance Strategies

By changing ownership and beneficiary of one of their Life Insurance policies to Link Charity they are granting a probate free gift to Link Charity. Link Charity in turn directs the assets equally among the five charities. George and Helen also receive a charitable tax receipt for the cash value of the donated policy.

RRIF Beneficiary Changes

George and Helen changed the secondary beneficiary on each RRIF to be divided 50% among the four children equally and 50% gifted to Link Charity. It is expected that upon last death there will be approximately \$50,000 in the RRIF account, leaving \$25,000 for the children and \$25,000 for Link Charity to distribute.

By approaching the beneficiary change in this manner they are creating a charitable tax credit of \$25,000 on their final tax return. This helps offset the income tax on the other \$25,000 disbursed to the children.



George and Helen are the
everyday philanthropist

Donors Just Like You

Gift Annuity Purchase

George and Helen had \$50,000 each in a GIC. Using the Charitable Gift Annuity through Link Charity it provided money back to them. Based on their age and gender, George would receive around \$260 per month and Helen would receive around \$250 per month for the rest of their lives tax free. Upon their death, Link Charity would transfer the principal to George and Helen's charities.

Charitable Loan Agreement

George and Helen decided to downsize. After all fees from the sale of their house, George and Helen had \$500,000. They 'loaned' Link Charity the \$500,000 with an annual interest rate of 2.5%. This provided them with \$1,580 per month with an option to access any monies at any time. The 'profit' from the investment was donated to their favourite charities.

George and Helen are the couple next door, or maybe even you.

They are the ordinary people doing extraordinary things.

Donor Advised Funds

Using Link Charity's Donor Advised Fund, George, Helen and their four children each contributed \$5,000 into a perpetual legacy for their chosen charities for decades to come. In essence, creating a family foundation for future generations.

By working with Link Charity, George and Helen were able to:

- ➔ Gift over \$570,000 now and over time to their church and at least four other charities.
- ➔ Provide \$725,000 to their four children as an inheritance.
- ➔ Save over \$25,000 on taxes.
- ➔ Receive over \$70,000 in charitable tax credits now (to be spread out over 5 years) and another \$10,000 in credit upon their deaths.

You don't have to do it all. Even one or two things out of George and Helen's story can make a big difference for you and your favourite charities.



Making the Most

As followers of Christ we have been taught to be good stewards of our money – we understand the principle of tithing, we invest carefully to insure good returns, and many of us follow good budget practices and live well within our means.

We have attended workshops and seminars on money management and Biblical stewardship, read all the good books on the subject and have listened to numerous sermons on the topic. But, in all of this if asked, *“How do you plan to leave it behind”*, the responses most often are, *“I never thought of it”*, or, *“The government will get it I suppose”*, or, *“I will let the kids fight it out”*, or, *“My lawyer knows my wishes”*.

Most have heard the phrase, *“I’ve never seen a hearse pulling a U-Haul.”* We know in principle that we cannot take it with us, but in practice few of us take the time to plan out how we can leave it behind.

At Link Charity, we call this Gift Planning and that is precisely what we do – we ask the right questions, we provide the right tools, and we prepare the right plan so that we can be good stewards of our estate as well as our budget.

In many cases you can double or triple the impact of your giving over the long term.

For example, a 74 year old male owned a \$75,000 GIC. Every year he would give the proceeds of his interest to his church with the intentions that when he dies the principal value of the GIC would be equally divided amongst five different ministries. He determined that his \$75,000 GIC was making more money for the bank than for himself or the Kingdom so he contacted Link Charity to get some advice. We suggested a Charitable Gift Annuity that would provide him (and his church) with income for life and upon his death the principal remaining (almost 100%) of original value would be distributed to his desired ministries.

“I am completely confident in Link Charity’s services and feel they have the highest integrity. I appreciate the personal service and will continue to recommend their good work.”

Brian W. Toronto, ON

of Your Gifts

This is what the before and after would look like:

Before:

\$75,000 GIC
@ 2.5% annual interest = \$1,875
x 15 years (life expectancy)
= \$28,125
Total giving: \$103,125

After:

\$75,000 Gift Annuity
@ 6.5% (guaranteed) = \$4,875
x 15 years (life expectancy)
= \$73,125
Total Giving: \$148,125

Bonus:

The gift annuity generated a \$22,675 charitable receipt in the year of purchase which provided him with over \$10,000 in tax savings over the next five years which he in turn gave to his church.

One simple act of gift planning for what you were already setting aside for God's work resulted in over \$55,000 more. Imagine the amount if he lived to 100.

Now imagine what you can do with a little bit of gift planning!

Donor Advantages

1. Save hundreds of dollars in lawyer fees by using Link Charity's letter of direction with your will.
2. Easy and cost effective process for donating stocks and mutual funds, which can save hundreds of dollars in brokerage fees and capital gains.
3. When supporting multiple charities under one Link Charity Gift Annuity you will save time, money and effort.
4. Your donations can be anonymous and selective to many charities using one giving tool.
5. Create a type of Family Foundation through a Donor Advised Fund program without all the costs and legalities involved in other programs.
6. Save thousands of dollars in taxes both now and at estate time with Link Charity's customized gift giving estate plan.
7. Donors can be assured that all discussions and work done by Link Charity is held in the strictest of confidence.

Link Charity Gift

Ask any good carpenter
there is always a proper
Charitable giving
in the same

Charitable Gift Annuities

When you donate a capital sum to Link Charity, in return Link Charity guarantees you regular payment at a very attractive rate for the rest of your life. Link Charity in turn invests the capital and the remainder principal upon your death is distributed to your selected charities.

Donor Advised Funds

Family Foundations are for the wealthy. However, by establishing a Donor Advised Fund through Link Charity a modest family can create their very own foundation directing grants and bursaries to their favourite charities annually.

Life Insurance Donations

Turn one of your largest assets at estate time into a low risk, low cost, tax effective gift. By utilizing Link Charity's expertise you could turn a few dollars a year into tens of thousands at estate time.

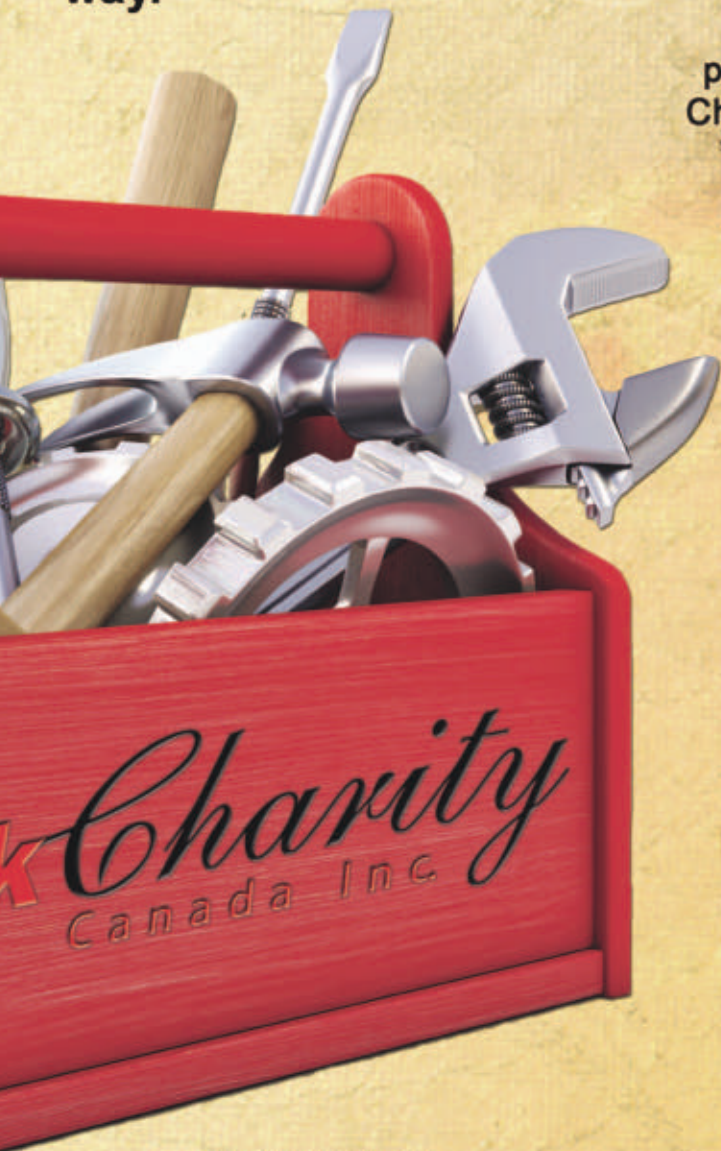
Bequests

Including gifts to charities in your will? Simplify your will, increase your privacy and increase flexibility by naming Link Charity as the distributor charity.



Giving Tool Box

and they will tell you
tool for each job.
tools work
way.



Charitable Loan Agreements

Need access to your principal but still want to provide to your favourite Charity? Consider Link Charity's Loan Agreements where we offer better than average payments to you while providing the profits of the loan to your selected charities. In essence this is a charitable GIC with better rates!

Gifts of Securities

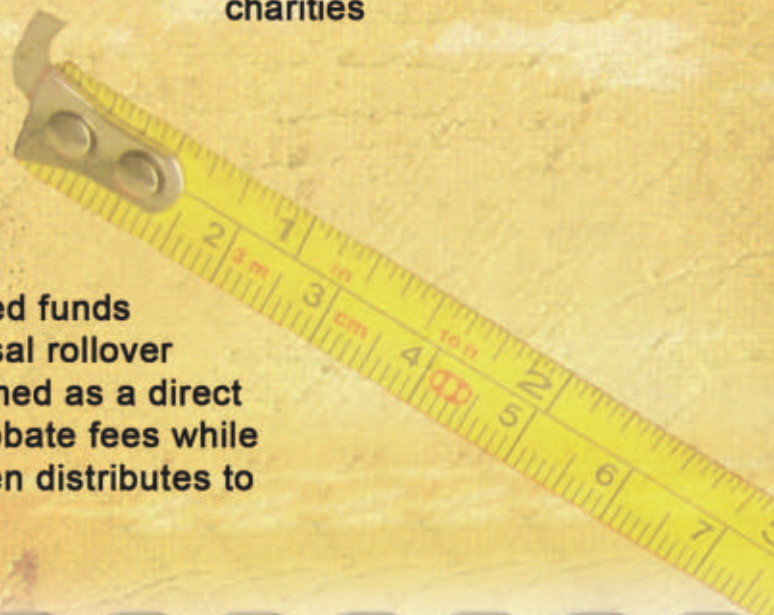
The special tax treatment of this type of gift makes it the most tax assisted gift of all. It provides immediate cash for your charity while eliminating the capital gains tax.

Use Link Charity if:

1. Your charity does not have a brokerage account
2. You wish to divide the benefits of one gift among two or more charities

RRSP/RRIF

The full balances in these registered funds become taxable upon death (spousal rollover excepted). Link Charity can be named as a direct beneficiary; avoiding taxes and probate fees while increasing privacy. Link Charity then distributes to your selected charities.



When an Income Stream is also a Giving Stream

Charitable Gift Annuities with Link Charity have the unique ability to provide individuals or couples with a higher than average investment income stream while providing a large gift to your favourite charity or charities.

Here is how it works. When you donate a capital sum into a Gift Annuity with Link Charity you trigger three events simultaneously:

1. The Gift is invested in our investment pool (generating an average return of around 8%)* * Past results are no guarantee of any future results
2. You begin to receive a guaranteed lifetime tax free annual income of between 5.5% - 10% of the initial gift, based on age.
3. You receive a charitable tax receipt of between 20 - 40% of the initial gift.

Your capital remains invested and at death, the remaining capital is distributed to the charities chosen by the annuitant. Link Charity has had great success with this program and has averaged just over 90% return of capital to charitable beneficiaries when the agreements mature.

You can even purchase a deferred annuity. So, consider your GIC's with their taxable annual income of 2.5% and ask yourself, what if, I could triple my annual income, and give to my favourite ministries at the same time.



Link Charity Gift Annuities

of Annuities
under Management
348

Value of Annuities
under Management
\$15,369,400

Value of 2013 Payments
to Annuities
\$1,180,525

Sample Charitable Gift Annuity Table effective May 2014

Gift Annuity Chart for Men (per \$20,000)

Age:	Payment Rate	Income	Charitable Receipt	Tax Free Annual Income	Taxable
65	5.47%	\$1,089	\$4,000	\$932	\$157
73	6.35%	\$1,270	\$5,186	\$1,249	\$1
77	6.99%	\$1,398	\$5,744	\$1,398	\$0
81	7.83%	\$1,566	\$6,218	\$1,566	\$0
85	8.94%	\$1,788	\$6,570	\$1,788	\$0
90	10%	\$2,000	\$7,778	\$2,000	\$0

Gift Annuity Chart for Women (per \$20,000)

Age:	Payment Rate	Income	Charitable Receipt	Tax Free Annual Income	Taxable
65	5.21%	\$999	\$4,000	\$795	\$203
73	5.94%	\$1,188	\$4,730	\$1,108	\$80
77	6.51%	\$1,302	\$5,342	\$1,302	\$0
81	7.29%	\$1,458	\$5,776	\$1,458	\$0
85	8.37%	\$1,674	\$5,901	\$1,674	\$0
90	10%	\$2,000	\$5,651	\$2,000	\$0

Joint Gift Annuity Chart (per \$20,000)

Age:	Payment Rate	Income	Charitable Receipt	Tax Free Annual Income	Taxable
75	5.59%	\$1,118	\$4,219	\$1,036	\$82
80	6.19%	\$1,238	\$4,920	\$1,238	\$0



Link Charity Canada Inc.

101-334 Donlands Ave.

Toronto, ON M4J 3R9

Charitable Organization Reg. #88804 7826 RR0001

1-800-387-8146

705-928-3971

416-410-4244

www.linkcharity.ca

steve@linkcharity.ca



Coming to a Screen Near You

Christian film critics reflect on upcoming mainstream movies about Noah and Jesus. *By Jeff Dewsbury*

PHOTO: NIKO TAVERNISE

■ **Will *Noah*, which opens on March 28, be more concerned with environmentalism than with God punishing human evil? Jennifer Connelly is Naameh and Russell Crowe is Noah in *Noah*, from Paramount Pictures and Regency Enterprises.**

Whenever Hollywood takes another stab at a biblical story, the evangelical community divides into three camps – the flattered (They noticed us), the focused (Let’s take advantage of the attention. Cue the accompanying outreach campaigns) and the offended (They’re taking liberties with *our* stories).

If the previews are accurate, director Darren Aronofsky’s upcoming film *Noah*, which includes apocalyptic visions, fallen angels and brutal clashes with other humans, is going to blow every Sunday school flannelgraph, flowing-robed, rainbow-glowing cliché out of the proverbial water.

Test screenings of Jewish and Christian audiences – the two markets the studio wants on board to guarantee commercial success – have reportedly not gone well.

Despite previous reports of disagreements between the director and the studio over the final cut of the film, a recent article in the *Hollywood Reporter* confirmed that Aronofsky’s version, which has not been tested, will be the cut moviegoers will see.

Early on in the *Noah* film saga, American screenwriter Brian Godawa (*To End All Wars, Alleged* and the novel *Noah Primeval*) read an undated draft of the script and decried Aronofsky’s version of the Noah story as an “environmentalist wacko” in a 2012 post on his blog *Hollywood Worldviews*.

“The notion of human evil [in the draft] is more of an afterthought or symptom of the bigger environmental concern of the great tree-hugger in the sky,” he writes. Godawa then goes on to lay out a script laden with the message that God and Noah

are working together on an endgame that will take mankind, who has abused the Earth, out of the picture for good.

He also outlines plot twists, such as one of Noah’s enemies stowing away on the ark, and Noah’s plan to kill the child of a pregnant woman on the great boat (who exactly the woman is, is not identified) if she gives birth to a girl – eliminating the threat of future human propagation.

We have to remember, of course, that the average Hollywood screenplay is rewritten more times than a four-year-old’s Christmas list. So some of the movie elements Godawa is critiquing may not make it into the final product. No doubt, being accustomed to miles of rewrites himself, Godawa says, “It’s never too late to right a ship that is heading in the wrong direc-

tion,” hoping his educated critique will be read by the right people.

One thing we know for sure – all the guessing will be over March 28 when *Noah* makes its North American debut (it will premiere overseas in the United Kingdom on April 4).

If the studio hired Aronofsky to deliver a film that will please both Christian and Jewish audiences, “They must not have seen his prior movies,” says Canadian writer/filmmaker Kevin Miller, whose documentary *Hellbound?* received generally favourable reviews from secular and faith-based film critics for its look at the doctrine of eternal, conscious torment.

He believes trying to make a biblical film that has artistic merit and will please Christian or Jewish audiences is “a fool’s errand. It’s like trying to please Star Trek fans. You’ll never get it right.”

Authenticity, Art and Story

A lot of Evangelicals judge biblical films solely on their accuracy, or loyalty to the text, even though that measure can be highly subjective in itself. That misses the point, says Miller, who believes creative licence is a necessary ingredient of any work of art, even when it comes to sacred stories like Noah.

“Many Christians expect a film like this to be like a hyper-realist painting rather than a Monet or a Picasso, where the interpretation is everything,” says the filmmaker, who is currently working on a feature-length biopic on Catholic writer Thomas Merton.

“Some Christians fail to distinguish between their interpretation of the text and the text itself, not seeing the difference between representation and interpretation. The art of translating a written work to a cinematic work is the art of interpretation.”

Coincidentally, Merton himself once wrote in his book *No Man Is an Island* (Houghton Mifflin, 2003) that “art enables us to find ourselves and lose ourselves at the same time” – a simple sentence which expresses the complexities when art meets our deeply held beliefs.

An understanding of the role of art is missing in many evangelical critiques of films, says Miller. We often judge the film on the wrong scale. “If you think that messing with [a biblical story] could raise the ire of God himself – that if a film doesn’t match one’s interpretation, it’s actually

evil . . . well, the stakes are pretty high.”

Godawa, who like Miller grapples daily with the relationship between the Word and the screen, understands full well that creative licence is an essential ingredient of any cinematic rendering of an ancient story. The key, in his mind, is not introducing foreign ideas that don’t mesh with the original text.

“All authors unavoidably bring some of their own meaning to the text,” Godawa points out. “The real question is: Does the creative licence or embellishment serve the meaning or theme intended in the original story? Or does it twist it into an alien meaning against the original story, a favourite propaganda tactic of postmodernists, leftists and radicals.”

Based on what we’ve seen so far, it looks like Aronofsky is casting Noah as the first “doomsday

prepper,” says Miller, who is expecting the director to engage the “big ideas” in the Noah story (the problem of evil, redemption, acting on faith, and survivor’s guilt, for instance) and hoping moviegoers will not judge the film solely by their own measures of biblical accuracy.

Canadian film critic Peter Chattaway, who has written extensively about biblical films on his blog www.patheos.com/blogs/filmchat and for the magazines *Books and Culture* and *Christianity Today*, among others, interviewed Aronofsky when the writer/director was promoting his first feature *Pi*, a film chronicling one man’s mad descent into Jewish numerology.

Aronofsky is “obsessive, and he specializes in films about obsessive people – *Black Swan*, *The Wrestler*, *Pi*. What could be more obsessive than a man building a huge boat on dry land because he hears voices?” laughs Chattaway.

He points out that Aronofsky, though a secular Jew, grew up in a Jewish context and has, for at least a decade, talked about his desire to tackle the story of Noah. As a 13-year-old Aronofsky even penned a prize-winning poem about Noah, and he told the *Hollywood Reporter* that, even though his production designer had “millions of ideas of what it could look like,” he insisted on an ark that met the biblical specifications because the measurements were “right there.”

“All authors unavoidably bring some of their own meaning to the text.”

“He grew up with the stories. It bugs me a little that [the studio] believes Noah has to be tailored to suit a Christian audience,” says Chattaway. “The story of Noah is just as much a Jewish story as a Christian story.”

Coming from that Jewish perspective, Aronofsky seems to have, at least in part, relied on passages of the non-canonical book of Enoch to create his vision of the Nephilim – who are in this version the offspring of fallen angels and man – the most widely anticipated element of the new film.

Nephilim, the “sons of God” (described as fallen angels and referred to as “the Watchers” in Enoch) are also mentioned as part of the flood story in the book of Genesis. But the references are cryptic, leaving plenty of room for speculation. Various theories (including the possibility they are the off-

spring of the unions of humans and angels) have been controversial among scholars and laypeople alike for hundreds of years.

Amid such ambiguity Aronofsky appears to plunge headlong into a fantastical tale of giant, once-heavenly creatures with six arms who, having shared forbidden knowledge with mankind, watched them turn around and use it for evil.

Also in an early draft of the script Methuselah (played in the movie by Anthony Hopkins) counsels Noah that God comes with two hands – “one with justice, one with mercy,” illustrating Noah’s inner battle with the recurring visions he receives from the Creator.

In the new film Noah may not be portrayed as heroic as everyone expects, warns Chattaway. “He might be the guy who stood by and watched most of humanity die out.”

Son of God by Burnett and Downey

If Noah hits too high on the radical meter for some, then the theatrical release of *Son of God* (February 28) – based on the very popular ten-hour History Channel miniseries *The Bible*, and produced by *Survivor* creator Mark Burnett and his wife *Touched by an Angel* star Roma Downey – should be a comfortable place to take refuge.

Chattaway, who saw the film in an ad-

vanced screening last year, says *Son of God* wavers between a very high view of who Jesus is and where He comes from, and the portrait of a very human figure who gets overcome by emotion. The film, largely pieced together from footage shot for the television series, chronicles the complete ministry of Jesus, with roughly half focusing on the sufferings of Jesus as he heads to Calvary.

“The rather extensive treatment of the arrest and trial of Jesus owes a lot to *The Passion*,” says Chattaway, who says the film has a few missteps, including a scene where Jesus prophesies the destruction of the temple in a playful aside, smiling as he pokes a little girl’s belly. “In the Gospel Jesus doesn’t just say it out of the blue. He says it to the disciples. And I can’t imagine Him smiling at that moment.”

However, he credits the filmmakers for setting aside Western tradition and choosing not to portray Mary Magdalene as a prostitute, instead focusing on her role as a disciple.

Christ’s story by its nature is both powerful and complex. However, cinematic representations of Jesus are often in line with what Christian audiences have come to expect over the years, interpretations of Christ that don’t cover much new ground. *Son of God* seems to fit snugly into this category.

“There exists a Christology of the popular mind, a fundamental inability to grasp the humanity of Jesus seen on screen,” says Regent College professor Iwan Russell-Jones, who teaches a number of courses on theology and the arts, including a course on Jesus movies. Before joining Regent, Russell-Jones produced and directed a long list of TV documentaries for the BBC including *The Crucified King* in 2003.

“We do [well] at the divine part, but are we doing a theologically accurate version of Jesus as one of us?” he asks. “In most Jesus films He often just emerges mysteriously.”

While a lot of treatments of Jesus are “devout,” most of them don’t really tackle the challenge of who He really is, says the professor. “If we’re comfortable about Jesus, we’ve probably got it wrong. A powerful Jesus film should make you squirm a little bit. It should offer a challenge for *me* that I can’t avoid, not just [for] the Sadducees and Pharisees.” **FT**

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

PROVIDENCE
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

**PREPARING FOR MINISTRY?
SAVE 60% ON TUITION**

Enroll in the Master of Divinity program for September 2014 and save 60% on tuition towards your first 18 credit hours.
Tel 1-800-668-7768 • info@prov.ca • ProvidenceSeminary.ca

2 AMAZING EXPERIENCES

WALK WHERE JESUS WALKED ISRAEL

STARTING FROM ONLY \$1898 • SEP 8 - 16 & NOV 28 - DEC 6, 2014

JOURNEYS OF PAUL TURKEY & GREECE

STARTING FROM ONLY \$1798 • NOV 3 - NOV 15, 2014

Airfare from Toronto • Groups, for an additional supplement we can book the air from your home city. • Includes most meals • Extensive sightseeing daily • Airport taxes, airline fuel surcharges and gratuities not included • Plan a group of 30 or more from your church and receive generous benefits

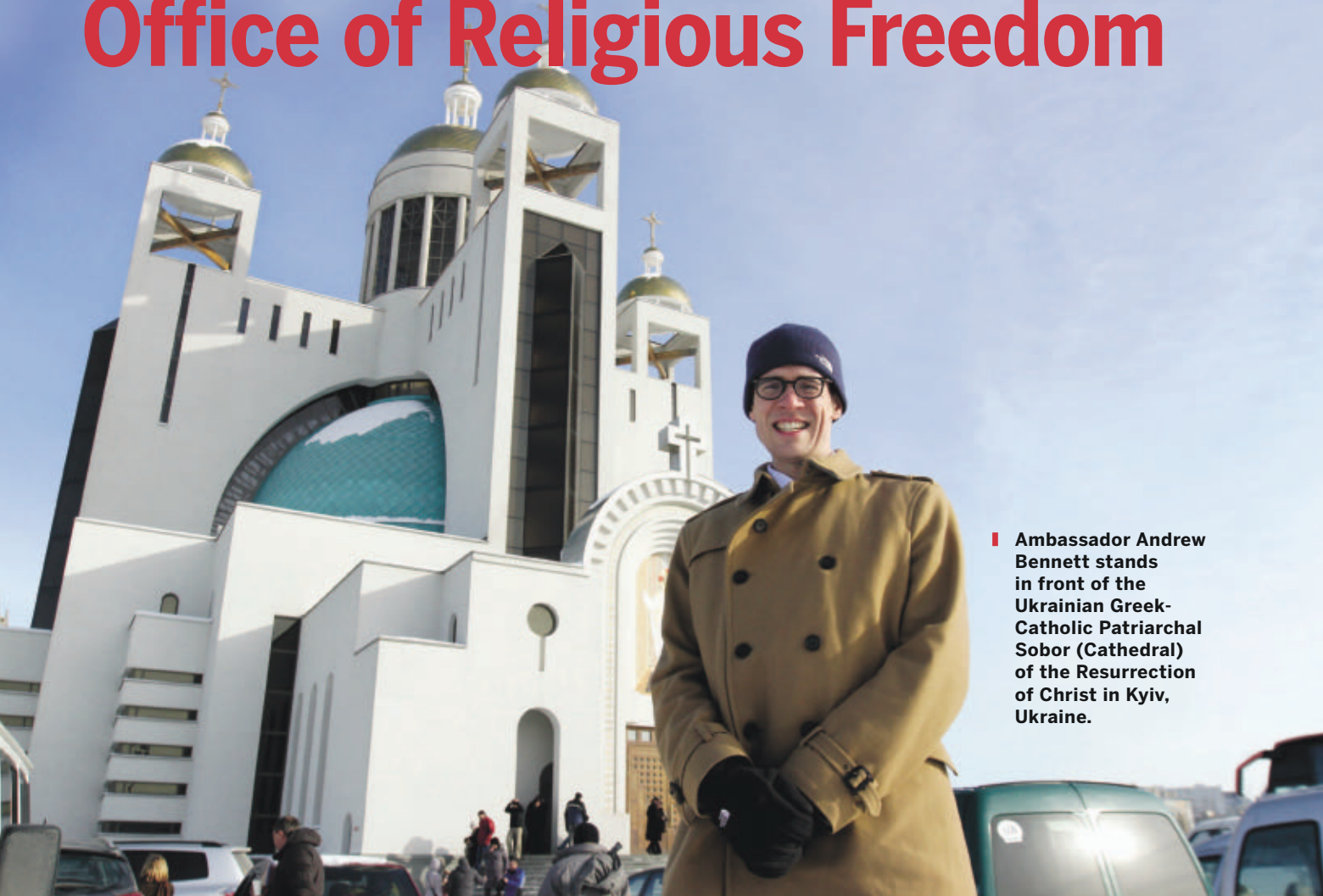
PRESENTED BY FRIENDSHIP TOURS

The Leader in Customized Christian Pilgrimages • Faithfully serving Christians since 1984

Custom Group tours at competitive prices to Israel, Turkey, Greece, England & Scotland, Italy and European Church reformation tours to Germany & Switzerland.

(800) 213-9155 • TOURS@FRIENDSHIPTOURS.COM • WWW.FRIENDSHIPTOURS.COM

The *Faith Today* Interview With **Andrew Bennett of Canada's Office of Religious Freedom**



■ Ambassador Andrew Bennett stands in front of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Patriarchal Sobor (Cathedral) of the Resurrection of Christ in Kyiv, Ukraine.

PHOTO: DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

It has been just over a year since Canada's Office of Religious Freedom (ORF) launched in Ottawa, with Ambassador Andrew Bennett at its helm.

Bennett, 41, has visited ten countries so far and addressed multiple infractions of religious freedom including persecution against Ahmadiyya Muslims, Bahá'ís, Tibetan Buddhists, Muslim Rohingyas, Uyghur Muslims and of course Christians around the world.

Ambassador Bennett (AB) spoke with senior editor Karen Stiller (FT) about how he feels the first year of the ORF has been, why it's so important Canada speaks out against religious persecution, and those awkward meetings with governments who are doing the persecuting.

FT: You've been at it for just over a year now. Can you tell our readers how you feel things are going with the ORF so far?

AB: Things are going very well. We are very happy with how things have developed. We have three main areas of focus – advocacy, policy and programming.

Advocacy is my role as ambassador, going out and travelling to countries where there are issues of religious freedom. I've now had the chance to visit ten countries, some with concerns of issues of religious freedom like Turkey, the Ukraine and Hungary, and countries where we have a common cause like the U.S., the U.K. and France.

So that gives me a chance to engage directly with foreign governments on this issue and also meet directly with groups suffering from issues of lack of religious freedom. In the Ukraine where I was recently, the government is directly intimidating the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church.

I'm also meeting with Canadian groups, different churches and faith groups to talk about religious freedom issues overseas.

On the policy side, we are looking at how we can best address issues in countries in which we can engage. We're interested in having dialogue.

We have a \$5 million annual budget, \$4.25 million of which is dedicated to the religious freedom fund, which is for running different programs in our countries of engagement. At the core of the programs is wanting to have that dialogue, to engage government and civil society to advance the goal of religious freedom. We're continuing to roll out different projects. For the first year we've accomplished a lot of what we set out to do.

FT: When you are visiting countries and the governments know you are there as a kind of watchdog for religious freedom, how do they receive you? Is it awkward?

AB: It's awkward for them, not for me. At times they don't necessarily receive Canada coming to talk to them about their own challenges and government restrictions on their own communities. That would be the same as when I meet with foreign diplomats in Canada. There might be a sense of Canada judging and meddling.

There is a difference between that and speaking what is true.

Religious freedom is a fundamental human right. It links in with freedom of expression, gender equality. It's incumbent upon us, where we have that in Canada, to speak out.

There is religious persecution that is directly attributable to actions of government. There are a number of egregious countries like Saudi Arabia. They target any religious community not connected with well-established faith.

Another type of persecution is the release of social hostility where one group targets another because of what they believe, like the persecution of Christians in many countries in the Middle East, Iraq, Syria, the Coptic Orthodox Christians in Egypt. We have to be able to engage in both aspects. When speaking with a government, it can often be a difficult conversation. But it is inherent truth, the inherent dignity of every human being. That is what we are speaking of.

FT: Ten out of the 15 countries with the worst religious freedom abuses are Muslim nations, according to a report released by the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom. One might assume, therefore, that Islam is more prone to religious persecution. Is this true?

AB: I think there are significant challenges with freedom of religion in countries that are Muslim majority populated, but it's not fair to target that. Muslims themselves are being brutally targeted in some countries. In China we have Muslims that face persecution in the northwestern part of the country. We look at

Muslim countries like Indonesia and Pakistan where minority populations face persecution from the majority. Countries that are majority Buddhist like Burma or Sri Lanka, where you have the majority Buddhist population that targets Hindus, Muslims and Christians in the North. There are all sorts of factors that can lead to religious persecution in a country. There are religious factors, socioeconomic, ethnic. So often, violations are linked to other human rights violations.

FT: When you look at all these different cases of religious persecution, are there similarities between them?

AB: There can be many different things happening such as in India where we have a lot of Christians that are of lower caste, and so often when Christians are attacked in certain states of India there is a caste element as well.

I think when we look at why people are being persecuted in the world because of their faith, we see government restrictions, governments trying to control religious practice in their country to favour one group over another.

It's a question of having a very narrow understanding of what religious freedom is. Former Soviet Union countries define it very narrowly. It is a restricted freedom to worship.

That is part of it, but it is also the right to openly manifest your faith in public. The right to change your faith is the canary in the coal mine. Also the right to not be coerced to change your faith, to engage in missionary activity, such as for Christians. Also, the freedom to not have faith. That is all within the bounds of religious freedom.

FT: In our own country we have the situation of Quebec and the proposed Charter of Values, which would restrict the freedom of employees of the State wearing symbols of their religion. That would strike some as not being in line with religious freedom.

AB: I think it's important for your readers to know our office focuses exclusively on religious freedom overseas.

We're talking about places where they are being tortured, imprisoned, killed. It's not my office's role to comment on the situation in Quebec. There are a number of people in the Government of Canada who have spoken out regarding the Charter of Values. It's proper that other parts of the government should address that conversation.

We are able to advance religious freedom overseas as Canadians because we have religious freedom in Canada.

The courts, legislatures, Parliament and individual citizens uphold religious freedom in our country. It's the very first freedom enumerated in section two of the Charter.

It's very clearly established in the Canadian context. We're blessed to have that freedom, and given that we have it, it behooves us to understand what it means, to champion it and to champion it abroad.

FT: How does an ordinary Canadian citizen champion religious freedom abroad?

AB: Make sure you are well informed. How is religious freedom understood universally? Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of

“ We're talking about places where [people] are being tortured, imprisoned, killed. ”

Human Rights explains it well. There are a number of very good research institutes such as the Hudson Institute in the U.S.

There are books by Paul Marshall, who is also a Canadian.

The Pew Forum can help. It is important to have an understanding of what the situations are, to inform yourself of who the groups are, to familiarize yourself with those Christian churches facing persecution, particularly the ancient Apostolic churches like the Chaldeans. These are maybe churches your readers are not as familiar with. These are very ancient churches that are increasingly being challenged in the birthplace of Christianity. That gives people then the opportunity to speak out in defence of religious freedom.

FT: You used the term “canary in a coal mine” earlier. That is how religious free-

dom has been defined as well, as the freedom that is sometimes the first to go and serves as an alert to observers.

AB: Absolutely. We can speak of it as a foundational freedom along with others that exist. It links in with so many other rights, of expression, of equality between men and women. Religious freedom allows us as people of faith to practise our faith, whether it’s liturgical practice, or expressing a theological point of view. Also, most religions have an ethical and moral framework that helps us understand human rights.

At the core of religious freedom and at the core of all freedoms is the human being. Each human being possesses an inherent dignity and that is at the core of our discussion about all rights. That understanding does not exist in countries that don’t have freedom of religion. It’s almost guaranteed

they don’t have those other freedoms.

FT: You mentioned earlier that the ORF really exists to speak externally. Is there a way in which your office benefits Canadians as well?

AB: In the past year I’ve had the opportunity to engage every major faith tradition in the country in some way. In doing that, it gives me an opportunity to raise awareness among Canadians about why it’s important for Canada to advance religious freedom, something that we’re blessed to enjoy in Canada.

Here in Canada we have a highly secularized society. It is important that there is a prevalent discourse around faith and religion in Canadian society. That helps us engage the world.

The ORF exists because religious freedom is a fundamental human right that is being violated. We need to have this office in Canada because that’s what Canada does – we speak out for human rights. It all points to a fundamental human truth about the dignity of each human being.

FT: Thank you, Ambassador Bennett. FT

“Each human being possesses an inherent dignity and that is at the core of our discussion about all rights.”

poverty: what’s it to you?

If you can’t answer this question, chances are you’ve never sent your children to bed hungry – and that’s a good thing.

But what about the other one billion kids stuck in poverty?

Last year alone Speroway gave \$10.7M worth of food and supplies to meet needs in Canada and around the world.

Make poverty your problem. Check out what we’re up to at: speroway.com or call **1.877.382.2262**



FOOD SECURITY * EDUCATION * HEALTHCARE



Residential Mortgage Special

3.29%*

5 Year Term

Lending is different at MSCU

“We encourage responsible use of credit, apply faith-based stewardship principles, and seek to live out our values every day.

When you choose co-operative banking you’re more than a customer. You’re a Member and an Owner.”

Call your local **Personal Lending Specialist** today and experience the MSCU difference.

Mennonite Savings and Credit Union **50** 1964-2014

www.mscu.com | 1.888.672.6728

* Rate subject to change. Rate includes relationship pricing. Annual Percentage Rate (APR) is equivalent to the Annual Interest Rate. APR assumes no fees or charges apply. If fees or charges apply, your APR would increase.

How to Welcome People With Disabilities Into Church

Expert advice on thinking, speaking and acting to improve the welcome at your congregation.

By Karen Stiller

Shredding documents at a police station is a highly repetitive, seemingly endless task that must be completed by a trusted worker who can maintain absolute confidentiality. It was just the job for a person of disability whose very challenges – not being able to read or write – coupled with his strong love of repetition, made him the perfect candidate for the shredding job at a local police station.

For Steve Snider, manager of educational services for Christian Horizons (CH), a faith-based Ontario charity serving nearly 1,500 people with developmental disabilities and their families, this true story of the man and the shredder serves as a challenging motif for how the Church might welcome and embrace people with disabilities.

“His disability was the perfect gift for what that police department needed. They needed someone who wouldn’t share confidential stuff, and would just shred,” says Snider. “If we saw a disability as an ability or a gift, something unique a person brings to the community, it’s pretty powerful stuff.”

That vision is part of the ethos of CH, and the message they are attempting to bring to Canadian congregations.

“We have a vision,” says CEO Janet Nolan, “that people with exceptional needs would belong to communities where their God-given gifts are accepted. There is really quite a wide range of what churches are able to do. We believe that people with developmental disabilities are a gift from God. Our communities are whole because there are all sorts of people at the table. We’re not judging or condemning a church [because]

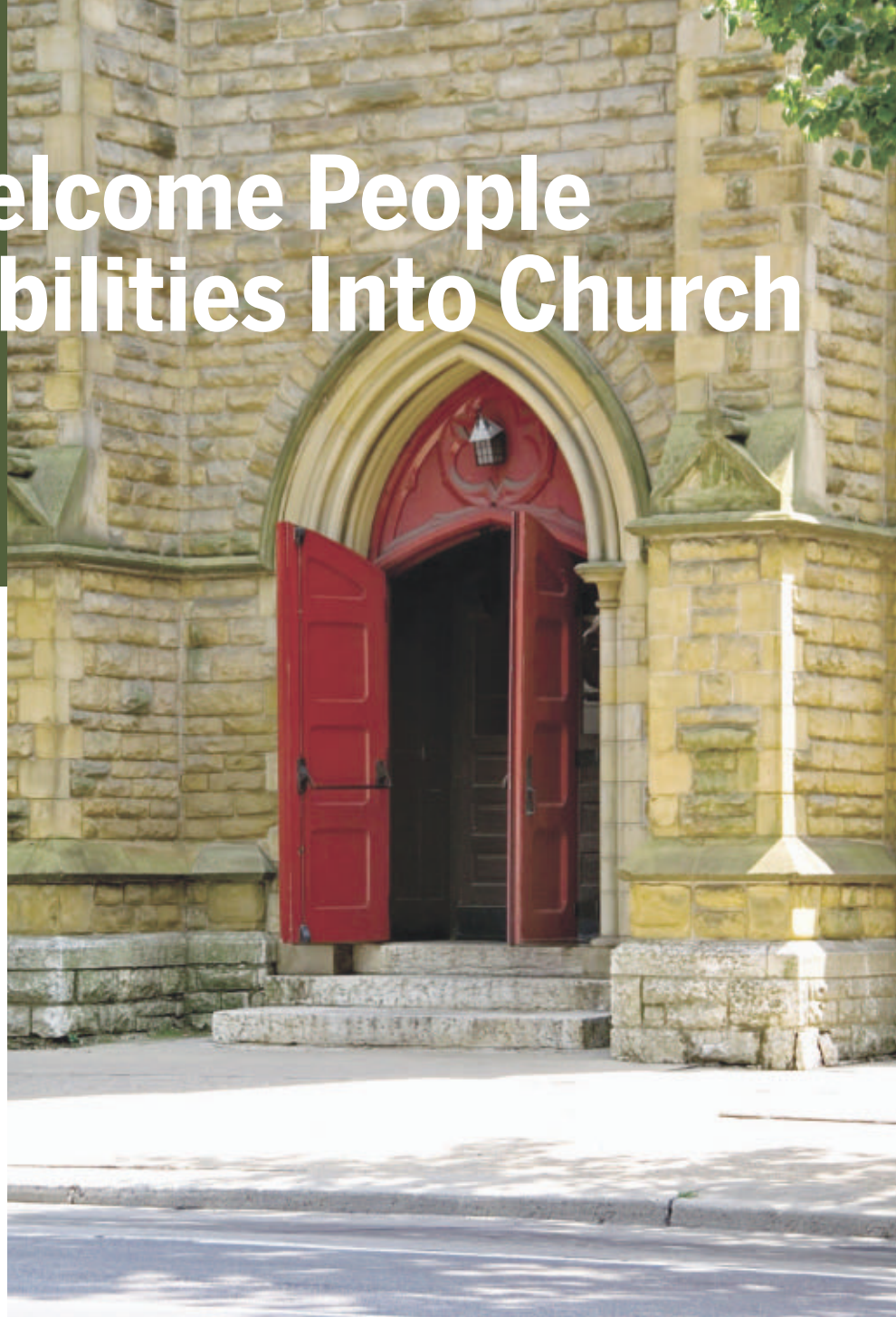


PHOTO: WWW.GLOWIMAGES.COM

they are not inclusive yet, but we want to be part of the solution.”

It’s not just about assigning tasks to people with disabilities, of course. And there are some levels of disabilities that mean a person will never be able to hand out bulletins or participate in a game night. But it is about recognizing that people with disabilities or developmental delays are full members of Christ’s church, able to give and receive.

According to CH, fostering communities of belonging and inclusion for people with disabilities is not that different from how we welcome anyone into our midst.

It takes some courage, authenticity and a genuine desire for a community where everyone has a place to serve and belong.

“We will discover,” says Snider, “that we have a lot more in common with people who are different from us than we expected.”

Here’s how churches can get started.

Think beyond the Sunday service.

There is a difference between attending church and belonging to a church, says Snider. Belonging tends to happen through activities before and after the Sunday morning service.

“Make that distinction between at-

tending and belonging. Belonging happens when you're not there and you are missed," says Snider. "That's when you know you belong. People who just float in and attend aren't really part of the Body. A lot of this applies to anybody. It's not really about ability and disability."

Ask people to serve if they are able. "The whole scripture around 'the body has many parts,' we tend to think that there are those who sing, teach, who preach, those are the valued parts and everything else is not as important. That excludes a lot of people," says Snider.

He tells the story of a person with disability who had a knack for assembling things. The church offered a service of assembly. "If you buy something and you need it assembled, drop it off there," says Snider. "I think of all the things I've bought at IKEA. It might mean we have to be out

of the box in our thinking. If churches can get that creative and say, 'Who is this person and what do they like to do?' To move people to a deeper involvement in the church life regardless of ability or disability creates healthy community. Let people serve in the area they are best at."

People with disabilities often experience barriers that go unnoticed to most people.

son and find the things they enjoy. Then you can say, 'I think we have a need for that,' rather than, 'We have a gap, and we need someone to pour coffee – can you pour coffee without spilling it?'"

The approach of filling a need rather than finding a gift limits the number of serving opportunities for anyone, but perhaps especially for church members with disabilities. It also might mean meeting with a personal care worker assigned to

Explore gifts

vs. filling gaps. Begin by saying, "So tell me about yourself. What do you like to do?" says Snider. "First get to know the per-

your new church member.

"The dialogue might be between the three of you. The staff can bring out some of those points in the life of the person, or a family member or a friend [could]. And it's fine to say, 'Would you like to do this?' and the person can say no. It may not be a fit for them."

Remove barriers to full participation.

People with disabilities often experience barriers that go unnoticed to most people, says Snider. People with disabilities can provide valuable insights into barriers that may be preventing others from returning to your church. Ask for their feedback and respond.

The physical barriers are the obvious ones, says Snider. "The more subtle barriers worth exploring are communication barriers. If you don't have an email account, or can't read, you feel very excluded. Even just having things in the bulletin assumes everyone reads."

Written announcements can be announced verbally as well, suggests Snider. Consider a large print version of the bul-

EXPERIENCE THE POWER OF COMMUNION



OUR LADY OF THE CAPE SHRINE

Trois-Rivières, Québec, Canada



QUEBECSHRINES.COM

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

québecoriginal
Quebec

Canada



letin, and have a website where users can choose the size of the font.

Transportation issues can be another barrier to full participation. "People don't like to ask, nobody likes to be a burden," says Snider. "At our church we had a drummer who participated in the worship team. He was blind and needed a ride to get to practice. He got tired of asking every time for a ride, so he just quit."

Maybe, says Snider, there is somebody else in the church who has a car and wants to serve. "It's that creative matching of people's resources and skills."

An honest conversation, asking people what barriers they are facing, can shed light. "They may say something we have not thought of."

Christian Horizons offers a free e-learning course on accessibility at www.christian-horizons.org/services/accessibility.

If missed, follow up. The true test of belonging is that if you're not present, people not only miss you, but they reach out to ensure you are okay. We all long to belong to communities that care enough to check on us. It is no different for people with disabilities. A friendly phone call, a home visit or just letting the person know they were missed when they do not attend, all contribute to community life.

Be friendly. Decide to engage with a person of disability, even if you are intimidated or perhaps don't quite know how best to interact.

"A friendly smile and handshake and introduction can go a long way," says Snider. "It can be true that the typical conversational stuff may create roadblocks. Asking, 'How are you?' and the person doesn't [answer] might be awkward. But saying, 'It's nice to see you today,' doesn't require a response."

Speak directly to the person, though, not their support worker. "Talk to them. It doesn't have to be a long thing, but make eye contact. That one person who seeks to engage can make all the difference in making the person feel welcome. Churches want to be known as being welcoming to everyone. That might mean stepping outside your comfort zone. Once you do it once it gets a lot easier," says Snider. "Most people can understand and process information much easier than they can express

In Their Own Words

Faith Today asked three Christians with developmental delays to share their thoughts on life, faith and God.



SUPPLIED PHOTO

What do I enjoy most about life? Most of all I enjoy God's creation. I enjoy going into the garden. I enjoy reading about astronomy and looking at nebulas. I'm even looking at taking an online class on astronomy. I enjoy my pet cats. My cats help me to calm down after I've had a hard day at school. I like to help out. I help out at the Nearly New store. That is where I spend my time if I'm not at school or the library.

My thoughts on God? God is slow to anger and abundant in love. Faith is trusting a friend you trust. It is like climbing a wall. Trust is the biggest thing between a climber and a belayer. Trust and faith are sort of the same thing. Trusting a friend can be very difficult. Sometimes there is damage because of something that happened, like talking behind someone's back. If you did something wrong, it can take time to rebuild those bridges. It is not easy. It can take time just like planting a seed. God just asks you to trust the way you would a friend. Sometimes we lean on our own understanding the way they did at the tower of Babel. In a sense they tried to find a way to God that was man-made. Trust is the issue. We need to trust God the way we trust a friend.

—Alex, 21, Niagara Falls, Ont.

Life is the best! Life is the best because I wake up in the morning and even though I have trouble with stuff, I learn how to deal with them and that's why it's the best. I wake up and I do my stuff. Even though I struggle at some stuff I'm still alive. Some people nowadays struggle and they can't do things for themselves. They're not alive like I am. I enjoy going to church because church is fun. I learn a lot about God. I don't read the Bible and I don't have a Bible, but I go and I listen to the pastor. I also like listening to music, any kind of music. I like talking on the phone. I like doing a lot of things!

God helps us in everything we do, and He helps us through every circumstance or situation we go through. I love that He is always there and supporting us. I like how I can talk to God. I like that He is a good God. I didn't believe in God. I used to live at a place where the other people I lived with went to church, so I started going to church. The people I lived with helped me know everything. The reason I believe in God is because He opened my eyes. He said, "I am here." I still believe in God because I go to church all the time and I go to Friendship Club. Friendship Club is making friends, praying, talking to God and crafts. —Amanda



SUPPLIED PHOTO

I really enjoy spending time with my family and friends. I enjoy camping and basically anything to do with the outdoors. I enjoy going to my church's social group and young adult group. At Young Adults we do a Bible study, activities, we have snack, fellowship and play games.

What do I love about God? I love that He's there when I need Him, He's there when I have questions, He's supportive, He heals people, and He can do miracles. God is a person who heals people and does miracles and guides people when they need guidance.

Faith means reading the Bible more and trying to understand [it]. I have a disability, so it's harder for me to understand the Bible when I read it alone. That's why I go to my young adults group and my church. The people there help me to have a better understanding of the Bible. Faith means that I can hopefully one day grow stronger in my faith. —John, 27, Ottawa

chairtex

THE SANCTUARY SEATING SPECIALISTS™

888.724.2478 www.chairtex.com

Comfort, Durability, and Elegance

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



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



themselves. They will notice and appreciate your effort.”

Snider says sometimes people become paralyzed by the fear of saying something offensive, and so they opt to say nothing at all. “When people ask questions of family members or support staff, opportunities arise to learn from people who know the person with disabilities best.”

Two good questions are: “What can people in the church do to make (name) feel included?” and “What barriers does (name) face at this church that we might address?” It’s amazing to see what insights are available simply by asking ordinary questions.

Support families. Many families of people with disabilities experience isolation, even within their community of faith. By inviting families over for lunch or a movie night, to a baseball game or a night of bowling, you help all family members belong. **FT**

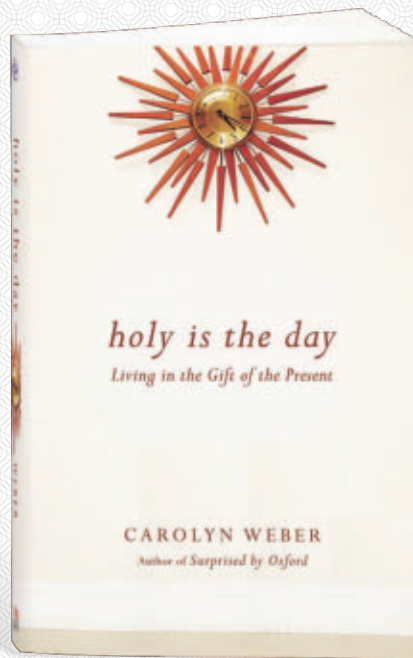
KAREN STILLER of Port Perry, Ont., is a senior editor at *Faith Today*.

RECEIVE THE DAY

“Carolyn Weber lives gracefully and writes elegantly. Her poetic eyes search beneath the surface, unearthing delightful insights missed by those in a hurry. Holy Is the Day is a call to see God and latch onto him, so he takes us through the day as he envisions it. This is a beautiful book that spoke to my heart and changed my day.”

—RANDY ALCORN, author of *If God Is Good and Deception*

Available through fine bookstores or by visiting
YOURCHURCHZONE.COM



Steady Through the Changes

After 44 years with a long-serving pastor, Moncton Wesleyan Church continues to impact their community under new leadership.

Moncton Wesleyan Church is a well-known and respected congregation in its community. Much of that good reputation was earned over many years of consistently positive impact across the city of Moncton. Part of that consistency can be attributed to the previous pastor Dr. L. D. Buckingham, who served the congregation for 44 years, retiring last summer at the age of 73.

"I have a fire within me to see the church move forward," Buckingham told the *Moncton Times & Transcript*. His passion is consistent with the church vision. "We must use every available method, in every available place, at every available time, to reach every person for Christ. Everything we do and everything we are is for that purpose."

With such a vision, perhaps it should not be surprising that the church during Buckingham's years of leadership has still changed dramatically. When he started, the church had less than 200 people, and now attendance is regularly over 1,400. There is a large pastoral staff and a wide variety of programs, from Alpha (a widely used program on the basics of Christianity) to Kids' World to adult social groups. The worship style has changed as well, moving from traditional hymns to a more contemporary style with newer songs.

Buckingham's own retirement was a major change in itself. The church and its leaders have worked hard to make the transition as smooth as possible, allowing some overlap between Buckingham and the new pastor Tim Guptill.

Guptill, age 45, was born just as Buckingham began at Moncton Wesleyan, and so perhaps it's no surprise that despite their age difference their vision for the church is the same. Guptill had previously been part of the pastoral staff as an associate pastor from 2000–2005 and returned as lead pastor in July 2012.

Following a long-serving pastor is not an obstacle for Guptill. "There is a culture of change at Moncton Wesleyan Church. People expect change," he says. This allows the



PHOTO: MONCTON WESLEYAN CHURCH

■ Pastor Tim Guptill baptizes a new member at a large outdoor baptism where over a hundred new members were baptized in one day.

leaders to work towards shared goals in new ways according to the changing culture.

One aspect of ministry Moncton Wesleyan has tried to keep the same is a strong focus on outreach. The congregation has worked hard over a long period of time to show care for the community.

"We don't try to reproduce what other organizations are doing, but instead we come alongside them by supporting financially or sending volunteers," says Guptill. "We have built trust in the church and developed a good name in the community."

Whether it's Teen Challenge or the local homeless shelter, Moncton Wesleyan pours resources into what God is already doing. The goal is not to build up the kingdom of Moncton Wesleyan Church, but the Kingdom of God.

The congregation keeps this goal in sight even in its approach to renting out its 2,000-seat auditorium. The facility is one of the best for major events in the area, and so the church reaches

out by making it available for rent to the community, including secular concerts. Rentals are not aimed primarily to make money, but for ministry purposes.

"Bringing people in from the community for nonchurch events

About Moncton Wesleyan

- **Meets at:** 945 St. George Blvd., Moncton, N.B.
- **Founded:** 1889
- **Denomination:** The Wesleyan Church
- **Weekly attendance:** 1,400
- **Average age:** 45



CAN'T AFFORD YOUR CAR THANKS TO HIGH INSURANCE?

SPECIAL RATES FOR MEMBERS OF AN EVANGELICAL CHURCH

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

PACKAGES
ALSO AVAILABLE
FOR ORDAINED
PASTORS



1-800-240-5283
www.deeksinsurance.ca

Available in Ontario/Alberta/New Brunswick
D.L. Deeks Insurance is a proud supporter of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada

helps to take some of the mystery out of the church," says Guptill. The hope is that people will be more likely to come to a church event because they are already comfortable in the building from that concert or other event.

And it's not just secular concerts that bring people in. Moncton Wesleyan is also known for a variety of its own Christian presentations including seasonal ones.

The Living Christmas Tree presentation helped draw in Cathy Pulsifer. Her husband Byron recounts, "There was a reason Cathy attended this particular event, at this particular time. It was a calling, an invitation that filled her with anticipation, a 'What if this church just may be the one we were searching for?' [It's] a big church, yes, but even bigger on support, learning, helping, prayer and encouragement."

Ruthie Allison, who had drifted away

from church, was also drawn in by attending some of the events at Moncton Wesleyan. "Everyone always seemed to be so upbeat, smiling, friendly and

"There is a culture of change at Moncton Wesleyan Church."

happy, plus the pastor always seemed so down to earth and so welcoming to all," she says. When Allison announced to her husband she was returning to church,

she was specifically looking forward to more of what she had tasted at Moncton Wesleyan.

Clearly God is at work both through traditional come-and-see ministries as well as go-and-help ministries at Moncton Wesleyan. **ET**

STEPHEN BEDARD of Cambridge, Ont., is associate editor at *Faith Today*. Find more of these columns at www.theEFC.ca/aChurchYouShouldKnow. Is your congregation or denomination an EFC affiliate? Join today at www.theEFC.ca/affiliate.

— TYNDALE —
**SPRING &
SUMMER
2014**
— SEMINARY —

CHOOSE FROM
40 COURSES

Courses include:

- Jeremiah
- Sparking Creativity & Change in Ministry
- Evangelism and the Missional Church

REGISTER TODAY AT
WWW.TYNDALE.CA/SUMMER

For more information:
416.218.6757
REGISTRATION@TYNDALE.CA

TYNDALE
SEMINARY

CELEBRATING
120
YEARS

How a Generation Leaving the Church Is Actually Propelling It Forward

By Matt Wilkinson

The Church in Canada today finds itself in very challenging times, desperately seeking to understand and respond to the ever-shifting world around us. That should not surprise us – we are in an age of rapid change, instant gratification and the celebration of veiled narcissism and moral apathy.

There remains a very short window of time during which the Church will have to make the critical shifts to respond effectively to this emerging generation. Yet, in the midst of angst about the future of the Church, I have found – as I engage with frontline youth workers and youth today – there is much hope to be found in this generation. I would even go so far as to say the young people of today are the generation the Church has unknowingly needed. We're just having a hard time seeing it.

Where are these youth the Church so badly needs? A few of these young people are still in our churches and firmly committed to the faith. Others are ones who have left the institution of church, but still desire to walk with Jesus. Still others appear to have no interest in church. But in their rejection they have exposed some very helpful and critical insights. It is when we hear their concerns, take time to listen and take seriously what they are revealing, that the Church will be moved to become what it means to truly be the Bride of Christ in our world.

If the Church is committed to reaching, engaging and empowering this generation to be the Church, then we can no longer simply *say* that. We have to *do* it. Many see reaching this next generation as the sole responsibility of the youth worker. If we hope to engage this next generation, it will come as church leaders, parents, youth workers and the entire congregation work together to disciple, empower and invest in the lives of today's youth (Deuteronomy 6, Psalm 78).

Why and when young adults are leaving, returning or staying in the Church are issues that have recently been highlighted by *Hemorrhaging Faith*, a study commissioned by the EFC National Youth and Young Adult Ministry Roundtable. It found that one in three who have grown up in the Church are no longer attending church, and one in two who have left the Church no longer consider themselves Christians.

How can we believe this generation is propelling the Church forward when the research looks so bleak? Where is the hope?

It is true the hope is not found in this generation leaving the Church. However, it is in their leaving that the Church has realized it can no longer continue with the status quo. What is more important than the statistics presented in *Hemorrhaging Faith* are the voices behind those percentages. The voices of a generation calling the Church back to being authentic followers of Jesus Christ.

These young people are game changers who are looking at their world, families, faith journey and means of influence in a different way. It is largely because of this there is great hope. If we are willing to listen and respond to this research, I believe the Church in Canada will become a healthier and more committed gathering of people who reflect the message of Jesus to a world desperately needing a loving Saviour and Lord.

When youth see their world differently, they seek to live differently than the previous generation. This is their worldview in terms of faith:

- They value *diversity* instead of segregation. They are focused on what can bring people together, rather than what divides them.
- They are not interested in preserving an institution. They want to embrace *spirituality*.
- They seek to be people who respond to issues of *justice* and the preservation of *God's creation*.
- They more often lead with *grace and love* than judgement and rejection.
- They embrace elements that bring *unity* rather than division.
- They are unafraid to *question the status quo* in search of something deeper.
- They desire a faith that is *transformational*, not merely behaviour modifying.
- They want to *experience God*, not just know more about Him.

Are we willing to be the church that will engage, embrace and adapt in dynamic and biblical ways to see this



generation empowered to become fully committed followers of Christ?

If we are, how do we use the knowledge gained from *Hemorrhaging Faith* in our churches?

In my book *Youth Ministry: Now & Not Yet* (Youth Matter, 2012), I explore some very practical ways to guide church leaders, youth workers and parents to be a church that engages this next generation in a transformational faith journey. Some of what I found in the research done for the book was that the Church in Canada needs to re-d the foundation upon which we are ministering to young people. In the midst of busy schedules and demands, a weekly youth program or Bible study, though beneficial, is not what is grounding youth in their faith.

We are seeing that the godly influence of parents and intergenerational gatherings are a critical component to healthy spiritual development for young people today, but this generation is crying out for genuinely caring, trusted adults who will walk with them, offering encouragement and be-

ing willing to challenge them in their life journey. This generation has made it clear they are not looking to be told the truth or informed about faith – they want to see it lived out in someone they trust.

In these days of limited funds, the great news is that engaging this generation is more about having adults come alongside youth than it is about planning flashy programs. Youth need adults who stay focused on Jesus, who live out God's mission of seeking justice, who proclaim the hope found in being forgiven, and who lead with a love that comes from having received God's grace in their own lives.


Youth have revealed to the Church the importance of many elements the Church needs if it is really going to be the Body of Christ to a hurting world.

- The value of family and the significance of seeing a vibrant faith in the life of a significant adult, preferably a parent.
- The desire to experience God in a meaningful and genuine way.
- Teaching done in the context of opening the door for further dialogue, discussion,

disagreement and interactive engagement.

- Most importantly, a community that champions the role of mentors in the lives of the next generation where the values of honesty and authenticity are surrounded by encouragement and empowerment.

– (based on the research of *Hemorrhaging Faith* and *Youth Ministry: Now & Not Yet*)

We must choose to intentionally invest in this next generation. They want this world to be different. How we walk with them will determine the role the Church will play. We need this generation, because in their honest response to the state of the Church they have moved it to ask the right questions, wrestle with difficult situations and teachings, embrace a wide diversity and aim to be a people who will come humbly to love and serve all. 

MATT WILKINSON is the director of youth ministries for the Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec and the author of *Youth Ministry: Now & Not Yet* (www.YouthMatter.com).

Tran(t)s-fər- 'mā-shən

Your Goals & Our Strengths= Transformation

PHILIP J.W. SMITH & CO.

Delivering powerful, effective & transformational excellence for candidates & organizations through executive search & recruitment consulting

- ◆ 15+ years as premier provider of executive talent
- ◆ Personal connection every step of the way with passionate devotion to your success
- ◆ Develops meaningful understanding of your challenges & provides you with the support you need to get the results you want
- ◆ Committed to the highest standards of discretion, meticulous methods & integrity
- ◆ Continually identifying the next generation of emerging leaders

"When Phil calls me, it's never a waste of time to listen."
- Director of Philanthropy, Humanitarian sector

Choose Philip J.W. Smith & Co. for all your recruiting needs.

PHIL SMITH Bth, President
psmith@philipjwsmith.com
1.416.312.6632
<http://www.philipjwsmith.com>



10 Reasons

to Subscribe to *Faith Today* Now

- 1 Ongoing promotions offer you the best deal possible for this award-winning magazine. Currently until the end of February, new subscribers will receive a free copy of the new **J.I. Packer** book *Weakness is the Way*
- 2 Never miss another national story that can impact you, your family and your church
- 3 A regular diet of Canada's best Christian writers and thinkers will help inform and inspire
- 4 *Faith Today's* publisher, The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, is formally affiliated with more than 40 denominations, making *Faith Today* the most multi-denominational publication in our country
- 5 The *Faith Today* interview in every issue tackles important issues with the thinkers and leaders you want to hear from
- 6 Connect with other Christians from across the country
- 7 Practical, how-to articles provide solid ideas for your church and organization to impact Canada for the gospel
- 8 Provocative columnists raise important questions for the Church in Canada
- 9 Each issue spills out into social media with an opportunity to interact with other readers on Facebook and Twitter
- 10 Full digital access means you can take *Faith Today* with you anytime, anywhere

Subscribe now at
www.faithtoday.ca/subscriptions or
call **1-866-302-3362**

Raise funds for your ministry –



Your group should be part of a CRA-registered charity. Fill out a simple registration form and we'll give you everything that you need.

it's possible when you partner with *Faith Today*

- Youth group
- Mission trip
- Christian school
- And more

Faith Today will pay your group \$10 for each subscription sold. It's easy – no need to collect money or credit card information.

Sell just 25 subscriptions, earn \$250 for your cause!

- Register the name of your cause
- Tell us where we send the funds
- Provide names and contact information of subscribers
- And we'll take care of the rest!

Annual subscriptions in Canada are \$29.99



Interested?

Contact

Anita Kwan

at

fundraising@faithtoday.ca

Canadian Women Offer Strong Leadership

Campaign Life Coalition: Dedicated to pro-life

Margaret (Margie) Mountain is a long-time volunteer who has watched the pro-life movement in Canada evolve into what it is today.

Mountain and her husband, Frank, were intrigued by speakers at a Festival for Life in Ottawa back in 1977. That event spurred them on to becoming two of the best-known pro-life volunteers in the community. They got involved with local pro-life groups, helping them to get up and running, passing out pro-life literature, coordinating events and fundraising, all the

while raising five children. Being a teacher by profession, Mountain was a natural to be asked to head a pro-life speakers' bureau. This put her in charge of arranging presentations to high school and university students, thereby teaching the truth that life begins at conception.

With abortion laws under scrutiny, she actively supports and encourages pro-life candidates who run for office, and keeps in contact with them once elected.



Margie Mountain

Her concern that pre-born babies were being aborted at local hospitals led her to organize a weekly picket at the Ottawa Civic Hospital, which still continues today. Campaign Life Coalition Ottawa has valued her dedication and considers her a key advisor.

In 1998 Mountain was part of the organizing committee for the Canadian March for Life, and she has remained a major player ever since. She is also actively involved in Life Chain and the 40 Days for Life.

Due to her persistent activism, Moun-



Help us create jobs

for street involved youth

DONATE TODAY

Give, Learn, Act

www.ysm.ca



Trans World Radio

Impacting millions in hundreds of languages.

Responding to a world desperate for hope.

Reaching beyond the barriers of isolation, poverty, politics, repression and disability.

Find out how to speak hope to the world.

www.twrcanada.org
888-672-6510



TWR Canada
PO Box 25324
London ON
N6C 6B1

tain is a well-known personality in the Ottawa pro-life community.

Visit www.ru-4life.ca.

**Christian Horizons:
Creating inclusive
communities**

As chief financial officer at Christian Horizons, Angelica McKay provides strong leadership in the areas of finance, legal



Angelica McKay

affairs, information technology and business development. McKay's passion, dedication and servant leadership play a vital role in the efficient delivery of support and services to over 2,000 Ontarians with developmental disabilities and their families.

McKay joined Christian Horizons as director of finance in 2004. After

working in the business sector as a chartered accountant for several years, she welcomed the opportunity to use her gifts to benefit a faith-based organization that shares her values. In May 2009, McKay embraced a new challenge and took on the role of chief financial officer.

McKay values the contributions of every team member equally because of her belief that we are all children of God. She builds and strengthens her team by setting clear expectations and holding herself and others accountable. As an exceptional leader and a woman of faith, McKay is a blessing to our organization and an inspiration to her staff.

Christian Horizons is a non-profit, faith-based charitable organization that reaches out with support and friendship to persons with developmental disabilities. Christian Horizons works with governments, foundations, donors and business partners to create inclusive communities for people with disabilities

by providing programs, education and resources. To learn more about Christian Horizons, visit www.christian-horizons.org.

**FaithLife Financial:
Flying the flag of faith**

For 23 years, Karen Bjerland, president and CEO of FaithLife Financial, has been driving to FaithLife Financial in Waterloo, Ontario where two flags wave – saluting province and country. But these are not the only flags that fly over FaithLife Financial. If you ask anyone at FaithLife Financial which flag flies highest over their organization, they will say, "The flag of faith."



Karen Bjerland

After Bjerland's early work in sales and member services, she assumed increasingly senior roles, becoming FaithLife Financial's first female president and

Thank you
for supporting
your local YFC/YU
staff worker!

To find a chapter in your area, please visit www.yfccanada.org and click on **Locations in Canada.**

Questions? Call **1.888.649.2011**



we see the hope and potential in every young person

Serving in the Hard Places since 1852
INTERSERVE
canada

*Integrate faith with profession!
Experience life in a radically different culture!
Join the Interserve Canada team in Asia and the Arab World*

info@interservecanada.org
416-499-7511 / 1-888-269-1311

CEO in 2010. Bjerland is known for strong leadership, excellent communication skills and ability to manage change.

"If God has called women to lead, we have no business to simply wonder what to do," she said. "We must impact the future by being rooted in Christian principles that empower us to live abundant and generous lives that will influence others to grow."

Under Bjerland's leadership, FaithLife Financial has refreshed its vision, revitalized its business model, and reinvented administrative systems to reinforce the foundation for future growth. Its goal is to ensure that members are covered for life.

"FaithLife Financial exists for people and not just for profit," Bjerland said. "We cover our members with insurance products that provide money when needed most – and as importantly, with vibrant community support. In 2013, our combined corporate and member contribution to community causes that our members care about exceeded \$3.3 million. Each time a member pays a premium for their FaithLife Financial life insurance plan, a portion is given back to make a difference in the lives of people we may never know, in towns we may never visit – building a better world, one community at a time."

Visit www.faithlifefinancial.ca.

Global Aid:

Pandita Ramabai Mukti Mission

Meet Jyoti. She's 19 and has been married for four years has just given birth to her third daughter. Jyoti's abusive husband ordered her to take her daughters and leave because she had not given him a son. Jyoti is out on the street with her two little girls and a newborn. Nobody will help her because her husband has the right to turn her out if she does not meet his expectations. A woman walking by hears the baby and sees Jyoti and her daughters begging. The woman picks up one of the girls and says, "Follow me, I know who will care for you. They cared for me when I was abandoned as an infant." The woman takes her to Pandita Ramabai Mukti



Pandita Ramabai

er, Pandita Ramabai, was an unusual woman for her day; she was a social reformer, poet, scholar and champion for the rights of women. She opened centres for thousands of widows and orphans to receive vocational training, homes for unwed mothers, a program for famine relief and schools for poor girls. Mukti Mission seeks to provide a Christ-centred home where destitute women and children, irrespective of their background, are accepted, cared for, transformed and empowered to be the salt and light in society. In 2014, Mukti Mission celebrates its 125th anniversary. Help continue the legacy and

Mission. Since 1889, Pandita Ramabai Mukti Mission has been caring for women and children like Jyoti and her daughters. The found-

sponsor a woman or child today. For more information on Pandita Ramabai or Mukti Mission, go to globalaid.net and/or contact sponsorship@globalaid.net for sponsorship opportunities.

Interserve:

From a woman's vision to an international mission

It was 1932 and women were supposed to marry and raise families. Instead, 29-year-old Canadian Ivey Estall followed God's call to become a teacher in rural India. "Her" children, all girls, numbered in the hundreds, ranging in age from 7 to 18.

Estall joined the Zenana Bible and Medical Mission, which started in England in 1852 and had spread to Canada by 1903. The missionary movement was revolutionary – women who were teachers or who were among the first females to be medically trained travelled to India to show compassion to the women and girls

Pandita Ramabai

mukti
MISSION

125th
Anniversary



Redeem. Restore. Reconcile.

Celebrating 125 years of ministry to destitute women and fatherless children. Help continue the legacy and sponsor a woman or child today.

For more info, email sponsorship@globalaid.net.



globalaid.net



Ivey Estall

there, and to bring the Good News about Jesus.

"We know the cultural differences are unknown to the Lord's great overall program, as we are all one in Christ Jesus," Estall once wrote.

The mission later became the Bible and Medical Missionary Fellowship, then, finally, Interserve. Men were first accepted in 1952, a full century after the mission began.

Now Interserve continues in the tradition of the women who started it. The partners, women and men, single or married, travel far from the comforts of home, responding to God's call to use their education, skills and training to help those who need it most.

They work in what Interserve calls "the hard places." The people are poor and know nothing of Jesus, and often the

governments are hostile to Christianity.

Interserve's partners are brave and loving Canadians responding to God's call, following in the footsteps of women like Estall.

Visit www.interservecanada.org.

Redeemer University College: A bold vision

Ministry is often referred to as something individual – the way one responds to God's personal call on his or her life. Elsje Zwart, vice president, advancement, at Redeemer University College, takes a broader view of the concept, one that places her gifts in service to a larger team and mission.

"When I think about serving others," she says, "it is through the exercise of my God-given gifts of leadership. To help Redeemer carry out its mission, my ministry, my role is to keep my teams focused, learning and accomplishing their goals. These are gifts that are best exercised within the context of sup-

porting, encouraging and helping my teammates become better equipped and more confident in their own skills."

For Zwart, this concept of leadership is only part of what makes an organization's ministry effective. "I have a deep respect for the people I work with and I am profoundly aware of my own limitations. That's why we function better together than on our own."

Redeemer University College has a bold vision: to make a difference in the lives of students so they are prepared to become tomorrow's thoughtful Christian leaders. What drives Zwart in her ministry is the desire to use her gifts in His service for the university. "Redeemer's mission and my sense of calling intersect in a place where I can use my gifts to add value to the university. This makes my work both a joy and a challenge."



Elsje Zwart

NATIONAL MARCH FOR LIFE

MAY 7, 8, 9, 2014 - OTTAWA

- Prayer Services
- Candlelight Vigil
- Rally on Parliament Hill
- March through downtown Ottawa
- Silent No More Awareness Campaign testimonies
- Rose Dinner
- Youth Banquet
- Youth Conference

Campaign Life Coalition

RU-4LIFE?

STOP RU-486
FROM ENTERING CANADA

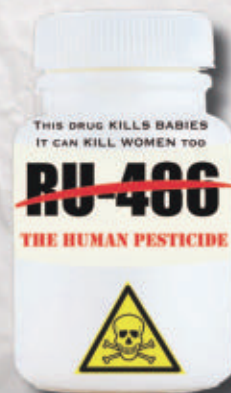
FIND OUT MORE AT



RU-4LIFE.ca



1-800-730-5358



Learn more about Redeemer's mission at www.redeemer.ca.

**Trans World Radio:
Creating a global support network for women**

Project Hannah is the women's ministry of Trans World Radio (TWR). Internationally launched 60 years ago, TWR's global outreach engages millions in more than 160 countries and in 230 languages. Reaching beyond geographic, political or societal barriers, physical disabilities and literacy issues, TWR speaks hope to the world. The life-changing Project Hannah ministry



Colleen Shoemaker

was begun in 1997.

Colleen Shoemaker is the Canadian Project Hannah coordinator. She speaks to women's groups and churches about Project Hannah and ministering to women – the world's largest unreached people group. Millions

of women worldwide suffer through poverty, disease, domestic violence, human trafficking and slavery, rape and sexual abuse, spiritual bondage and they are denied basic human rights.

Project Hannah offers compassion and hope by introducing women to Jesus and sharing His love for them. Women find their dignity and value in God's kingdom and experience peace, security and joy in spite of distressing and discouraging situations.

Women of Hope, Project Hannah's flagship radio program airing in over 60 languages, reaches women with spiritual teaching and practical advice around the world. A network of in-country groups offer friendship, prayer and tangible help.

Project Hannah distributes a monthly prayer calendar in 79 languages in 120 countries. Shoemaker says, "With over 40,000 intercessors praying the same prayer requests every day, this is the most important aspect of the Project Hannah ministry."

To learn more about Project Hannah or to join the prayer team, visit www.twrcanada.org/ph, email Shoemaker at hannah@twrcanada.org, or phone at 888-672-6510.

twrcanada.org/ph, email Shoemaker at hannah@twrcanada.org, or phone at 888-672-6510.

**Yonge Street Mission
Collaborative leadership**

"My passion is what also breaks my heart – the conditions of the poor and vulnerable. It was clear that I had to become an advocate and agent for change," stated Angie Draskovic, president and CEO of The Yonge Street Mission (YSM).

Draskovic was appointed president and CEO in June 2013 and brought with her over 25 years of business, non-profit and social enterprise experience.

She pursued a business education, which led to a successful career in telecommunications. But it was a prayerful process centred on the promise of Ephesians 2:10 that had the greatest influence on her journey.

"My faith shapes my character and greatly contributes to how I lead," she added. "Great leaders are in pursuit of

goals greater than themselves and their passion inspires others to want to accomplish those goals too."

Firmly believing in creativity and collaboration, Draskovic's approach to leadership builds on YSM's strengths while taking very seriously the need to achieve greater outcomes for people living with poverty in Toronto. "Large-scale complex societal issues will involve organizations working together, which requires collaborative leadership and the courage to take a different approach."

To young women who are considering their callings, Draskovic advises, "Have confidence, be authentic and do the work – leadership is work. But above all, stay close to God and devote yourselves to becoming who He made you to be."

For more information on how you can be an agent for change, visit www.ysm.ca.



Angie Draskovic



Christian Horizons is a non-profit, faith-based charitable organization proudly serving Ontario families for almost 50 years. We support people with developmental disabilities through residential and day programs, employment assistance, respite care, and child services. Internationally, CH Global has been working to improve the lives of people living in exceptional circumstances in developing countries since 1990.

Our vision is that people with exceptional needs belong to communities in which their God-given gifts are valued and respected.



visit www.christian-horizons.org to learn more!





We Need More Light

The executive director of the Union of French Baptist Churches in Canada introduces another EFC affiliate family of churches.

The roots of the Union of French Baptist Churches in Canada (Union d'Églises baptistes francophones du Canada) can be traced back to two Swiss missionaries – Henriette Feller and Louis Roussy, who arrived in Quebec in the 1830s.

They settled in Saint-Jean, a rural area, ministering in an environment where hostility toward these new Protestants was extensive and at times, severe. At one point Feller and 50 new converts sought refuge across the border in Champlain, N.Y.

Bringing a Protestant understanding of the gospel into such a setting required strategy. These pioneers began with door-to-door distribution of literature and Bibles, then placed an evangelist where a small nucleus was birthed, and created schools for children. Two of the churches begun by this first generation are still part of the union, and continue to worship and serve Jesus 170 years later!

Today the union is comprised of 34 churches spread from Ottawa throughout the province of Quebec and into New Brunswick.

The need that drew that first generation of pioneers continues today. Many more church planters are needed among the francophone populations in Quebec and New Brunswick.

According to the 2013 *Christian Directory* edited by Christian Direction, there are 1,053 churches in Quebec, half of which are concentrated in the Greater Montreal area. But there's an obvious problem: only 584 are French speaking, to serve the entire francophone population. The rest include 469 English-speaking churches, 200 Haitian churches and 100 Hispanic churches.

The majority of French speakers remains outside the present reach of a church – a serious need indeed.

The task is further complicated by an observable disconnect on two fronts. On one hand, we have a modern society embedded in sheer ignorance or in clichéd perceptions of Christianity (for example, assuming the gospel is

powerless to transform lives and society). On the other hand, the existing church here remains disconnected in many respects from its calling to impact society.

The church among Canada's francophones needs to find, clarify and amplify its voice in today's society. This requires rehearsing and living out the power of the gospel in both content and expression.

It also requires listening to the competing voices which have already gained a wide audience. In doing so, we gain credibility and open doors to opportunities for effective ministry.

There are encouraging signs that we are moving forward in this direction.

A recent initiative, the Réseau des Évangéliques du Québec (Network of Evangelicals in Quebec), has brought denominational leaders together, determined to place

God's Kingdom, relationships, the sharing of expertise, as well as the capacity to speak with one voice above personal interests.

A generation of younger church planters is challenging Quebec's church to launch thousands of new churches in the coming decade (www.transformequébec.com). Their enthusiasm is contagious and their determination refreshing. The

union has committed to planting 20 new churches over the next decade.

Admittedly, ministry in French-speaking Canada often feels much like riding into the wind, generating fatigue and testing the resilience of many. It is evident that new approaches to church planting are necessary. Our connectedness to society needs to be stronger and our compassion genuine.

As I see it the supportive role of English-speaking Canada is still necessary. Its focus, however, should be on providing expertise and resources for church planting efforts and leadership training. Together we hope to create networks of small teams willing to embark together on the adventure of placing hundreds of new cities of light (Matthew 5:14) in the francophone landscape. **FT**

A generation of younger church planters is challenging Quebec's church to launch thousands of new churches in the coming decade.

DAVID ROWLEY is executive director of the Union of French Baptist Churches in Canada, a group of 34 churches which has its headquarters in Montreal. This column series (www.theEFC.ca/godatwork) features affiliates of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. For a complete list of EFC affiliates see www.theEFC.ca/affiliates.



The Little-Known World of Girl Evangelists

Girl evangelists are a surprising part of Canada's Church history.

The 1920s are known as the “Roaring Twenties,” a time of feverish prosperity and even excess as depicted in F. Scott Fitzgerald’s well-known novel *The Great Gatsby*. The grim atmosphere of the First World War was swept away by the lively sounds of jazz and the bold lines of the Art Deco style. Notions of womanhood were redefined by the rise of the “flapper,” a class of fashionable young women with bobbed hair, short skirts and carefree attitudes toward smoking, drinking and sex.

The dominant image of an era, however, rarely captures everything that was going on.

In an interview with *Faith Today*, Tom Robinson, professor of religious studies at the University of Lethbridge, explains that while researching early Pentecostalism in a digital newspaper archive, he stumbled across thousands of references to “girl evangelists” during a short period in the 1920s and ’30s.

One thing led to another, and the result was a book Robinson co-authored with sociologist Lanette Ruff called *Out of the Mouths of Babes: Girl Evangelists in the Flapper Era* (Oxford University Press, 2012).

In their research Robinson and Ruff discovered a forgotten world in which girl evangelists, typically ranging from 9 to 17, travelled across the United States and Canada preaching to packed audiences in theatres, churches and stadiums. Some of the more well known, such as Uldine Utley of California, preached to millions of listeners before ever reaching adulthood. Several had promotional teams and their own magazines, and a few became household names.

Although most of the girls were American, they crossed the border with preaching tours to places like Toronto, Winnipeg and Saskatoon. Adding a further Canadian twist, many of them had been inspired by the Canadian-born celebrity preacher Aimee Semple McPherson.

In a conscious contrast to the rebellious flappers of their era, the girl evangelists preached a gospel message of repentance, salvation and upright living. While the message was a familiar one centring on God’s offer of salvation in Jesus Christ, the messengers were definitely unusual. Where did this phenomenon come from?

On the one hand Robinson says it was “theologically driven” by the idea, especially common in Pentecostalism,

that in the last days God was pouring out His gifts on all people, male and female, young and old (most of the girl evangelists were Pentecostal).

On the other hand, the rise of girl evangelists reflected broader cultural developments. The 1920s was the era of the “child performer,” seen especially in the case of child actors like Shirley Temple, who signed a Hollywood contract when she was only three. Part of the reason girl evangelists were able to get so much media attention was that they fit into this cultural trend.

In this respect the phenomenon of girl evangelists raises familiar questions for Evangelicals, who have always used existing cultural forms as vehicles for the gospel – whether radio broadcasting, celebrity televangelists or the Christian contemporary music industry. When is it appropriate to borrow cultural forms from the surrounding culture and fill them with gospel content?

In his thought-provoking book *Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling* (IVP Books, 2008), Christian author Andy Crouch affirms that copying cultural forms is sometimes an appropriate gesture toward culture, but adds we need to take care that it does not become our unchanging posture. Copying needs to be tempered by careful discernment, since cultural forms are not simply neutral vessels. The cult of celebrity, for example, is not something Christians should blindly imitate.

By the 1930s girl evangelists faced increasing criticism from within the evangelical fold along these lines. Early Canadian Pentecostal leader R.E. McAlister, for instance, joined his voice to a growing concern that the practice of “unduly shoving children to the front” was a wrongheaded attempt to attract crowds by providing an unusual spectacle.

Without necessarily endorsing this conclusion, Robinson and Ruff say famous evangelists like Utley were “trademarked and marketed as merchandise” and “surrounded by a cult of personality.” At the same time they note the lasting positive impact of some of the girls, such as Uldine Utley, who helped inspire the famous Chinese evangelist John Sung.

Whatever our verdict on the phenomenon of girl evangelists, it can serve as a reminder that it is not only our message, but also the means and the medium we use to communicate it, that will become part of our historical legacy.

(Robinson is still collecting information about girl evangelists – if you have any, consider sending him a message through www.girlevangelists.org.) **FT**

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).



Developing My Influence for Christ

Can we be more evangelical in the workplace?

Christians are often more focused on work and hobbies than on building relationships. Often we keep our work relationships separate from our personal activities and our spiritual life. But that separation is nowhere to be found in the Scriptures!

The Bible teaches us to make friends and build relationships, spreading our influence for the Lord. Every one of us has spiritual influence at home and at work. Christians are to share their faith, although obviously not on our employer's time.

Often we struggle to share our faith in an ongoing relationship. We'd prefer to simply invite someone to church or an evangelistic outreach event.

But consider the results. Imagine a successful evangelist who holds a major stadium event every weekend, where each time about 1,000 people come to accept the Lord as their Saviour. Wouldn't we admire how powerfully the Lord was moving? If that continued for 20 years, almost 1 million people would come to Christ!

Now let's remember that Christ has called each of us to "make disciples," not just simply make decisions. And so compare that scenario with this one. Suppose just one group of 25 believers decided to support each other so that each of them could make one disciple a year and teach those disciples to make one disciple a year.

By making a disciple I mean walking a person through the decision for salvation (if they haven't already trusted Christ personally) and coming alongside them for the year, mentoring and teaching them how to walk with the Lord in an intimate relationship.

The multiplication is almost unbelievable: after 20 years these 25 would become more than 26 million!

Even if some would possibly fall away, after only 25 years we would have reached all of North America. Just imagine what could happen if, instead of one group of 25, there were 100 groups with that vision! All it takes is for each of us to heed Christ's command.

So how do we do develop our influence for Christ, preparing to disciple whoever God places before us? First, we must personally trust the Lord and accept the mission He

gave us. "All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:18-19).

If we do, all our life choices will reflect this decision. Anyone joining the military or a sports team is expected to be totally committed to their mission. So should Christians. It's sad to say, but often people in cults are more dedicated to error than Christians are to Christ.

Second, we need to be equipped with the correct message. Christ never told us to convince others of a particular political position or the exclusive rightness of a particular denomination. Instead we must allow the Holy Spirit to

Christ never told us to convince others of a particular political position.

direct our disciples into whatever truth from the Scriptures they are ready to accept. It is the internal draw of the Holy Spirit, not external pressure from us, which changes individuals.

Third, we should walk humbly before God. In our culture we are taught to promote ourselves and climb the ladder to the top. But the servant leadership of Jesus is not about being first, but rather last.

Finally, we should be intentional about disciple making. It's all about relationships, at work and at home. Since, as the saying goes, the road to hell is paved with good intentions, we need something like a weekly accountability group to keep us on track.

At Christian Business Ministries Canada, the ministry I work for, we use tools such as our 10 Most Wanted Card – a card with space to list the names of people we pray for daily to accept Christ.

As a team we initiate events at which we, or a guest, can share our faith. Perhaps it's a breakfast or lunch to hear a special speaker. Or it's a golf outing or fishing trip. The event must always appeal to the ones for whom we're praying.

Once our friend develops an interest, we engage him in a discipleship program called Operation Timothy (www.operationtimothy.com), a systematic spiritual development course.

Because making disciples can be challenging and time consuming, we must stay focused and remain intentional. CBMC would be glad to come alongside anyone serious about becoming the person God designed us to be. We're here to help! **BT**

JOE MACDONALD of Whitby, Ont., is president and CEO of Christian Business Ministries Canada. Find more of these columns at www.theEFC.ca/BusinessMatters.



When Women Start Saying No

What women need to stop doing in the church...and quickly.

I hate it when someone from our church family dies. I'm not talking about hating grief. Grief is a normal part of life. I'm talking about hating guilt.

And when someone I don't know from our church passes away, I invariably receive that guilt-inducing phone call: "Can you make sandwiches for the funeral?"

I must have missed the Sunday School lesson when they taught girls how to make funeral sandwiches, because I don't know where to start. I don't like tuna or salmon sandwiches to begin with. I'm more of a soup-for-lunch kind of gal. And I hate mustard. Sandwiches at funerals always have mustard.

But it's not the fact that my palate doesn't suit the typical church funeral that bothers me. It's that I have no time. I understand that someone has to make the sandwiches, but does it have to be me?

Life is certainly busy, but I think one of the biggest sources of stress isn't the amount of work on our plate – it's that nagging feeling that one more straw is going to cause the whole thing to come crashing down. And for many Christian women, church commitments feel like that final straw.

If I'm superorganized and superenergetic, it is possible to keep my house clean and get all my work done and, hopefully, to head to the grocery store before we discover that all we have in the cupboards are tins of cranberry sauce and cream of mushroom soup. But if an emergency – or a funeral – comes up, I'm in trouble. I have no margins in my life.

I don't think I'm unusual. Most women are pulled in so many different directions that we're seriously in danger of burning out. Women who don't work outside the home are often as busy as anyone else. Their husbands may have shift work, or the kids are in activities, or they're babysitting their grandchildren. When most adults started working outside the home, it affected those inside the home too. There's more work to go around and fewer hands to do it.

Women have become busier, but church life hasn't adapted to this new reality. It's still expected that women will teach Sunday School, run the nursery, cook for the potlucks and supply the funeral sandwiches. That's what

a church community is all about, right?

Now, most churches do have a dedicated army of older women who have given selflessly over the years to create community. They've cooked more casseroles than President's Choice, they've decorated for Christmas and Easter longer than I've been alive, and they've made church homey and inviting. We couldn't function without them.

Unfortunately, there aren't very many of them left, and my generation isn't exactly clamouring to fill their spots. And so these ladies, who have given tirelessly for decades, have even more thrown at them. They "overfunction," as Geri Scazzero, author of *The Emotionally Healthy Woman: Eight Things You Have to Quit to Change Your Life* (Zondervan, 2013) says, filling in the gaps so that other people – including many of the men – can get away with underfunctioning. Churches tend to take advantage of those who consistently say yes, instead of telling them, "You've done enough." And this dysfunctional system can't right itself until the overfunctioning people start saying no.

Looking around, I think we're just about at that point. Women are just too tired, and few men will willingly take on the jobs women have been doing in the background for years. If churches want to support the women in their midst, then they must start adapting to the new reality.

We all still crave a vibrant community life, but let's think outside the box about how to create it. Host community events that don't require work, but just let us put our feet up and relax. Hold more family game nights – after the dinner hour, so we don't have to bring food. Invite women to simple scrapbooking and craft get-togethers where we can relax doing things we long to do – rather than organizing a big women's day that requires a ton of volunteer hours.

Instead of focusing on church programming that adds "extras" to our lives, incorporate things we already do. Host homework clubs on Saturday morning where parents can pool their knowledge, or host once-a-month freezer cooking days where parents can all gather together and cook meals to last a month.

And, please, ask people to throw money into a pot to have the funeral catered, rather than requiring women to make sandwiches. I'd much rather give \$20 than an hour of my time.

In other words, meet us where we're at. And don't expect me to buy any mustard. **BT**

Most women are pulled in so many different directions that we're seriously in danger of burning out.

SHEILA WRAY GREGOIRE is an author and inspirational speaker (www.sheilawraygregoire.com).



Why Men Avoid Doctor Visits

Are colorectal concerns at the bottom of your list? Is men's health not a community issue?

My heart sank as I looked through the envelope that arrived in the letterbox one day. It was from Cancer Care, and not only did it remind me that men in their 50s are at risk for colorectal cancer, it offered a simple solution to the possibility that I might be living with an undetected cancer – a way to find out whether I have a problem or not.

All I had to do was follow some very basic instructions to provide some stool samples and return them in a convenient envelope. But the yuck factor made me pause. I was pretty sure I didn't have cancer. Certainly I had no symptoms. Why bother?

Well ... the letter nagged at me. I know that the earlier a problem is detected, the better the treatment options available. In fact, some cancers can be totally avoided by finding and treating early changes. So I resolved to send in the samples, and then let the letter linger for months on my dresser. Something within me resisted the effort required to proceed with a relatively easy procedure, even though it offered a tremendous health benefit. I was pretty sure I was okay, and that was enough to keep me from taking preventive action.

It's a Man Thing

I'm not alone in my tendency to ignore health warnings. It's a man thing, and it's not just colorectal cancer precautions we're avoiding. North American men often show a callous disregard for their own health, and many habitually resist visiting a doctor. In fact, men make only half as many physician visits for prevention than women.

Let me say that another way. Women are 100 per cent more likely to visit the doctor for annual examinations and preventive services than men.

I had already been thinking about writing a column on men's reluctance to seek medical attention when a woman approached me with a pointed question. "Why is it that men do not go to see a doctor willingly?" She said it was "a mystery" to her, and while it's not particularly clear to me either, I've come up with a few reasons that help explain our habits of avoidance.

Because it's invasive. We tend to approach medical appointments with visions of colonoscopies dancing in

our heads. A doctor's physical examination confronts our notions of privacy and puts data about our personal, intimate functions on the record. We don't like opening ourselves this way. This isn't just embarrassment about flab and other evidence of unhealthy lifestyle choices. It's about being exposed and vulnerable to distasteful proings and potentialities.

We don't like being poked. We don't want to hear that we have some disease. We'd rather not know. Medical gowns make us feel as helpless as infants. We don't like that.

Because it's bad news. Many of us believe doctors and health care centres are for sick people. Therefore, if we're not feeling ill, there's no point being there. Consciously or otherwise, we associate medical care with pain, disease, suffering and loss. Again, these are conditions we don't want to deal with unless or until they become inevitable.

In so doing we miss the point that is well encapsulated in a proverb: "A man too busy to take care of his health is like a mechanic too busy to take care of his tools." Our inaction indicates that the concept of preventative maintenance matters more for machines than it does for people.

Because it undermines our values of strength and independence. From an early age, North American males are typically taught to suck up discomfort without complaining, and to stifle tears when they threaten to arise. Being ill is equated with weakness. We learn to mask and minimize symptoms because we want to appear tough and strong – to be resourceful, pickup-driving men able to travel a tough road and prove ourselves in the process.

This distorted vision of manliness means we lose status if doctors' orders force changes to our lifestyle. We want to blaze our own trail. We don't want to depend on others to care for us. We believe it's our job to look out for others.

Truth be told, it's everyone's job to look out for others. A Christian ethic of care seeks the well-being of everyone in the community. And because illness does have such devastating effects in people's lives, it makes great sense to take reasonable precautions against contracting avoidable diseases. That means, among other things, regular doctor visits and age-appropriate screening for common ailments. It's better to avoid the sickness than to shy from the test.

Recognizing and preventing health problems is not just an individual concern. Men's health impacts women – wives, mothers, daughters, sisters – as well as workplaces, churches and anywhere else a man is active. It isn't about any one man going it alone. Men's health is a community issue. **FT**

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



Clarity on Hinduism

The longings expressed in the Hindu religion can be truly satisfied in Christ.

There's one thing you can say about Bhaktimarg Swami. He likes to walk. He has traversed Canada on foot from coast to coast several times. Why? Well, he loves the scenery and the people he meets. But mainly he wants people to know about the Hare Krishna movement and Hinduism.

I first met Bhaktimarg thirty years ago in my doctoral research. I would meet him at the Krishna temple in Toronto, in the building where Charles Templeton used to preach the gospel. He has come to my classes over the years, and I have taken students to the Krishna temple (though, to be clear, to watch and not worship).

When I met him in the 1980s, Canada had an estimated 70,000 followers of Hinduism. Today, thanks mainly to immigration, there are about 500,000.

Bhaktimarg grew up Catholic in Southern Ontario and was drawn to the images, rituals and teachings of Hinduism. He sees great similarity between Christian faith and Hinduism. Some liberal Christian scholars side with him and propose Christians should join in Hindu worship. Diana Eck, a famous Harvard scholar, has her roots in Methodism but delights in ceremonies at Hindu temples.

In her book *Encountering God* (Beacon, 2003) she critiques Christians who stress the exclusive claims of Jesus and recounts her participation in the worship of Vishnu, one of the Hindu deities, at the Padmanabhaswamy temple in Trivandrum, south India.

Eck describes the huge image of Vishnu in the inner sanctum and the sound of bells as an evening fire ceremony began. The last lamp of fire offered to Vishnu was brought out to bless the people. "Four hundred pairs of hands stretched out to touch the flame and then touch its blessing to the forehead. Mine were among them."

All things being equal, Christians should defend the freedom of Eck or anyone else – Christian, Hindu or otherwise – to worship as they wish. (Defending freedom of religion and speech is not the same as endorsing various views or practices.) Reciprocally, it would be great if conservative Hindus in India would honour the freedom of others to worship, whether it be Muslims, Buddhists or Christians.

Traditionalist Hindus also need to do a lot more to defend freedom of speech and inquiry in general. In February Penguin Books India was forced to destroy all their remaining copies of Wendy Doniger's scholarly 2009 work *The Hindus*:

An Alternative History. Some powerful fundamentalist Hindus claimed the book is inaccurate and abusive to Hindus.

What, then, is a proper Christian estimate of Hinduism? Hindu worship of Brahman as the "one" God must be noted, but the parallel to Christian monotheism is lost in the face of the thousands of gods and goddesses in Hindu scripture and folklore.

More importantly, the historical integrity of Hindu worship is lost in the completely mythological character of the many deities. I once interviewed A. L. Basham, a great scholar on this topic. He loved India, was not a fan of the Christian faith, but told me with great clarity that traditional Hindu views of gods such as Krishna are not backed up by historical evidence.

The same critique is made by Steve Tsoukalas, a Christian specialist on the translation of the Bhagavad Gita, the most-loved Hindu scripture, and an authority on Krishna. He tells me the primary documents about Krishna date hundreds of years from his alleged time in history. In contrast, the first writings in the New Testament date within two or three decades of Jesus.

Christian mission to South Asia's Hindu worlds was fuelled by deep belief in salvation by grace alone. In contrast, Hinduism offers a works-based system, with emphasis on getting rid of one's karma as the way to salvation.

In orthodox Hinduism the karma doctrine was tied in with the caste system, which leads even today to fatalism and inequalities, even in high society India. I clearly remember a conversation with a powerful business leader in New Delhi who told me the downtrodden in society deserved their fate.

In the end, the distinctions between Hinduism and Christianity centre on Jesus Christ, who He is and what He did. Hinduism's search for the image of the divine can find its true, wonderful and only resting place in Christ. As C. S. Lewis reminded us, the longings in various religions and philosophies can find their fulfillment in actual history. Myth did once become fact through the Incarnation.

As well, the death of Jesus shows forgiveness can be known, not through karma but by grace. I still recall staring at a spot at a temple near the Ganges River where animals had just been sacrificed to cover human sin. It brought to mind passages in the book of Hebrews about a final and perfect shedding of blood. Certainly, Christians can pray that Hindu recognition of the reality of sin and need for atonement will lead Hindus to find their true resting place in the walk Jesus made to the Cross. **FT**

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.

Holy Is the Day: Living in the Gift of the Present

Author: Carolyn Weber
InterVarsity Press, 2013.
192 pages. \$15.99
(e-book \$9.99)

This book's first chapter, about the unexpectedly complicated birth of a child, is breath-stopping and reveals Carolyn Weber as a writer of unusual skill. Her abilities with the English language match the intensity of the event she describes. She brings you into the hospital room. You can almost feel the blade moving across your lower abdomen. Reflected on act

quite clear that Weber realizes how blessed she had been. Still, harried and exhausted professionals, perhaps especially women with small children, will identify with Weber's desire to escape and sleep, sleep, sleep.

On my reading desk are photographs placed there to remind me of Guatemalan friends who live in squalour and constant fear. Of course, such a fact doesn't take away from the truth that professional life in well-organized societies has its own difficulties and stresses. "I am hungry," writes Weber. "I am a tired mama, a worn-out teacher, a burnt-out writer, a weary wife." Yes, professional and family-life exhaustion are real, and we seek the Lord's presence in such soul-sapping times, which can go on for years. But there is, perhaps, a potential danger in not maintaining a larger perspective.

Weber, originally from Southwestern Ontario, has also published a memoir about her conversion *Surprised by Oxford* (Nelson, 2011). —Preston Jones

What on Earth Do We Know About Heaven? 20 Questions and Answers About Life After Death

Author: Randal Rauser
Baker Books, 2013.
176 pages. \$13.99
(e-book \$9.86)

The new book on heaven by Edmonton theologian Randal Rauser is a challenging read because it is theologically creative. I have read some of Rauser's other books and been challenged by them in a positive way. He is a provocative and gifted writer, a deep thinker and theologian who

dares to launch into weighty matters of faith and practice.

However, this one is more theory than theology. It's intriguing, entertaining and wildly descriptive, but goes far beyond the Bible's own revelation on the topic of heaven. It doesn't try to meet the usual evangelical/orthodox criteria for good theological discussion or biblical exegesis.

Many people are asking real-life, hard questions about heaven that can be met with soundly biblical answers, but this is not the book for them.

Rauser's main point is to reject popular otherworldly conceptions of heaven in favour of the idea that heaven will be "Earth perfected." (He explains more in a playful interview between "me" and "myself" at www.randalrauser.com, which includes challenging comments from readers.)

His conclusion is that everything that now is, will be in/on this future heavenly Earth. All things including people will be perfected, but there will be some continuity. Deaf people, for example, will have no auditory deficiency in heaven, but may still be connected to the cultural identity and community that exists today around deafness.

He imagines the *Titanic* will sail again. Insects will abound to bite and sting. Tigers and lions may not lie down with the lambs, but rather hunt them instead. He goes on to conjecture about aliens, free will and universal salvation.

If speculation based loosely on biblical principles interests you, you may find this a stimulating read. But others should beware. —R. Wayne Hagerman with Bill Fledderus

Jesus on Justice: Living Lives of Compassion and Conviction

Author: Don Posterski
World Vision Canada,
2013. 208 pages. \$16.99

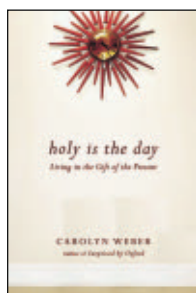
Jesus' teachings as recorded in Scripture present no clear-cut position on many issues. However, this is not to suggest He was unconcerned about social policy. He clearly invited His followers to learn and live by the principles He taught and lived out.

In *Jesus on Justice* Don Posterski profiles Jesus as one who "lived right and righted wrongs," and challenges the Church to emulate him by "living lives of compassion and conviction."

Posterski, a Canadian and former director of faith and development with World Vision International, begins by developing the dimensions of the Trinity (God the Creator, Christ the Redeemer, Holy Spirit the Sustainer) and the major commands of the gospel (great command to love, great commission to make disciples, great requirement to serve). All "overlap at the centre."

The divine/human Jesus advocated "for the poor and socially marginalized." As "a justice advocate," Jesus included the excluded, challenged cultural practices, confronted the powerful and advocated for the oppressed.

Posterski discusses all four emphases by exploring the historical predicament, encountering God in biblical stories, presenting current challenges and offering prayers of response. There are also sections for self-reflection or group discussion,



Love & the Outcome

Artist: Love & the Outcome

Word Records, 2013. \$14

Love & the Outcome are a husband and wife duo from Winnipeg – bass player Chris Rademaker and singer Jodi King. They met while touring with Canadian worship artist Jon Buller. To pursue their “musical vision,” they eventually sold their condo in Winnipeg and travelled across the continent performing. (They’ve also gone to the Philippines, Liberia and China.)

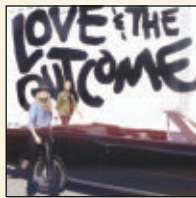
On their website King notes, “When we hit the road, we just responded to what God challenged us to be. We kept travelling and sharing our songs with anyone who’d listen. That’s what makes this record so special and so different. We were living on the edge.

There is a hunger, a letting go and a grabbing-hold-of at the same time. We lived in the middle of so much tension in those two years – coming to know who God was – but also coming to trust the journey.”

It’s an inspiring backstory, but the music on the album is not extraordinary. The lyrics of the 11 songs are well written, and each one succinctly, straightforwardly makes its point about some aspect of living the Christian life in a world like ours – and God’s faithfulness through it all.

The music though has a sameness that for some listeners will border on monotony. There is little variation in beat or rhythms, in instrumentation, in form (short stanzas, each followed by a refrain) or in key (Jodi sings all the songs, which puts them all in the range and key she finds comfortable). Some listeners won’t be distracted from the message because of that. Others, however, will be disappointed that the music isn’t more adventurous in support of the ageless message.

–Marian Van Til



Till the Sunrise

Artist: Matt Brouwer

Black Shoe Records, 2012. \$9.99 at www.mattbrouwer.com

Despite the fact that Matt Brouwer’s fourth album was recorded in Nashville, it sure isn’t country. It’s mostly full of light rock (with the occasional nod to country). Like his previous Juno-winning album *Where’s Our Revolution* (2010), it is produced by Michael Omartian, who has worked with major Christian artists such as Amy Grant and Steve Camp.

The title track “Till the Sunrise” kicks off the album, yet is misleading. It’s a fluffy pop ditty about being in love and staying awake all night, à la Aerosmith’s “I Don’t Want to Miss a Thing.” On his website he explains it was written for his wife – they married in 2010. But it seems out of place as the album’s lead-in, sounding more like a piece of filler. Most of the other tracks are much stronger, both musically and lyrically, and would have worked much better here – even the second song “Tonight” (also the most recent radio single).

The most powerful tracks are “Everlasting,” “Outside, Inside” and the haunting, piano-driven “Ocean.” They deliver an emotional wallop. “Ocean” was named inspirational song of the year at GMA Canada’s 2012 Covenant Awards.

Brouwer, a 30-something from Truro, N.S., lost his dad when he was three, and has a number of songs that express unnamed longings and shadowy memories of someone gone away, including two on this album, “Wish You Were Here” and “Outside, Inside.”

He certainly has taken his time putting out albums, with three to four years between releases since his debut in 2001 (*Imagerical* on Reunion Records). His songs have also been featured on the TV series *Degrassi*.

–Terry Burman



including future dilemmas.

Posterski responds to the social outsider, excluded children and “second-class” citizens, as well as the spiritually arrogant, poor, privileged and oppressed. He also addresses gender inequality, racism, reputation, unjust behaviour and political power.

Twenty-first-century believers, who are committed to following the example of Christ, can do no less than demonstrate our own social activism. Posterski’s book is a clarion call to Christ followers to proactively pursue social justice, for God smiles on those who “strive for a justice vision.”

The introduction and first chapter of this book are available free at www.churches.worldvision.ca/jesus-on-justice.

–Burton K. Janes

The Uncomfortable Church: Can Gays Be Reconciled to the Body of Christ?

Author: Lawrence Brice
Deep River Books, 2013.
168 pages. \$14.99
(e-book \$8.87)

Lawrence Brice, a minister of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, is a man on a mission, which is clearly stated in his book’s subtitle. This hot-button issue is bound to elicit strong emotional response and reaction.

As an Evangelical, he defends “the marriage of one man and one woman as the only venue for sexual activity according to God’s voice in the scriptures.”

Therefore, he “cannot grant moral acceptance or ‘equality’ to sexually active homosexuals... since gay marriage can never be

viewed as true, biblical marriage, nor as a morally defensible lifestyle.” In the same breath he insists the Church is mandated to provide pastoral care to the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community.

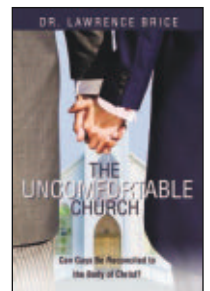
The strength of his book lies in the practical ways the Church can build bridges for reconciliation with LGBT people. He calls for the Body to exhibit civility and decency toward them; grant them legal and social equality; sincerely and warmly welcome them; accept them as created by God and therefore of immense value; create an honest environment for them to “come out”; fashion a caring, supportive, accountable and believing fellowship; and display deep love to those who triumph over their desires.

“Let’s end the battle,” he

pleads, “with these terms of peace.”

Brice leads his readers through scripture, searching for “God’s revealed trajectory for sexual activity.” He is both fair and open minded, interacting with revisionists who reinterpret the traditional interpretation of Scripture on homosexuality. He then presents counterarguments.

In a recent interview Brice said, “Evangelicals must never put in jeopardy the free gifts of the gospel to people struggling with same-gender sexuality.” By providing what he calls “a new horizon” he hopes to recover the Church’s “prophetic voice.”



Does AIDS Still Matter?

In the last few years the world has been struck by so much conflict, natural disasters and tragedy – tyranny in Syria, revolutions in Egypt, hurricanes, earthquakes and tsunamis in Asia, and here at home tragic fires. We are becoming tired of bad and sad news, and it's easy to shut our ears and hearts to a seemingly relentless litany of hardship.

These urgent needs sometimes have a further effect of supplanting ongoing issues – poverty, education, the environment, maternal health and chronic diseases – many of the things that make up the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Although these goals were to be met by 2015, there is still a long way to go.

Like all the MDGs, Goal Six – to combat and bring down the incidence of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other diseases – is an ambitious one. AIDS in particular has had such a profound effect on the world that we can't afford to let the matter slide into oblivion.

First the numbers: Almost 35 million people around the world are HIV positive. That's more than the population of Canada. According to the World Health Organization another 35 million have died in the last three decades. AIDS is growing in Asia and Eastern Europe, but Africa still bears the burden, with 70 per cent – some 25 million – of AIDS cases in sub-Saharan Africa.

But there is some good news. AIDS-related deaths are decreasing – sub-Saharan Africa has reduced AIDS-related deaths in the last 5 years by a third – and UNAIDS (the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS) reports a 50 per cent drop in new infections across 25 countries. In addition, the number of people taking antiretrovirals has increased.

The attitude towards people – both in North America and overseas – living with HIV/AIDS has also changed. In the 1980s perplexed church people struggled to respond appropriately to a disease seen largely as the result of lifestyle choices. I believe we have become more honest – even when it's difficult – since

then. African churches have also become more compassionate and less judgemental than they used to be. The hard reality is that no church, no village, no family, is untouched by the disease. When African pastors began confessing they too were HIV positive, a shift began to take place. Across the spectrum of denominations churches are undertaking educational,

preventative and health care measures.

Response is a tricky balance. While condom use is promoted by foreigners, abstinence often is not. But the countries that have focused on faithfulness and abstinence (Uganda, for example) as the first lines of defence are the ones that have seen the greatest turnaround.

In some places such as the Democratic Re-

public of Congo, where sexual violence is rampant, AIDS is just one tragic outcome of a complex web of armed conflict, political corruption, greed over mineral wealth, poverty and lack of education. So many innocent women and girls have contracted HIV through violence. So many babies have been born HIV positive as a result.

So there's still a long way to go. As long as there are grandmothers looking after their children's children, there's still work to do. As long as there are people who could be taking antiretrovirals and are not, there's still progress to be made. As long as there is sexual violence against women and girls, there's still injustice that needs to be made right.

Does AIDS still matter? Yes it does, and it matters that we don't give up the battle. **FT**

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



Almost 35 million people around the world are HIV positive. That's more than the population of Canada.

Canadian Connections

- Partners International helped start the Victory Plus Children's Home in India, which provides a loving home for children living with HIV/AIDS who would otherwise be neglected, abandoned and shunned. [www.partnersinter-](http://www.partnersinternational.ca/global-projects/uphold/)

national.ca/global-projects/uphold/

- Ugandan churches mobilized by Samaritan's Purse are providing practical help, raising awareness and sharing the gospel so that HIV/AIDS sufferers are gaining newfound health, faith and community. www.SamaritansPurse.ca/HIV-AIDS

For more about how EFC affiliates are addressing HIV/AIDS issues, visit www.theEFC.ca/globalvillage.

CAREERS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Fairhaven Ministries (Canada) is a non-denominational retreat centre located in the Okanagan Valley of British Columbia.

The mission of Fairhaven is to encourage the health and renewal of Christian leaders with a particular emphasis on those in career ministry.

Expressions of interest for the position of Executive Director may be sent to our search committee at: rlbom@telus.net. Visit our website: www.fairhavenministries.org

COMMUNITY RELATIONS MANAGER

Promise Keepers Canada is seeking a full-time Community Relations Manager for Western Canada. He will primarily build relationships

with local churches, lead workshops, and manage volunteer teams.

The ideal candidate will be a strategic leader who has strong relational and communications skills, combined with initiative and the ability to thrive when presented with a challenge. He will live in Western Canada and be able to work from a home office.

Go to promisekeepers.ca for a full version of the posting. To apply, send resumé and a cover letter to pkchr@promisekeepers.ca or fax 905-331-1832.

CANADIAN DIRECTOR OF PRECEPT NETWORK

A full-time position with Precept Ministries in Brantford, Ontario. Complete job description and application package available online at www.preceptministries.ca/careers. Deadline March 31, 2014.

MISCELLANEOUS

BIBLE LAND TOURS

100s of departures to Israel, Jordan, Egypt, Italy, Steps of Paul in Greece & Turkey, Best of Britain, Germany, Switzerland, etc. www.pilgrimtours.com 800-322-0788

CHURCH CUSHIONS

40 years' experience, references, free info! www.pewcushions.com 800-396-7555

CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

Wondering How to Start a Christian School in Ontario or the Maritimes? For a free booklet on the subject contact ACSI Eastern Canada. Email acsiec@symaptico.ca or phone 1-705-728-7344.

VISIT CHRISTIANITY.CA

MinistryDirectory | BUSINESS CARD ADS



MISSION POSSIBLE CANADA

Sponsorship provides Christian education, food and plans for a better future in our Haiti & Dominican Republic schools.

519-285-2644
missionpossible@odyssey.on.ca
www.OurMissionsPossible.org

We are serving 9 Churches & Schools with 3000 students Pre-K to Gr12 Medical help. - Vocational e.g. 3-yr Nursing program LOVE & HOPE

Short-term Mission Teams

Study At Your Own Pace



DEGREES Through Correspondence Associate through Ph.D.
Credit for life experience
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT US AT
lbc.org • lbcands@gmail.com
352-621-4991 or write to us at:
5480 S. Suncoast Blvd.,
Homosassa, FL 34446 U.S.A.

Liberty Bible College & Seminary



InScribe www.inscribe.org
(780) 646-3068
Twitter: @InScribeCWF

"Proclaim the Word!"

2014 InScribe Fall Conference - September 26th and 27th, 2014

- ✓ Four Points Sheraton in Edmonton, Alberta
- ✓ Sign up before June 15th, 2014 and receive 10% discount*
- ✓ inscribe.org/events/fall-conference

Writing is an act of love. Enjoy the journey. Nancy Rae

*Enter discount Code on registration form - 14FT03



Called to Ministry?

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

Contact: Evangelical Christian Church in Canada (Christian Disciples) @ www.ceconline.net
Email: info@eccincanada.org
Toll Free: 1-888-981-8881



NON PROFIT & CHURCH INSURANCE SPECIALISTS

1-800-917-SAVE

Very Broad Coverage
Low Cost
Abuse

JDS JD Smith Insurance.com
INSURANCE SOLUTIONS
SINCE 1979

May/June 2014 issue advertising details:

Deadline for May/June 2014 issue reservations: April 13, 2014
Contact: Brian Shephard
Tel. 905-481-4275 or Email: ads@faithtoday.ca



More of the Same?

Can we truly flourish without innovation?

Let me introduce you to Sharon. She is a change agent, a questioner, a critic. She asks “why” a lot, and suggests alternatives to almost everything we do – even things we have done the same way for years. She’s usually polite, but sometimes she’s uncomfortably direct, even a bit sharp and impatient.

And Sharon is persistent. If she doesn’t get a satisfactory answer, she sometimes drops the matter temporarily, but you can be sure she will ask again the next time the subject comes up. She’s clearly talented and achieves at a high level. But she certainly does disturb the space around her.

We’ve decided, for the good of the group – you know, the sense of unity, co-operation, common vision, camaraderie – Sharon has to go. She will be terminated this Friday with the quickest and quietest exit we can engineer.

Now let me introduce you to Greg. Frankly, Greg is a charming failure. He’s always ready to say hello, eager to engage in small talk and quick with a smile. He works long hours and listens well to everyone. He promises to make amends when mistakes or shortcomings are pointed out to him, and he never directly challenges anyone.

His work, however, is actually pretty bad. He consistently fails to meet targets. He has alienated many of the people who work most closely with him because of his incompetence. The job is clearly too big for him, although he never acknowledges it is, and instead always seems to have an excuse at hand.

We’ve decided, for the good of the group – you know, the sense of unity, co-operation, common vision, camaraderie – we’ll keep putting up with Greg. We’ll work around him, put some of his responsibilities on others, and set lower, more reachable goals for him.

Some organizations prize innovative thinking, “creative disruption,” straight talk and a quest for excellence. Others value mutual reinforcement of the status quo, avoidance of conflict, soothing euphemisms and a quest for “comfortableness.” Why does it seem that the latter culture is far more common among Christian organizations than the former?

We Canadians generally have a culture of pragmatic co-operation going back to the compromises and connections necessary to produce Confederation almost 150 years ago.

There is a lot to be said for not pushing the envelope when resources are hard pressed, the stakes are high and another potentially murderous winter is coming.

So we cut off the tall poppies. We fear novelty, resent ambition and reward conformity. If improvement is absolutely necessary, then it will be carefully modulated so as not to make anyone else feel criticized in the process.

Layer onto this culture of moderation (some would say “mediocrity”) a dose of “Christian speak” as well as a fundamental confusion over metaphors and models – running a Christian mission like a family, for example, or a Christian school like a church – and the likelihood increases drastically that we will ostracize the Sharons and keep validating the Gregs.

To be sure, love requires us to treat everyone with compassion and forbearance, including the Gregs. But neither Jesus nor the apostles sacrificed the good of the mission for the sake of an individual who refused to change, however sweetly, and who stubbornly impeded the common good.

Let’s look at the state of Christian institutions in Canada today, then, shall we? Are they suffering from too much innovation, too much risk taking, too many hard questions rocking our established norms? Have we been encouraging too many searching questions, fostering too many wild ideas, harbouring too many crazy possibilities? Do we need to pull back on the reins and settle things down a bit in this madcap scene of Canadian Christian creativity?

Or are we replete with organizations barely surviving, poorly funded, staffed by those who couldn’t get hired elsewhere, plodding along the same paths, and generally in need of serious reconstruction, if not closed doors? Do we need to loosen the reins a lot more, challenge ourselves and each other to think new thoughts, and experiment with a whole wide range of alternatives to business as usual?

Business as usual isn’t getting the job done very well. And changing our institutions starts right here, at the micro-level – listening to, and empowering, the Sharons in our midst as gifts rather than threats.

And disciplining, or firing, the Gregs. **FT**

Neither Jesus nor
the apostles sacrificed
the good of the mission
for the sake of
an individual who
refused to change.

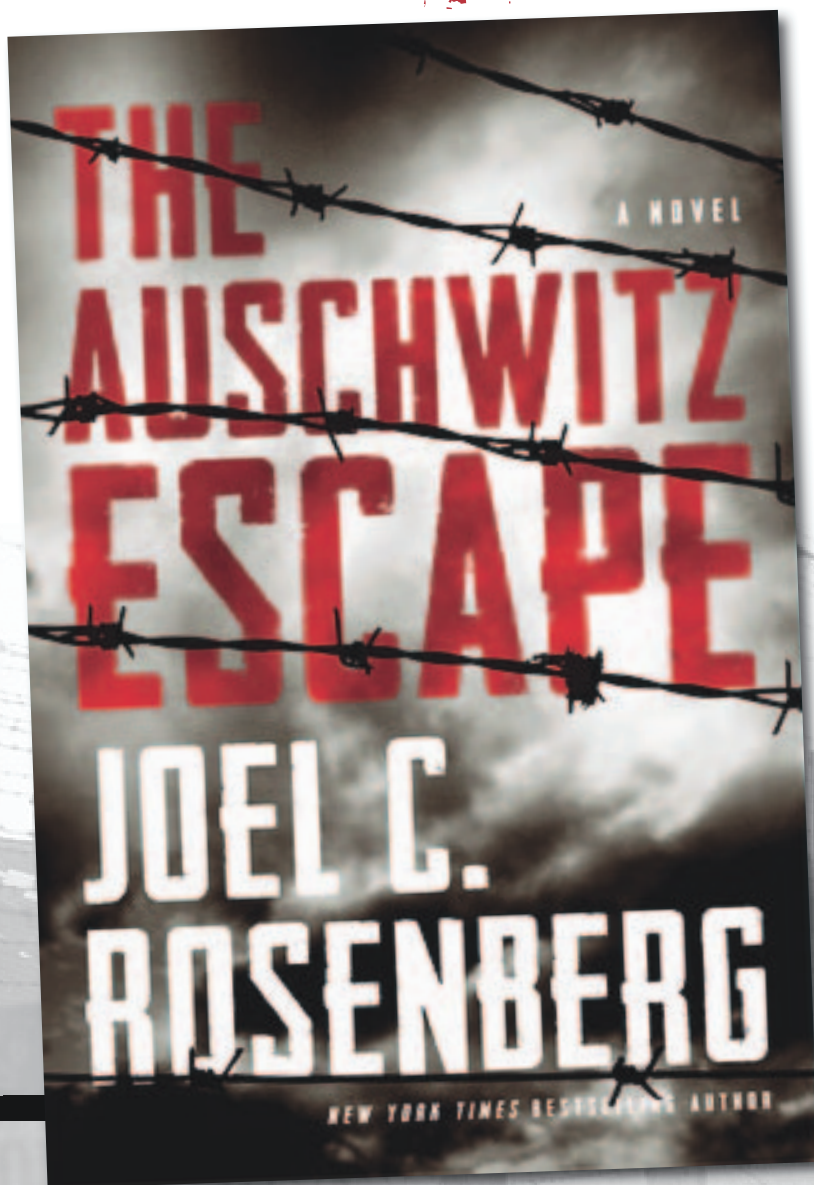
JOHN STACKHOUSE teaches at Regent College, Vancouver. His next book *Need to Know: Vocation as the Heart of Christian Epistemology* will be released in June 2014 by Oxford University Press. Read more of these columns at www.theEFC.ca/ChristAndCulture.

NEW FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES BEST-SELLING AUTHOR JOEL C. ROSENBERG

THE AUSCHWITZ ESCAPE

NEW!

AVAILABLE
MARCH 22, 2014



With unspeakable violence escalating against his fellow Jews, Jacob Weisz joins rebel forces working to undermine the Nazi regime. But after a raid goes horribly wrong, he's shipped to a death camp. With the fate of millions in the balance, can Jacob manage an against-all-odds escape and alert the world to Hitler's actions?



Joel C. Rosenberg is the New York Times bestselling author of seven novels—*The Last Jihad*, *The Last Days*, *The Ezekiel Option*, *The Copper Scroll*, *Dead Heat*, *The Twelfth Imam*, and *The Tehran Initiative*— and five nonfiction books with nearly 3 million copies sold. Joel is the producer of two documentary films based on his nonfiction books—*Epicenter* and *Inside the Revolution*. He is also the founder of The Joshua Fund.

AVAILABLE AT YOUR LOCAL CHRISTIAN BOOKSTORE



The world's leading Bible
experts use Logos 5.
Do you?



Get 15% off a new Logos 5 base package with coupon code **FAITHTODAY14**.

Learn more at Logos.com/FaithToday

Logos is the world's leading Bible software. Its massive networked libraries, fast searches, original-language tools, and helpful Bible-knowledge features connect you to the Word. And with Logos' free mobile apps, you can take your Christian library anywhere.



Get J. I. Packer's *Growing in Christ* for free!

Don't miss out—this offer ends April 20.

Visit Logos.com/FaithToday today to claim your free copy.

SHONLOCK



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

issue

3

MARCH/
APRIL 2014

WWW.LOVEMOVEMENT.ORG

Contents



09



06



04

FEATURES

04 PHOTO CONTEST

Check out the winner for this issue! It could be you.

06 SHONLOCK

COVER

Ben Porter spoke with urban musician and dancer Shonlock about coming to God and his work with other Christian artists.

08 BALANCING FAITH

SPOTLIGHT

In her efforts to understand the human mind, Sarah Bishara has found a valuable balancing agent in her faith.

09 SOCIALLY ACTIVE

See what's being said about the Love Movement on social media and chime in on the conversation.

10 THE KINGS OF SUMMER

RETRO REVIEW

Steve Norton reviews this "little known gem" and explores the danger of running away from our problems.

11 OUR FINAL CREDITS

CHALLENGE

Ever imagine your life as a Hollywood feature? How would you write your final credits?

12 CATCHING A BREATH

SPIRITUAL LIFE

With the increasing pressures and pace of life posing risks to our physical and mental health, does the Church hold the secret to slowing down?

14 FIGHTING THROUGH FAILURE

Tristan Bronca interviews Canadian artist Manafest about his path to international success and the trials that inspired his book, *Fighter*.

words from the editor

Senior Editor
Tristan Bronca



Editor in Chief
Joel Gordon



Editor in Chief
Benjamin Porter



Last year, *The Walrus* published a well-received memoir from a new Canadian mother. In it, she writes about the personal and familial struggles she dealt with after her daughter was born with a very rare and equally ambiguous medical condition called albinism, a genetic anomaly that stops the body from producing pigment, making the skin and hair white. Despite its uncommonness, there's nothing scientifically mysterious about it. At least, not anymore.

Before we could explain albinism in genetic terms, we explained it through fantastic folklore of angels and fairies cavorting with humans. The condition made some the target of crude witchdoctors and beckoned others to a divine calling. Some even say Noah had the same condition.

What makes the article fascinating was the way the author – a professional folklorist, mind you – understood the importance of these stories. “Science can tell you how genetic anomalies and birth defects happen, but not why they happened to you rather than your neighbour,” she writes. It's not just that these stories once explained the condition, it is that they contain – and will forever contain – some answer to the unanswerable; a question that arises out of the struggles which cause us pain, make us beautiful and ultimately define us. Why me? The answer – like the one the author searched for in those stories – can only come through faith. We as Christians hold that faith in God, in our narratives, and in our sacred rituals.

In this issue, we take a look at the struggles that demand that same faith. From high school parties in Chicago to the depths of the adolescent psyche, these exceptional artists, musicians and young people have confronted their conditions and emerged stronger. We see the effects of love, that uplifting force we have committed to spreading. Now, we at *LIA* hope these stories will remind you that amid our struggles, we might find comfort in love.

-Tristan Bronca; senior editor of *LIA*



EDITORIAL

EDITORS IN CHIEF:

Joel Gordon
Benjamin Porter

SENIOR EDITOR:

Tristan Bronca

LAYOUT DESIGN:

Jason Miller

WRITERS:

Mark Fisk
Christina Helvadjan
Steve Norton
Christina Porter

LOVE MOVEMENT/LIA MAGAZINE

FOUNDERS:

Joel Gordon
Benjamin Porter

CONTACT:

info@lovemovement.org

ONLINE DISTRIBUTION COURTESY OF

The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada
www.evangelicalfellowship.ca

READ EVERY ISSUE AT

www.faithtoday.ca/LIA

LOVE MOVEMENT

LOVE IN ACTION PHOTO CONTEST



THIS ISSUE'S WINNER:
LIVING WATER
PHOTO BY: CHARDON MYERS

#LOVEINACTION

NEW DEADLINE
MARCH 11, 2014
UPLOAD PHOTOS TO FB
using #LOVEINACTION
fb.com/joinlovemovement



LOVED AND APPRECIATED
BY JASON MILLER



LIVING WATER
BY CHARDON MYERS



LM BIBLES
BY DAVID TAEJUN KIM



#UNSELFIE 1
BY CHAMNI KIM



WATER THE EARTH WITH LOVE
BY OLIVIA AND ELISE



BATTLE OF THE BANDS
BY GORDON JAMES



#UNSELFIE 2
BY DANIEL LEE



DONATION
BY MATTHEW SNOW



RAYS OF SUN
BY CHRIS NURSE

A SIT DOWN WITH SHONLOCK

written by: **BENJAMIN PORTER**

Shonlock has rubbed shoulders with some of the most renowned Christian artists in North America, but before he made a name for himself, he had personal battles to fight.



Before he was Shonlock, the Atlanta-based Christian urban rock and hip hop artist, he was Deshon Bullock, a high school break dancer with a troubled upbringing. In 2010 he released *Where Never Begins* after signing with Arrow Records/Universal. The single "Something in Your Eyes" from the 2011 album *Never Odd or Even* sat in the top spot on Billboard Radio Charts for seven weeks straight.

I interviewed Shonlock about his upcoming album, his time on tour with tobyMac, and the trials that led up to it all. The interview below has been edited for length and clarity.

Ben Porter (BP): What was the road like to becoming a Christian urban artist?

Shonlock (SL): It was a struggle. My mom was a single parent and had me when she was 17. I dealt with shame from my grandmother who wanted her to abort me. Mom did what she had to do to provide for me but in the process became an alcoholic which affected my life in a strange way. Mom would show up to these high school parties I was at, which was very embarrassing. My friends would think she was cool but no one wants to see their mom when they're out.

She went to rehab and returned home the day after I threw a huge house party. I became angry about my life, and when she came home I started to fall into the same situation she was in. That was a low point but God pulled me out.

BP: How did you come to know Jesus?

SL: It started when I was break dancing in high school. One day I heard about a competition on the radio where the winner would be chosen by R Kelly to dance for Aaliyah. My crew auditioned and won. After that, a friend of mine who was then managing GRITS asked me to come and help out with their dance choreography. That was a real turning point.

GRITS was the first Christian hip hop I ever heard. I liked their music and they didn't have the façade so many artists seem to have. They were humble. One day Verbs, one of the members of the crew Factors of the Seven, called me over to share the Gospel. He asked me what I knew about Jesus and I just said I thought that church was for old people. After that, something changed. I began to pray and give my life over to Christ. I ended up laughing and crying all at once as God moved me. I couldn't deny it.

The guys from GRITS said I should move to Nashville for discipleship and accountability and through them, I got to know tobyMac. One day Toby told me that DC Talk was going on hiatus and that he was going solo. He asked me if I would come on tour with him.

My first rehearsal was crazy. I remember thinking I would just be doing dance choreography but Toby also wanted me to sing. I still don't know how he knew that I could sing but that was my introduction to the mic onstage. After a while I thought I would produce my own music. I sold my CDs after the concerts and thought if I could sell 15 at every show I would break even. By the end



of the summer, I had sold over 15,000 and attracted the attention of a few record labels.

I ended up signing with Warner Brothers but in the middle of the contract things went south. I didn't like the deal and they let me out of it. In my quiet time I realized God wanted me to reach a broader market. He opened the doors to Arrow Records in Atlanta and when my single went number one, I knew that was where I was supposed to be.

BP: What Bible verse do you cling to?

SL: One Corinthians 12:12. "Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ." At my concerts, it's so exciting when I ask those who are part of the Church to raise their hands and in city after city I see how big and unified the body of Christ is. God

is moving all around the world right now through His people. The Church is huge.

Shon's next release entitled *A Night to Remember* comes out this month. One song on the album entitled "Heartbreak" is Shon's modern day nod to the parable of the Prodigal Son, written, he says, from the perspective of someone wrestling and running from the truth. "Heartbreak" speaks to the conflicts that stem from not only making the wrong choices in life but also facing the hurt we have caused loved ones and the Creator. Experiencing this in my walk, I could relate to being tired of running and surrendering it all to my Father. I watched Him take me in like I never left, washing me with His grace."

For more on Shonlock, check out www.shonlock.com

BALANCING FAITH

written by: **CHRISTINA HELVADJIAN**

As any chef knows, the key to a great recipe is balance and sometimes it comes down to a few special ingredients. For Sarah Bishara, those are desire and determination.

Studying psychology and neuroscience at The University of Toronto, Sarah has dedicated her young life to understanding mental health and the people affected by it. After searching through job postings to fulfill her student placement requirement, Sarah ended up on the translational research team – a unit which investigates how to make use of scientific findings in practice – at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH). She has been there for the past eight months.

CAMH is Canada's largest mental health and addiction teaching hospital as well as a world-leading research centre in those fields. According to the website, CAMH "combines clinical care, research, education, policy development and health promotion to transform the lives of those affected by addiction and mental health." Sarah is currently taking part in a study that may lead to a cure for marijuana withdrawal.

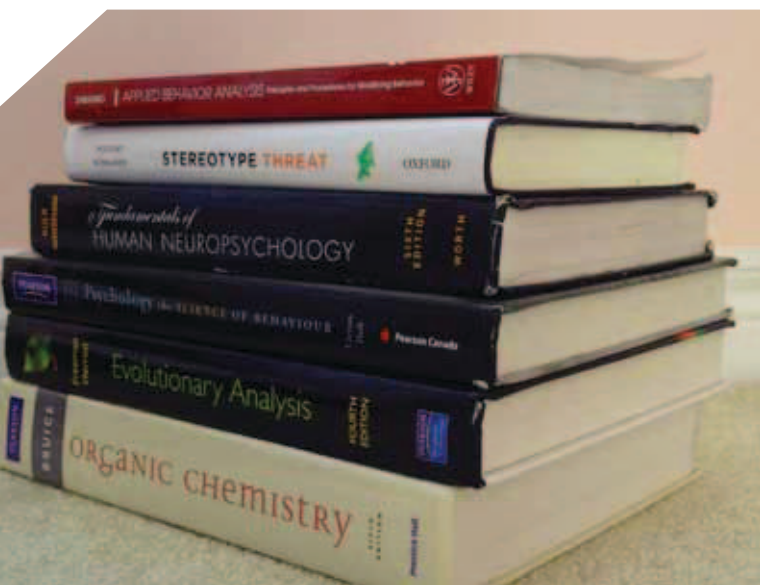
Sarah took interest in mental health at a young age, particularly the fields of schizophrenia and depression. But as she got older, she came to appreciate the important balance that faith offers. She is often placed in high pressure debates about spirituality and its relation to the struggles



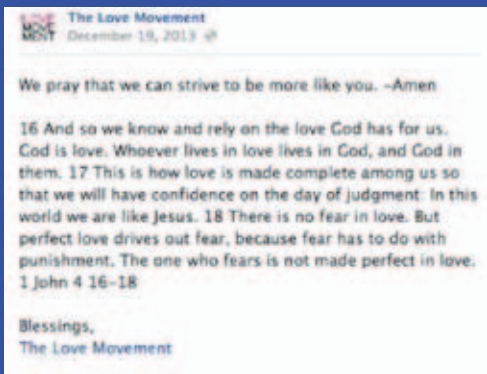
affecting those with mental illness. "It forced me to go and research and look for evidence which helped me grow as a person," she admits. "Essentially, it comes down to communication with God." Spending most of her time at school or in the lab, Sarah says she sees patients and wonders "what the cause of their strife is, biologically and environmentally." With work on her mind, she finds balance by serving in her local youth group, attending liturgy regularly and remaining steadfast in her beliefs – just a few additional ingredients that help her deal with the mystery.

To learn more about CAMH, visit: www.camh.ca

“Essentially, it comes down to **COMMUNICATION** with God.”



SOCIALLY ACTIVE



FIND OUT WHAT THE LOVE MOVEMENT NATION is saying in THIS EDITION of socially active. make sure to FOLLOW US ON TWITTER @ LOVEISMOVING & ON FACEBOOK AT facebook.com/joinlovemovement



The KINGS of Summer



written by: STEVE NORTON

(2013)

Starring Nick Robinson, Gabriel Basso
Directed by Jordan Vogt-Roberts
Rating: 3.5 out of 5

Why live when you can rule?

The tagline for the little known gem, *The Kings of Summer*, reveals the desire of so many youth to control their own destiny. Feeling trapped in the midst of school pressures and family issues, what teen doesn't dream of setting their own rules and living independently? In light of this, however, the film also explores the cost of this freedom.

Still dealing with the death of his mother and frustrated by his father's (Nick Offerman) house rules, Joe (Nick



Robinson) enlists his best friend Patrick (Gabriel Basso) to move out on their own, into the forest. Joined by a young and eccentric Biaggio (Moisés Arias), the trio work together to build a new home and vow to fend for themselves. At first, the experiment seems to be going well as each of the boys begins to move into adulthood. But as ghosts of home and personal struggles begin to resurface in their forest haven, the young men soon discover that life can't always be rebooted without consequence.

Without question, Joe's journey is at the heart of the film. Unable to deal with the struggle of an overbearing father, Joe feels that his only recourse is to start over. As he, Patrick and Biaggio begin to build their new home, the audience senses that this is the home they've been searching for all their lives – a place of limitless hope and freedom from parental rule. While Patrick and Biaggio capably manage their transition into adulthood, Joe remains stunted by anger and family hurt. Unable to recognize the needs of others and his own brokenness, Joe begins to withdraw

emotionally and lashes out at those who care most about him. As a result, his inability to properly deal with his anger eventually begins to destroy that which they had worked so hard to build.

This is not to say that Joe does not experience any personal growth over the course of the film. Instead, the problem is that so much of Joe's growth is stifled by his failure to confront the pain that drives him. In moments of crisis, we are faced with the choice to either run from our hurt or cry out for help. By seeking counsel from God and others who care, we're often able to recognize some sense of hope that we couldn't see before. Too often, however, we choose the same option as Joe and find ourselves fleeing into the woods to escape.

And it's in these moments that we find ourselves in the most danger.

The Kings of Summer is available on DVD, Blu-ray and digital download.





-Our Final Credits-



written by: **CHRISTINA PORTER**

Most of you are probably familiar with the pecking order in Hollywood. The leading man or woman, who by reputation alone can turn a movie into a box office hit, sits front row at the premiere while the average extra sits in his or her hometown cinema, camera in hand, hoping to snap a shot of their name flying across the screen. As the star basks in the fame, fortune and adoration of fans, the extras scurry to update their portfolios before their next audition, praying their rent check doesn't bounce in the meantime. Here, it seems natural that in the final credits the first appear first and the last, last. Wouldn't our own final credits yield a similar order? Wouldn't those we deemed the most influential to our personal success be first to receive our respect and love? Of course they would. It seems natural. But our nature can often be backwards or unfair when it does not need to be. Let's rewrite our final credits. Let's make the last first, as God intended. Here's how:

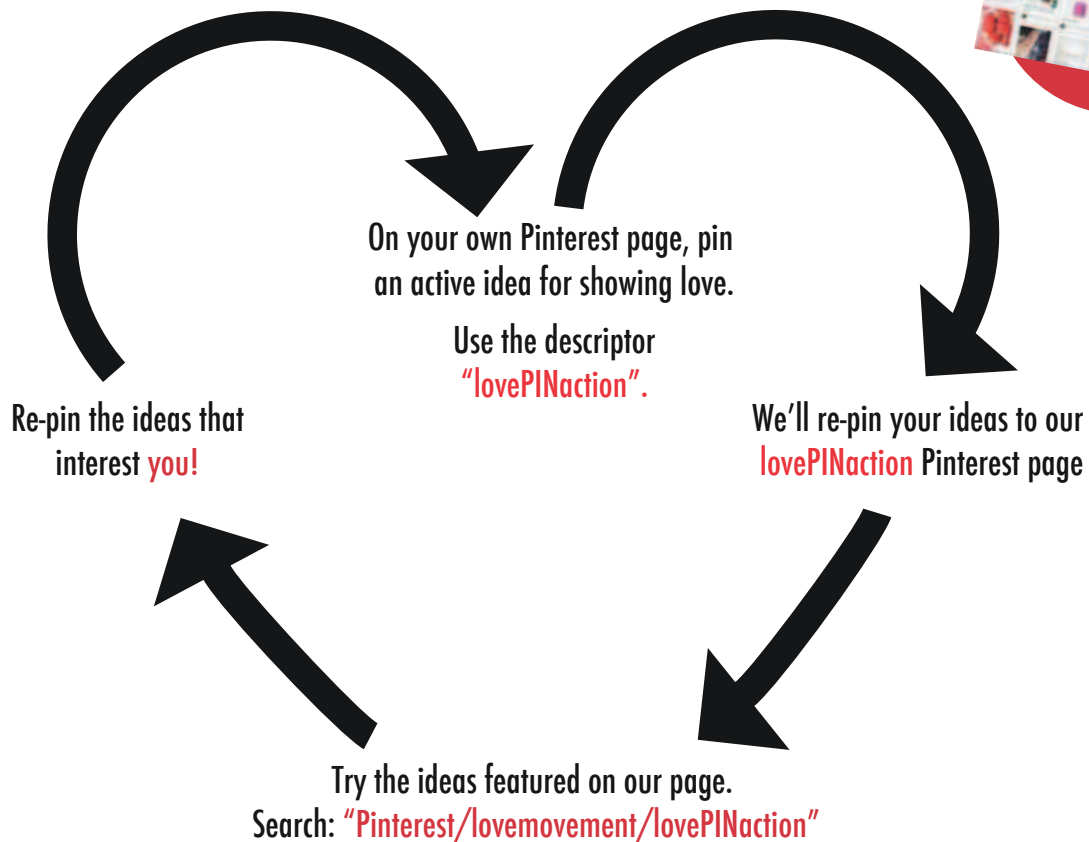
CHALLENGE

Materials needed – two pieces of paper and something to write with.

- Step 1.* Make a list of all those who influence your life. These are your "final credits." It can be as extensive or as simple as you wish. Rank them as you would if your life were a Hollywood feature.
- Step 2.* Circle the bottom name on the list. It could be someone who you only met in passing or someone who has had a relatively small but memorable effect on you.
- Step 3.* Pray for this person, asking God how to show them love and appreciation.
- Step 4.* Write this person a note telling them why they made your list. It could be something they've done or an admirable quality you see in them.
- Step 5.* Present this note to the person. You could leave it attached to a bouquet of flowers, a box of donuts, or on their windshield. If you're comfortable doing so, you could also give them the note in person.
- Step 6.* As you leave, pray for this person again and thank God for their presence in your life.

Searching for more ways to spread the love?

HERE'S HOW WE DO IT AT LIA:



CATCHING

written by: **STEVE NORTON**

Working with youth for almost two decades now, I've seen and heard a lot. Still, there's one phrase that breaks my heart every time I hear it.

"Steve, I just think it would be better if I weren't alive."

Even hearing that sentence once is too many times... and I've heard it much more than once. In fact, I seem to hear it increasingly as each year goes by. As life stressors increase at a dramatic rate, issues such as self-harm and depression have also become more common among younger generations.

Though, to be honest, I'm not surprised that the ever-heightening level of stress has become the new normal in our culture. Amid the pressure, today's youth have lost the ability to stop and catch a breath. Let's look at some facts:

- Thanks to social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter and Vine, younger generations are more connected to each other than any other period in our history. I'm not saying that this redefinition of community is necessarily a bad thing (God created us for community) but it does create a social paradox whereby people are communicating more frequently but not necessarily in a deeper way. By hiding behind an airbrushed, onscreen version of themselves, youth are becoming increasingly disconnected on an honest, personal level. As a result, despite having huge groups of "friends" and "followers," youth begin to experience a more profound loneliness.

- Global awareness through the 24-hour news cycle and internet has created a deeply rooted passion for social justice and advocacy for human rights in today's youth. Though this too is a good development, it also adds pressure to aid people around the world who lack the basic necessities of survival. Awareness of this large scale suffering can quickly lead to feelings of inadequacy and hopelessness in those who wish to help.

- As the employment market becomes more competitive, young people are struggling to find ways to make their dream job a reality. One article from CBC news suggests

that many of the underemployed right now are "young adults who had practical goals of being lawyers, teachers and medical care workers and who went through extensive training and education to do..." These pressures have forced major life decisions earlier than it did in previous generations, creating a sort of personal and professional anxiety.

Am I stressing you out yet?

These issues (and more) have created a sort of black hole of anxiety among young people, all of whom are in danger of being pulled down into the abyss. Increasingly, youth I come into contact with seem to feel like they can't keep up



A BREATH

with all the pressures, responsibilities and commitments that have been thrust upon them as necessary preparation for “the real world.” We must ask what can be done to help our youth navigate these waters of fear and worry.

Enter the Church.

The Church has a responsibility to speak truth into the very noisy and chaotic lives of our youth. Sometimes, however, we miss the importance of quiet reflections in that earnest quest for truth. While young people need to hear the words of Scripture, we must not forget to emphasize powerful biblical realities like Sabbath rest, spiritual mentoring and a living, breathing community, because these realities

help manage the onslaught of a culture consumed with achievement. With these tools, we might understand that true healing extends out of the depths of a relationship with Jesus and provides us with the strength to get through each day. By learning to “be still and know that [He] is God” (Ps. 46:10), today’s youth may also begin to experience the wholeness that God has always intended for His people. This type of spiritual reconnection not only helps our youth to discover distant or obscure spiritual realities, but also reshapes the way we view the world and ourselves.


What’s more, it may help us learn how to breathe again.



FIGHTING THROUGH FAILURE

written by: TRISTAN BRONCA

Being a man of many titles, musician, skateboarder, and now author **Chris Greenwood** (a.k.a. Manafest) also goes by another that is particularly appropriate: **Fighter**. Also the title of his recent book and 2012 album, the Christian rock artist has come a long way from his roots in Pickering, Ontario. In the process, he's overcome both injury and tragedy to reach the success he enjoys today; a success that – despite the slew of awards and sizeable social media following – was uncertain for a long time.



“I knew that I had to do it and that was **bigger** than the **DOUBT**.”

His foray into music began after a broken ankle brought his young skating career to an end. Around the same time, his then-girlfriend left him and his emotional outlook took a turn towards depression. "A lot of my identity was trapped up in skating," he says over the phone. "I felt like that was what God wanted me to do. When that was gone, I just sort of felt like, 'what now?'"

Music was it. It became an outlet for the hurt and confusion that weighed him down. In one of his earlier shows, he performed as the opening act for Fred Hammond, an American gospel singer and guitarist, alongside two other rappers. "Yeah, I'll say it, I was a white rapper," he chuckles.

"These two black guys came up to me afterwards and told me that I really needed to 'work on my stuff,' which basically meant that I sucked," he says. "I probably shouldn't have even been there. None of my friends were there and I just felt really alone." Chris isn't sure why he decided to stay his path in music, speculating that maybe he just "enjoyed the challenge." But, through this period, he never abandoned faith. He remembers sitting in his room listening to a lot of John Hagee, a "fire and brimstone" preacher from San Antonio, Texas. He remembers he kept showing up to church, even if it was just to meet girls. He remembers his mother prayed for him and he remembers he continued making music. "I just surrounded myself with good people," he says. In this company, he eventually found success.

But this is not the first struggle that his faith has helped him overcome. Chris lost his father to suicide when he was only five years old. "He was a workaholic and he wasn't really around all that much, so I didn't really understand what I was missing until I got a little older," he says. In the wake of such a loss came "a man" – a fatherly figure whom Chris references with a strange air of mystery and benevolence – who spent time with him, offering Chris his first exposure to the Bible. These were the uncertain beginnings of his life as a Christian and precursor to the transformative experience that happened in his first year at Cobourg Pentecostal Camp.

"I didn't have a lot of great influences at school," he says. When he got to that camp, he felt immediately drawn in by the speakers, who's every word seemed chosen especially for him. "I was one of those kids that threw it all out and made some really big decisions that week at camp." In a demonstration you might expect to see in a film, Chris got rid of all his profanity-laced tapes, magazines with pictures of half-naked girls, and t-shirts he "probably shouldn't have owned." He returned to the camp for years afterwards, eventually becoming a counsellor.



Over the last few years, Chris has drawn on these struggles and experiences as the source material for his book. Once he settled into life in Orange County, he began to read intensely before something dawned on him. He began to appreciate the power of words even when they stood alone, without music. He began to think he had more to say than he imprinted on his tracks that filled his albums. "I felt like I've been through some things, and learned some stuff. I thought that maybe my story might inspire others." Like most important challenges he's faced, there were times when Chris had doubts about this project. Like the others, these were also surmounted through the force of his determination and the support of his friends.

"I knew that I had to do it and that was bigger than the doubt."

To order Chris' book or for more information, visit:
www.manafest.ca

LOVE MOVEMENT



LOVE MOVEMENT supports your kids, grandkids and our churches with innovative Christian education and media.

Help us reach your kids. Give a gift today.

LOVE MOVEMENT

15 Olive Ave., Willowdale, ON
M2N 4N4

Gifts over \$20 will receive a tax deductible receipt.
Make cheques payable to:
"Willowdale Baptist Church"
with "**LOVE MOVEMENT**" in the memo line.

Love Movement is a ministry of Willowdale Baptist Church, a registered Canadian charity. B.N. : 861655702RR0001

issue

november/
december 2013