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MAY/JUNE 2014



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## Planting Season in Canada

### Digging Deep Into Church Planting in Three Canadian Cities

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## The Challenge of Growth

What do church planting, the TWU law school controversy and *Faith Today's* new digital offerings have in common?

**C**hurch planting these days usually means breaking up some pretty hard Canadian soil. That's why we thought it would be fascinating to assign writers in three cities to go behind the scenes in very different church plants to see what makes them tick – or grow.

If you live in eastern Canada, a part of the country where we had a tough time matching an available writer with an existing plant, please write to us and tell us about your church plant experience. We'd love to hear.

In this issue we also unpack the Trinity Western University (TWU) school of law situation. Bob Kuhn, president of TWU, shares his experience as the public face of this struggle that seems to be pitting religious freedoms against human rights – at least that is how the discussion is often framed.


Sometimes our best articles come out of conversations with thinkers, leaders or writers (often all three in one), where we ask them what's currently on their mind and heart. And that's how we ended up with Carolyn Weber's beautiful essay on coming home reborn to the country she had left. A phone conversation musing with this talented writer about what she might tackle for *Faith Today* led to this thoughtful piece. We hope you enjoy it as much as we did.

We were having another set of conversations about prostitution reform even before the courts ordered Canada to rewrite our laws. The result is a 16-page compilation

of our best articles on prostitution reform. We hope you'll equip yourself by reading and sharing this supplement.

When we plan every issue, we ask ourselves these types of questions: Is it interesting? Will the readers care? Who is the best person to write it? Are we building up or tearing down? Does this topic matter? Are we doing and giving the best? If you want to share your answers to such questions, drop us a line at [editor@faithtoday.ca](mailto:editor@faithtoday.ca).

This month we also strongly encourage you to check out our dramatically reworked digital offerings. We're aiming for May 2014 to launch three major projects – a totally redesigned website at [www.faithtoday.ca](http://www.faithtoday.ca), a brand new *Faith Today* blog featuring fresh content each week from the editors and senior writers, and a brand new mobile app built on the latest generation of technology (existing app users should find their app will upgrade automatically).

All our digital offerings – including the free youth magazine *Love in Action* – are free and designed to help you live out the Good News we just celebrated at Easter – so, again, don't be shy with your feedback. 

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

# Faith Today

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## More Traditional Voices

*Re: Evangelical in Quebec (Mar/Apr 2014)*

I read with interest the article by Jenna Smith. I'm not sure it's fully representative of what it's like to be a Christian in Quebec.

For example, the church Echad that is mentioned is very marginal. Including it may give the impression that most second-generation Protestants challenge the traditional model of church and instead fit this "beer and Bible" type. My experience in Rimouski is that there are also many who adapt very well to the more traditional model (perhaps we should call it the "coffee, tea and Bible" type).

I also disagree with Pastor J.-S. Morin's statement that Quebec is entirely without resources. We have fine Bible colleges, libraries, musical groups, and ministries such as Focus on the Family, the Fellowship of Christian Farmers Canada, the Gideons and many others.

He mentions 46 per cent of



the funds for the Quebec wing of his denomination come from outside Quebec, but I want to challenge whether that is typical. In [over two decades of ministry in] Shawinigan and Rimouski, we have received a loan from our association (repaid) and one or two grants for evangelism projects. But mostly we manage by ourselves, and so far the Lord has been faithful. My experience may not be the norm, but I don't believe either that it's the exception.

Pierre Bergeron has done well to share his optimism, which contrasts with the rath-

er pessimistic tone the others show toward the more traditional model of church.

Frankly, not everything is rosy (the lack of workers in remote areas, for example), but I think we are making progress. Readers would benefit in the future from hearing from a broader sample of what it's like to be evangelical in Quebec. [Editors' Note: This letter is translated from French.]

Félix Bélisle  
Rimouski, Que.

## Roy Is the Man!

*Re: Forgiveness for Murder Saves Dozens (Mar/Apr 2014)*

I just read your article about Roy Comrie, a former missionary colleague of mine. Roy is a treasure trove of stories, and most of them are as compelling as the one about his sister's murderer. He is a legend in Northwestern Zambia among the Kikaonde people and a loved elder statesman among missionaries.

Seriously, if you want more great redemptive stories, Roy is the man! Ask him about being

bitten by the black mamba, a fatally poisonous snake in the Zambian bush. There are only two known survivors of such a bite, and he can tell you the "rest of the story" about meeting the other survivor many years later.

Scott Forbes  
London, Ont.

## True Caring

*Re: How a Generation Leaving the Church Is Actually Propelling it Forward (Mar/Apr 2014)*

The article by Matt Wilkinson hit the nail on the head. Young people today (I'm 30 myself) are searching for something real, something authentic, and they are turned off by superficial, institutional Christianity. Things like going out of your way to be friendly, asking genuinely how they are doing, those things really matter to today's youth.

Too many Christian youth groups are like little cliques or social clubs where you're either in or you're out. We all know that runs contrary to

## Milestones

### APPOINTED

John Fryters of Prince Albert, Sask., as director of **Timothy Program International – Canadian Office Inc.** This new organization oversees Bible schools in Peru, Uganda and Tanzania (with others being developed in Kenya, South Sudan and Ghana). Formerly these schools were overseen by CHAKAM School of the Bible, which also had a campus in Prince Albert. The Canadian campus has now separated from the international ones, changed curriculum and renamed itself the Canadian Revival Training Centre, under the leadership of Kevin and Teresa Tabuchi. Dr. Fryters was also appointed to the international board of Timothy Program in Charlotte, N.C.

### LAUNCHED

**A two-year worship arts program at Prairie Bible Institute**, directed by



SUPPLIED PHOTO

**Brian Doerksen**

worship leader and songwriter Brian Doerksen starting September 2014. Doerksen is known for songs such as "Come, Now Is the Time to Worship," "Faithful One," "Refiner's Fire" and "Hallelujah (Your Love Is Amazing)."

The school, which includes Prairie Bible College, Prairie College of Applied Arts & Technology and Prairie School of Mission Aviation, has 300 students and is based in Three Hills, Alta.

A revised part-time **master of divinity program at Providence Theological Seminary** starting September 2014. The

Association of Theological Schools has endorsed the new four-year program – which offers hands-on ministry placements, online courses, video conferencing, and intensive one- and two-week modules – suited to allow students worldwide to remain in their present church or other occupation while completing their degree. The seminary, based in Otterburne, Man., has about 175 students earning master's and doctoral degrees. About 300 bachelor's students also study at Providence University College.

**Mile Two Discipleship School** on the campus of Providence University



how Jesus would have lived, and it is a turnoff.

At any rate, I appreciated the positive angle on what the idealism of today's youth and young people have to offer. Underneath all the cynicism and social problems we really are searching for people who care, who *really, actually* care, and when we find that, let's just say it's hard to get rid of us, even if you want to!

When a church is being the real deal young people will show up. Just look at Bob Birch's church in the 1970s when all the hippies started coming – all he did was get his congregation to love on them and show them Jesus, and the people came. Today's youth are no different.

*Randall Burke*  
Fort St. John, B.C.

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

College & Theological Seminary in Otterburne, Man., starting September 2014. The new eight-month discipleship school focuses on biblical study, experiential learning and seeking God, and includes a trip to Israel.

The **Saskatchewan Association of Theological Colleges**, an initiative to provide a united voice in promoting the credibility of theological degrees. Partners include Nipawin Bible College in Nipawin, Millar College of the Bible in Pambrun, Horizon College & Seminary in Saskatoon, Briercrest College and Seminary in Caronport and Bethany College in Hepburn.

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# Christian Theatre Troupe Uses Plays to Make the World a Better Place

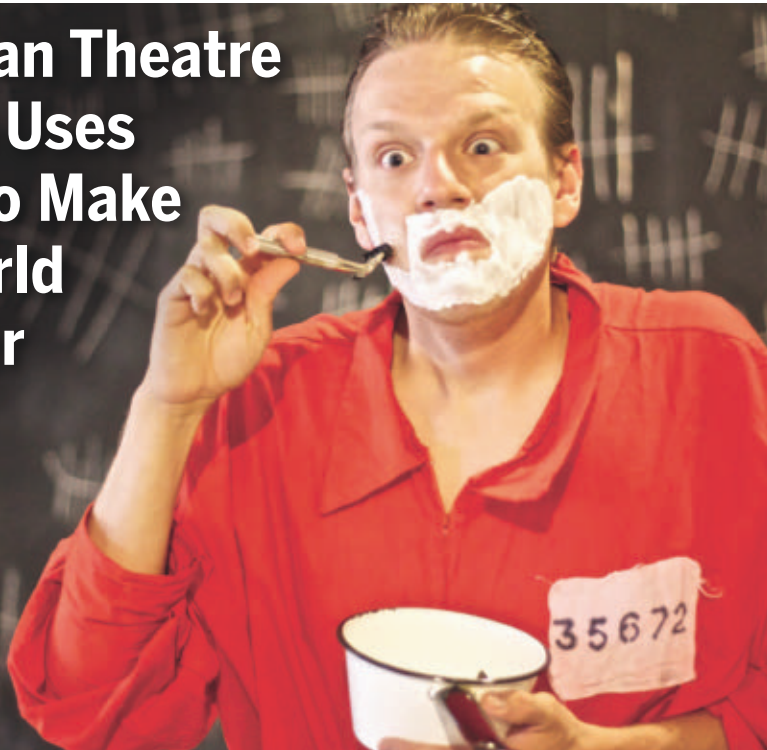


PHOTO: THEATRE OF THE BEAT

**Johnny Wideman as “the Inmate” in *This Prison or: He Came through the Floor*, produced recently at the Bank Theatre in Leamington, Ont.**

Theatre of the Beat founder Johnny Wideman says most people think social justice theatre is like Buckley’s cough medicine – it tastes bad, but it’s good for you.

“What we want to do is entertain as well as educate,” says Wideman about the Stouffville, Ont.-based troupe. “We’re using theatre to hopefully make the world a better place.”

Wideman started Theatre of the Beat ([www.theatreofthebeat.com](http://www.theatreofthebeat.com)) in 2011 after graduating university with a theatre degree specifically geared toward socially conscious theatre and history. He was encour-

aged by a professor who said if he couldn’t find meaningful work that inspired or connected with him, he should create his own.

The troupe of five came together in “a weird way,” says Wideman. He met Rebecca Steiner and Kimberlee Walker on a mission trip to Guatemala, his partner Leah Harder Wideman at a Habitat for Humanity build, and other partner Ben Wert through connections at a Toronto church. The name was inspired by a “lot of different ideas” including the Beatitudes, the idea of beaten-down people who are often forgotten and the Beatniks of the 1960s.

The Beatniks “were a bunch of young

people struggling with where the world was going, the direction it was going, and this feeling of helplessness,” says Wideman.

He also sees theatre as the “beat” in people’s lives where they can take time out to sit, think and engage in conversation about how an issue affects them and how they can respond.

Since being founded the troupe has developed a repertoire of seven plays. Its first, *Gadfly: Sam Steiner Dodges the Draft*, was commissioned by Conrad Grebel University College. It tells the story of the college’s archivist who came to Canada as a Vietnam War draft dodger and explores the issues of peace and peacemaking.

This past January, Theatre of the Beat teamed up with Stouffville’s Community Mennonite Church to produce *Selah’s Song*, the troupe’s

first musical. The story of a young peasant girl whose courage inspired a village, it features music by Bryan Moyer Suderman.

Theatre of the Beat’s newest production, set to premiere at Kitchener, Ont.’s Conrad Centre for the Performing Arts in May, is *A Bicycle Built for Two*.

“We’ll be looking at some of the issues that come up in marriage which people aren’t necessarily talking about,” says Wideman. Commissioned by Shalom Counselling and Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, the play will likely tour through Ontario after the premiere. “We want to get congregations talking about what healthy marriages look like.” **FT**

—Robert White

## Vancouver Refugee Groups Combine Forces to Serve

Hitting the reset button. It’s what we do when things aren’t working, when we need to start over. For over 40 million displaced people around the world, starting over is a matter of basic human survival.

Uprooted by war, famine, natural disaster and/or persecution, more than 23,000 people and their families sought to restart their lives in Canada as refugees in 2012. This resettlement process is tremendously difficult, the welcome often less than embracing.

Three Christian-based refugee assistance organizations are now combining forces in a partnership called Reset to

“creatively collaborate for the effective integration of refugees into the community in Metro Vancouver.”

James Grunau is the executive director of Journey Home, an organization serving refugee claimant families in Burnaby, B.C. The term Reset, he explains, refers to people “having to press the reset button in their lives” and is the first part of the word “resettlement,” which is a large part of what the partner organizations help refugees do.

The Reset partnership includes Journey Home ([www.journeyhomecommunity.ca](http://www.journeyhomecommunity.ca)), New Hope Community Services Society ([www.newhopecs.org](http://www.newhopecs.org)), and Kinbrace Refugee

## Canadian Churches Respond to Syrian Crisis

**C**hurches and faith-based organizations in Canada are stepping up to help people caught in the crossfire of the ongoing crisis in Syria. The conflict has left more than 9 million people displaced over the past three years, with 2.5 million fleeing to neighbouring countries.

With their homes destroyed, family members killed and livelihoods disrupted, Syrians are facing enormous challenges daily just to find food and shelter. The Church in Canada is doing its part to help, according to Jim Cornelius, executive director of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, which has committed nearly \$12 million to provide Syrians with food rations or food vouchers.

"A large part of the donations that Canadians have been making in response to the Syrian crisis has been directed through Canadian churches and church-related agencies," he says. "The Canadian Church has been at the forefront of responding to this crisis." The Foodgrains Bank has received over \$740,000 in donations from individuals, congregations and organizations to provide humanitarian assistance.

St. Paul's Bloor Street in Toronto donated more than \$40,000 to the Foodgrains Bank through its annual Advent Ask last Christmas, well beyond the campaign goal of \$25,000. Barry Parker, rector, explains that the Advent Ask is an annual spiritual discipline the Anglican congregation embraces, but this year people were particularly moved by the Syrian crisis. "Christian communities in Syria have been destroyed. They are powerless and we want to help empower them."

That kind of thinking is also behind Samaritan's Purse Canada's work with a network of pastors and churches inside Syria distributing food, medicine, blankets and clothing to several hundred families. The organization is also providing relief to refugees in Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey.

"We are trying to direct our funds to be most effective for the Church inside Syria for those people who haven't left. The Church will be weakened by the crisis. Hopefully peace will come, and we want to help rebuild the Church," says Bruce Piercey, regional director for Eurasia in Samaritan's Purse Canada's projects department.

Other Christian organizations are helping Syrians and refugees with services that go beyond the essentials.

World Vision provides food, sanitary supplies, household materials and other nonfood necessities to approximately

209,000 people inside and outside Syria.

"As a child-focused charity World Vision has launched child protection initiatives, and in Lebanon and Jordan we have also opened our Child-Friendly Spaces to give children a chance to play and learn in a safe, structured environment," says Bob Neufeld, manager, emergency response and corporate communications (public affairs). In Lebanon and Jordan World Vision is also providing refugees with rental supplements and cash vouchers for food.

Meanwhile, Intercede International based in Fort Erie, Ont., has teamed up with Manara Outreach Ministries in Amman, Jordan, where almost one-sixth of the population is made up of Syrian refugees.

In addition to providing basic necessities, Manara provides counselling services. "Many people are traumatized. Christians can bring them new hope and new perspectives," says James Eagles, president of Intercede International. "We need to help other people when they are in dire straits."

"It is not possible for Christians to hear of this suffering



PHOTO: AMANDA THORSTEINSSON

**Abdo Khalil, who worked as a driver in Syria, now lives with his children and grandchildren inside their two-bedroom apartment in Zahlé, Lebanon, near the Syrian border.**

and do nothing," Cornelius echoes. "Our Scriptures and the commands of Jesus compel us to act, to concretely express love, concern and solidarity for the person who has been displaced and is in need of help." **FT** —Renée Joette Friesen

Housing & Support ([www.kinbrace.ca](http://www.kinbrace.ca)). While the three organizations have always worked together on refugee issues, the enhanced collaboration has two very specific goals.

One is to increase the organizations' ability to fundraise from government, foundations, faith-based groups and others who like to see strategic alignments and partnerships, which Grunau calls "a strength of capacity."

The other goal, says Loren Balisky, director of Kinbrace, is to speak with one voice for people isolated in Canada's refugee system. "To work together to counter the mega negative message that is being propagated across this country" about refugees and replace it "with the biblical narrative of welcoming the stranger."

"Love your neighbour was revolutionary teaching," says Michael Dressler, executive director of New Hope. He hopes the Reset partnership will help get people back to Jesus' commandment to love and away from an "us versus them" mentality.

Dressler says Christian and non-Christian Canadians share common misconceptions about refugee claimants, including "Canada is full," and those seeking a new life are unskilled and a drain on the country's resources. "Our role," he says, "is to get out there and educate people. When you hear some of the stories that refugees have to tell, it's amazing that they have made it this far. It's heartbreaking. We need to do more as faith-based communities." **FT**

—Mary Lou Harrison

## Canadian Ministry Leading 3-D Printing Prosthetic Initiative

**C**BM (Christian Blind Mission) Canada hopes 3-D print technology will provide children in developing countries with prosthetics in less time than it currently takes. The technology allows a solid object to be created from a three-dimensional digital model that is then created in a solid form, layer by layer.

The Stouffville, Ont.-based international development organization has teamed up with the University of Toronto (U of T), software developer Autodesk and CoRSU, a rehabilitation hospital in Uganda for the project.

"We've been talking around 3-D tech for about 18 months," says Mitch Wilkie, CBM Canada's director of international programs. The project focuses on children who need below-the-knee prosthetics. The small size of the sockets means the prosthetic can be printed complete. Adult sockets would need to be printed in two halves and adhered together.

3-D printing will solve two key prob-

**Lead investigator Matt Ratto's leg is scanned with an infrared laser to simulate what would be done in the field to capture a digital image of an amputee's residual limb.**



PHOTO: CBM CANADA

lems – the amount of time it takes for a child to get a prosthetic and the shortage of prosthetic technicians in Uganda. "Traditional methods can take up to five

days for fitting and production," says Wilkie. "It's not just the cost of the prosthetic. Families are away from their livelihood. With 3-D technology we can print out a socket in three to four hours."

Part of the process will be training additional technicians in the 3-D process. Currently only 12 prosthetic technicians serve Uganda's population of more than 250,000. CBM Canada started on the project with U of T last year. Initially digital photography was used to create the images needed for a prosthetic socket.

"We found that didn't work well," says Wilkie. They then looked at the computer gaming world, discovering that what captures 3-D images for games could also create images needed for a prosthetic. Between the infrared laser camera, which captures the image, and software being modified by Autodesk, a 3-D matrix of the socket can be created.

The project is about 18 months away from being implemented, with fundraising and clinical trials needed (which will be subject to a U of T ethical review before being approved), along with final revisions of the software.

"It's a three-year project with 18 months or so to create a useable prosthetic," says Wilkie. "It could be another 18 months after that to refine the technical process and have the business model figured out." **FT**

—Robert White

## Canadian Cowboy Preacher Helps Fill the Gap

**O**f all the icons of North America, the cowboy has to be one of the most evocative and enduring. One of the strongest associations with the cowboy, apart from horses, is that of the lonely trail-wandering cattle driver who spends his days working on the range and his nights making do wherever he can find a place to rest his head.

Things have changed over the decades. But to be a cowboy, riding horses and bulls on the modern rodeo circuit still means an awful lot of time on the road.

For Scott Hilgendorff, a London, Ont., native who went from a career in journalism to a vocation as a cowboy preacher, filling the gap left by the lack of a home church community is one of the most important elements to his ministry with Cowboys of the Cross ([www.cowboysofthecross.com](http://www.cowboysofthecross.com)).

"Most of them are not connected with a church anywhere," he says of the riders, announcers and workers he meets during cowboy church, "so you become their only tie to the Christian faith."

The short, Bible-based service Cowboys of the Cross offers, held before rodeo events, is just the tip of the iceberg, says Hilgendorff.

"That's the more exciting and more visible part of the ministry, but that's what opens the door to the more important part, which is discipleship, where they get to know who you are and they'll come to you. You become their go-to person." Along with fellow cowboy preachers Jesse Horton and Brien Ayers, Hilgendorff travels across the southeast United States, bringing the Word to the ring, so to speak.

The kind of work the Cowboys are doing, which also includes hospital visitation (nobody said being a cowboy had become safe over the years!), is almost unique in the part of North America where Hilgendorff operates, though he says it's definitely more popular and established out West.

"I don't know so much about Canada," he says, "but in the States there tend to be more ministries doing some more things out there the further west you go. There's only a handful of cowboy preachers that I know of that are in the Southeast." **FT**

—Ryan Paulsen

## Note-worthy

### Canada Post Apologizes for Delivering Anti-gay Flyers From Church

Canada Post is apologizing for its delivery of anti-gay flyers from The People's Gospel Hour, based in Halifax. The flyers entitled "Same-Sex Marriages and God's Word" were delivered in late April. Canada Post spokeswoman Anick Losier says the flyers should not have been accepted for mailing.

### Canadians Giving Less to Charities

Fewer Canadians are donating to registered charities, and those who do are giving less, according to a new study by the Fraser Institute. "There's been a downward trend in the proportion of Canadians donating to registered charities and the share of income they donate. This decline in charitable giving limits the ability of Canada's private charities to serve those in need," says Charles Lammam, study co-author and resident scholar in economic policy at the Fraser Institute. The study found that Americans give a substantially higher



percentage (1.33 per cent) of their income to charity than Canadians (0.64 per cent).

### Homeless People Who Attend Church Better Resist Addiction

Homeless people who regularly attend church or other religious ceremonies are less likely to consume alcohol, cocaine and opioids, suggests a new study by the University of British Columbia School of Population and Public Health. "Religion may have a protective effect on substance use behaviours," says the study. "Indeed, several of our participants indicated ... that their faith 'keeps them clean.'"

### Marriage Linked to Income

The Institute of Marriage and Family Canada has released what it calls an analysis of Statistics Canada data examining the link between marriage and income in Canada. "It turns out that there's a huge 'marriage gap' – the wealthy are mostly married/common-law, and the poor are mostly unattached," they report. "The marriage gap between rich



and poor remains very large, worthy of serious consideration by policymakers."



### Countries Search Bible Differently

Bible Gateway has released information on how users from different countries search the Bible differently. Global Bible Searches Missiographic suggests this information helps the Church empathize and connect with people in different countries. The top countries from which visitors came were the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Mexico, Philippines, Colombia, Singapore and South Africa.

### Churches Show Olympic Hockey Game

Churches across Canada showed the Canadian Winter Olympics gold medal game on Sun. Feb. 23. Bedford United Church in Bedford, N.S., posted on Facebook, "The congregation of CTV came to BUC this morning to video our patriotic-sport zeal. Canada WON!!!!!! Praise the Lord!" Nexus Centre in Kitchener, Ont., also broadcast the game to its congregation.

## Ontario Equestrian Fuelled by Faith

For 30-year-old Cannington, Ont., resident Jessica Phoenix ([www.jessicaphoenix.ca](http://www.jessicaphoenix.ca)), the next three years will be full as she competes against the world's best in the equestrian sport of eventing. Phoenix was recently named to the 2014 Canadian National Eventing Team. She will participate in the 2014 World Equestrian Games in Normandy, France,

the 2015 Pan American Games on home turf in Toronto, and the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.


"I'm an extremely competitive person. But every time I compete, especially in those moments that you really need to produce a performance, I feel relaxed and I think it's because God is there reassuring me and supporting me. I don't feel the

pressure when I get in the ring," Phoenix explains.

Phoenix competes against equestrians with deep-pocketed connections, including the Queen of England's granddaughter Zara Phillips. Phoenix is, you could say, an underdog. She finds many of her own horses at the race track, most notably a 2012 Olympic mount Exponential, a thoroughbred who had a reputation for lying down in his stall at race time. Under Phoe-

nix's guidance, Exponential learned to trust his new rider and love his job as an event horse. The scope of his jump is so impressive that he's been referred to in the eventing world as "a freak of nature."

As a little girl Phoenix says she set her sights on the Olympics, and never looked back. She credits her strong faith with allowing her to focus on hard work. After missing the 2008 Beijing Olympics due to an injury, she re-entered the scene in London, riding to a 22nd place finish. She says her unstoppable formula is simple – faith plus a dream = reality.

As an Olympic athlete, Phoenix says there are blissful highs and devastating lows that make up a career, with perseverance being the key to success. "Trusting in God's plan and knowing that He has a plan for each and every one of us gets me through the highs and lows of being an Olympian. In the low times it's incredible to know that you always have God on your side, surrounding you in love. In the high times I always remember to give thanks."  –Julie FitzGerald

Jessica Phoenix will compete against the world's best in the equestrian sport of eventing.



PHOTO: WWW.EVENTINGPHOTO.COM/HANNA BROMS

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



## The Supreme Good

The *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* has made intervening before the courts an important part of promoting biblical principles in Canadian society.

It's never predictable, and always the stakes are high. Appearing before the courts of Canada, and particularly the Supreme Court, is a privilege and quite a responsibility.

The EFC is closing in on 50 court interventions in the EFC's 50 years. All, in fact, in the past 25 years. Why is it so important?

The *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, enacted in 1982, has significantly changed the role that our courts, and particularly the Supreme Court, plays in shaping Canada's laws.

The Charter empowered the Supreme Court to determine not only jurisdictional matters and interpretations of law, but also to assess whether laws passed by Parliament and provincial legislatures are consistent with the rights and freedoms set out in the Charter, such as freedoms of religion, thought, expression, peaceful assembly, political action, relocation, life, liberty, security, equality and language.

Unlike the United States, where courts have the final word over governments, Canada also has the notwithstanding clause, a hard-won provision from the constitutional debates in the early 1980s.

If the courts rule a law unconstitutional because that law violates the Charter, the notwithstanding clause enables governments to override the courts. However, it is rarely used. The one exception is Quebec's language laws privileging French. And when the notwithstanding clause is invoked, it must be re-invoked every five years.

To the extent legislatures remain wary of using it, and they are very wary, is the extent to which the Supreme Court has the final word. The result is that laws passed by Parliament are subject to challenges in the courts, and the courts have become, in effect, the final arbiter.

Canada's laws regulating prostitution are a major current example. Last December in one decision the Supreme Court ruled these hundred-year-old laws to be unconstitutional and struck them down.

They included provisions dealing with soliciting, pimping and brothels, or to use formal language, "communication for the purposes of prostitution," "living off the avails of prostitution" and owning a "common bawdy house."

The Court suspended its decision so that the existing laws remain in effect for one year. If the government does not introduce new laws, or invoke the notwithstanding clause, there will be no laws on prostitution in Canada.

Twenty-five years ago the EFC needed to develop a rationale for why a Christian organization would go to court. Some felt uncomfortable with the EFC taking on this role.

Now, if we are not applying for intervener status on a significant case, we need to explain why not.


Certainly the Charter has made intervening before the courts an important part of promoting a biblical vision of life in law and public policy.

Battles over the meaning of freedom of religion, the meaning and substance of fundamental principles of justice, the meaning of life, liberty and security of the person, the nature of equality, the balancing of rights and freedoms, and what is a reasonable limit on our freedoms in a free and democratic society – all of these are encompassed by the Charter.

The Charter uses these concepts, but offers no definitions. That is up to the courts. And that is why it is so important to be before the courts. Part of the parties' task is to assist the Court in deciding what these terms mean and how they are to be applied.

Critical to interpreting and applying the Charter are the principles, the norms, what the Court calls "Charter values."

On this level Evangelicals have a lot to contribute to the dialogue about the nature of religion and the scope of religious freedom, the sanctity of human life, the dignity of the human person and the care for the vulnerable.

By participating as interveners we offer the wisdom of the principles we find in the Word of God, and seek to show how these principles will contribute to the public good, to justice and to peace. It is an important part of Christian public witness in Canada today. 



**Together for influence, impact and identity**

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

**BRUCE J. CLEMENGER** is president of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. Please pray for our work. You can also support it financially at [www.theEFC.ca/donate](http://www.theEFC.ca/donate) or toll-free at 1-866-302-3362.

## EFC Endorses Palliative Care Motion in Parliament

The EFC endorses and supports a private member's motion in the House of Commons aimed at improving palliative care. M-456, *Establishing a Pan-Canadian Palliative and End-of-Life Care Strategy*, was introduced by NDP MP Charlie Angus and jointly seconded by nine MPs from the NDP, Liberal and Conservative parties. M-456 had its first hour of debate on April 1. Read more at [www.theEFC.ca/M456](http://www.theEFC.ca/M456).

## EFC in Supreme Court on Religious Freedom in Education

The guarantee of freedom of religion in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* can't be easily brushed aside when a province mandates what schools must teach, the EFC argued recently in the Supreme Court of Canada. The *Loyola High School v. Attorney General of Quebec* case concerns the Government of Quebec's refusal to permit a private Catholic school to teach ethics and religion from a Catholic perspective. Read more at [www.theEFC.ca/Loyola](http://www.theEFC.ca/Loyola).

## EFC Writes Law Societies About Trinity Western Law School

The EFC has sent letters in support of Trinity Western University's proposed school of law to four law societies considering whether or not to accept graduates of the recently approved TWU law school. Letters to the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society, Law Society of Upper Canada (Ontario), Law Society of British Columbia and Law Society of New Brunswick challenge each to comply with

human rights legislation in their own provinces as well as earlier decisions of the Supreme Court of Canada. Read more at [www.theEFC.ca/letters](http://www.theEFC.ca/letters).

## Geoff Tunnicliffe to Step Down From WEA

Geoff Tunnicliffe will be stepping down as secretary general of the World Evangelical Alliance at the end of 2014. Dr. Tunnicliffe, a Canadian who also serves with the EFC, has served two five-year terms at the WEA. The EFC is one of 129 national alliances which belong to the WEA. See [www.theEFC.ca/Tunnicliffe](http://www.theEFC.ca/Tunnicliffe).

## Helping Improve Canada's Prostitution Laws

The Government of Canada invited public input into the reform of Canada's prostitution laws. The online consultation ended March 17. The EFC encouraged supporters to participate, and provided the government with a report and recommendations. The EFC participated in a consultation meeting with Minister of Justice Peter MacKay along with other organizations. Visit [www.theEFC.ca/ProstitutionLawReform](http://www.theEFC.ca/ProstitutionLawReform).

## New Canada Watch Online

The latest issue of the EFC's *Canada Watch* newsletter is available free at [www.theEFC.ca/CanadaWatch](http://www.theEFC.ca/CanadaWatch). You can also sign up there to get it by email. 

### Events to Help You Learn and Grow

Visit [www.theEFC.ca/calendar](http://www.theEFC.ca/calendar) to learn about worthwhile events near you, and to post and promote your own major events. The Billy Graham Evangelical Association, several homeschooling associations and other groups have multiple events on the calendar for May and June. New events are added every few days.

## Meet the EFC Board: David Guretzki

As part of the 50th anniversary celebrations at The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, *Faith Today* is introducing members of the board of directors (listed at [www.theEFC.ca/board](http://www.theEFC.ca/board)). We continue with David Guretzki, professor of theology, church and public life at Briercrest College and Seminary.

**FT: What made you want to sit on the EFC board?**

**DG:** I've long been impressed by how the EFC consistently sought to bring biblical perspectives on matters that affect the general Canadian public as a whole, and not simply matters that pertain only to evangelical believers. I liked that the EFC was an organization that was having a presence in places where most of us, on our own, would be unable to go.

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

**DG:** I believe one of the most important functions of the EFC is found in its convening power. As far as I can tell, it is the only evangelical organization in Canada that can effectively gather people together from a wide variety of ministry contexts for strategic conversation and action. Second, I think the EFC is widely understood as having a voice where most churches and organizations could only dream of going themselves.

**FT: What is the biggest challenge facing Canada right now?**

**DG:** As a theologian and educator, I'm concerned that we are seriously underestimating the massive influence our pub-



**David Guretzki**

lic educational system, media, leisure, judicial, and marketplace contexts have in undermining a truly Christ-centred outlook on life. We are daily bombarded with direct and indirect messages that reinforce ideologies inherently contrary to the gospel of Jesus.

So I'm also concerned that the church itself is under-equipped to discern this is happening. I certainly make no claims to knowing the future, but if the historical trajectory holds true, it seems to me Canada is on the road to becoming a place where certain freedoms to preach the gospel and make disciples will eventually be threatened.

**FT: Thank you, David. May God bless you and your work.** 

## Laurie Cook, President and CEO of World Relief Canada

World Relief Canada (WRC) is a relief and development agency working in 12 countries in Africa and Asia.

### What is the mission that drives World Relief?

Our official mission statement says, “World Relief Canada’s mission is to respond to the relief and development needs of the world’s poor in the name of Jesus Christ through our global network of Christian organizations, in partnership with Canadian and overseas churches.”

We’re Christians passionate about ending poverty. Inspired by the example and teaching of Jesus, we recognize people have deeply interconnected material and spiritual needs, and we seek to meet those needs by working through our local Christian networks, primarily through churches and faith-based organizations who are at the heart of their communities. Our cause is to represent our donors and churches as a powerful force for transformation in communities living in every kind of poverty.

### Where does World Relief fit into the fabric of the Canadian evangelical community?

WRC has a special relationship in that we were officially the relief and development arm of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. Although that “official” designation has dissolved, we have official partnerships with a number of evangelical denominations, and beyond that have a significant number of churches across most denominations that support our causes.

### What are the most pressing global issues for the Church to respond to in the next few years?

Inequality and injustice with all the complexities these entail. And if the Church cannot respond, I fear it will become largely irrelevant and merely religious.

### How do you disconnect from your work at the end of the day, or at the end of an overseas trip?

I am an avid cyclist either on the road or in spinning classes. Beyond that I am an information junkie and love politics, business, religion and much more.

### Who are your heroes?

I have an aversion to the breadth assigned to that term, but I have found many incredible people who have influenced my life and my thinking. Most have had some




PHOTO: WORLD RELIEF CANADA

exemplary characteristic or practice – discipline, dedication, freedom of thought, desire and accomplishment. A few examples would be my father for endurance and commitment to family; Augustine; and C. S. Lewis, not for simply his writings and philosophies of life, but for all of that combined with the uniqueness of character and personality, and even his frailties.

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

I have just finished reading *The Future: Six Drivers of Global Change* by Al Gore (Random House, 2013) and would highly recommend it. It really captures today’s challenges with significant research, depth and insight.

### What is your best leadership advice?


When you’ve finished reading all the books and taking all the courses on the subject of leadership, shape it all into relationships. And if that doesn’t work, throw out the parts from the books and courses. Two of the worst leaders I ever encountered were both absolute gurus when it came to the theories of leadership. 



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# Planting Season in Canada

**Faith Today** asked three journalists to visit church plants in **Calgary, Winnipeg and Toronto**. Their reports reveal the diversity and dynamism – mixed with very hard work – of church planting in Canada today.



## Planting in Toronto

By Alex Newman



A Toronto plant does church where church has never been done.

It's a few minutes before 7:00 on a Saturday night and a steady stream of footballers snake through the atrium concourse of the Liberty Market building in downtown Toronto, on their way to the pub. Some glance through the plate glass windows of the Danceology studio where a worship team tunes up. Others stop, wander over and investigate more closely before friends prod them on.

It is the worship service at Liberty Village's first church plant that's aroused their curiosity. It's not obvious "church" is going on, though.

At least that's what Darryl Dash hopes. The 46-year-old didn't anticipate this turn of events in his life. Three years ago he was pastor of a well-established Baptist church in Etobicoke. He had a home, stable family life, two kids doing well in school. Then he received The Call. Not a booming-voice-and-burning-bush kind, but it was persistent – *Go and serve downtown*.

After more than a year of prayer, research and conversations with family and church plant consultants, Dash zeroed in on Liberty Village, a brand new community rising out of the ashes of an industrial wasteland of parking lots and abandoned warehouses. But it had what he was looking for – downtown, growing population and no church.

Condos were going up at the speed of light and he moved into one with his wife Charlene – who works locally – and their two teenaged children. Soon after, 36-year-old part-time associate Nathan Fullerton joined him, moving with his wife Sarah and four children into a condo as well. Together they are forging a new religious path in an urban – and highly secular – landscape. "There's no manual for how to do this," Dash says. "We are feeling our way every day. Church planting, especially in uncharted territory, and especially without raiding other downtown churches, is a notoriously high-risk venture. Most of them fold after a year or two."

That may be starting to change, however. Greg Laing, regional director of the C2C network of church planting, remembers how flat the Vancouver church was in the 1990s. "Nobody was planting, big churches were in transition. Ten years later people starting coming from everywhere, and the church planting movement was on."

What's happening, Laing believes, is a massive landscape shift – 80 per cent of Canadians now live in cities, many in condos, and they're becoming desperate for human connection, a sense of belonging to a community. "Loneliness is the number one malaise in North America," he says. "We believe the antidote isn't just community, but a community of believers."

Churches in downtown Toronto, which emptied in the 1960s when people left the city in search of wide-open space in the burbs, have not repopulated. In fact, many have been retrofitted into lofts.

Unlike the seeker-friendly churches that previously attracted "tons of people, but fell short of the missional life that was

PHOTO: WWW.DESIGNPICS.COM



**Pastor Darryl Dash (inset) serves a new community rising out of an industrial wasteland of parking lots and abandoned warehouses.**

PHOTOS: ORVIN LAO

originally envisioned, church plants call people to intentional lives of faith among believers and nonbelievers. They aim more modestly, organically, purposefully and are reaching out,” Laing says. “The end game isn’t to coalesce people to buy an expensive building.”

Dash is okay with that, because he believes the financial and maintenance headaches of a building can get in the way of what Church is really about – “To show the love of God to people who are hungry for relationships and community.”

Though Toronto is a notoriously hard field to plant, according to colleagues – and church planters here feel like modern-day Jeremiahs – Dash is confident of this calling. “It has the potential to sustain faith better. Living close ... in a condo community lets me have a life with others ... to eat with your fellow believers regularly, have them know my issues regularly. But the choice is a hard one.”

Rather than creating an attractional product to entice people in, Dash goes out to the people. Making connections is easy enough in an environment as lively as Liberty Village. Maintaining those connections is a little tougher.

When he’s out, at a café, at a condo board game night, walking the dog, inevitably the question comes up of what he does. Saying they’re starting a church does prompt conversations, but most don’t go far. “One night I spoke briefly with a young woman,” Dash says. “I figured that was it, but six months later she contacted me on Facebook. Her mom was dying of cancer and she needed someone to talk to that she could trust and who is close to God.”

Dash tries to roll with the situation. He isn’t starry eyed

about outcomes. “No matter what we do, and what we offer, 60 per cent of the people who live here, no make that 70 per cent, will never come to a church. Some weeks we get 30 out [to the service], other weeks it’s 12. But if we’re aiming for numbers, we’ll get very disappointed.”

Church planters aim to meet people where they are, but still set boundaries. One person brings their dog to the service. Dash is fine with that, but not comfortable with the dog eating communion bread. “We don’t want to make a big deal about most things, however communion is a significant event and a means of grace. Taking the time to explain this to the person created an opening for a much bigger conversation about faith.”

Defining success is elusive for Dash. “Intentionally living in a community, building relationships, showing the love of Christ is ideal and I want to be about that. But the reality is I also rely on this to live, and those two things will always be in tension.”

For now, Dash depends on outside support from his denomination, from friends and family, and individual donors. His hope is that church planting can eventually become “more affordable and reproducible. Bivocational ministry may be the way ahead ... we will have to be creative in the future if we are going to get the job done.”

Support isn’t just financial – church plants are nurtured by experienced coaches and seasoned boards until rooted and harvesting fruit. The family has needs too, explains Laing. “We need to take care of their physical health and their emotional health. Darryl and Nathan are resident missionaries in

**Toronto is a notoriously hard field to plant.**

the towers at Liberty Village and we recognize that they have to hold a long-term position there. The work can be frustrating and exhausting, and requires faith in the call. But they also need to be sustained by others.”

This is especially true in areas where people are apathetic to the Word. Most of the people Dash would speak to in any given day have no background or interest in the Church. But he knows that church planting is one of the best evangelism strategies around – and also how the early Church started. “When I was a pastor, a friend started a plant in his living

room. Over a period of ten years, we [the church Dash served at the time] stayed the same, while they surpassed our size and then went on to plant two new churches. They reached way more people and did way more than we did with our buildings.”

Typical church plants bring along some believers to give the young plant a boost. Dash welcomes other believers to come and be part of the outreach team. But there’s a catch. They have to move into the community. Because what Liberty Grace is really trying to do is “church that takes place all week long.”

## Planting in Winnipeg

By Doug Koop



Two gatherings in Winnipeg challenge the definitions of a church plant.

**R**achel Twigg Boyce doesn’t find the word “church” helpful to describe the ministry she leads. And House Blend in Winnipeg is not what everyone would consider a traditional church plant either. But something is growing here that is a fresh expression of evangelical faith. Connected with the Mennonite Brethren Church of Manitoba, this is an example of a Christian commitment that prioritizes social action and deep fellowship.

“If you understand church to be a group of people following Jesus, then yes, House Blend is a church. But if you mean a building and a Sunday service, then it doesn’t fit the bill.”

House Blend, she explains, is as an intentional Christian com-



PHOTO: DOUG KOOP

**The word “church” doesn’t really describe the ministry Rachel Twigg Boyce leads.**

munity where people are encouraged to adhere to a Rule of Life and expected to be part of a local congregation. “We are a group of people who, because we are inspired by Jesus’ love of people who are poor, and by Paul’s words in 1 Thessalonians 2:8, have committed to sharing our lives with each other and with our neighbours in West Broadway, Winnipeg.”

Some people within the community live in this actual house on a non-affluent street. Others stay connected through weekly potluck and prayer gatherings, and by participating in community service.

The house itself provides affordable housing for an ever-

## Church Planting Requires Digging Deep

By John Bowen

**C**hurch planting is hard work. The risks are financial, emotional and spiritual. There is frequent disappointment. One church plant I know saw two converts in three years. Then one of the converts died by suicide and the other returned to the street.

Other Christians don’t understand how difficult it can be. It’s not uncommon to be asked, “Don’t we have enough churches already?” Funding agencies frequently want to set benchmarks. “You’re supposed to have a hundred people attending worship by the end of this year. How many do you have right now?” And more than one aspiring church planter has lost his faith when things didn’t work out. So why bother?

The bottom line is simple. It’s all about the gospel. People need to hear and experience the Good News of Jesus Christ. Existing churches will never reach everyone. Either they no longer relate

to the community around them, or the population has moved somewhere else (whether downtown or the suburbs), or they are so taken up with their own internal affairs that they have no time for outreach. New churches can avoid all of these dangers, and focus on the most important point of all – the gospel.

What is delightful about these three (or four, really) stories is how diverse they are, and yet how much they have in common. The diversity is obvious – a church among Iranian immigrants, a church among the condos of downtown Toronto, a church among the poor of Winnipeg, and a church doing new things out of an old, traditional church.

Yet all four have the same heart and the same instincts. They are key for understanding the why and the how of church planting in Canada today.

Darryl Dash spent a year to discern how and where to begin in downtown To-

ronto. My guess is that none of these four plants started in a hurry. Good church planting doesn’t work that way. Funding agencies get antsy about the slow

“progress,” but slow is the only way. Until you know the community where you are called to plant, you won’t know where to begin. That doesn’t happen overnight.

These new churches have a clear vision of the heart of Church: Rachel Twigg Boyce is clear that church is “a group of people following Jesus.” Lydia says it’s about people “who are sold out to Jesus.” Darryl Dash says it is “to show the love of God to people.” It’s pretty simple. Groups that begin with a building and a bunch of administrative committees can easily



PHOTO: WWW.INSTITUTE.WYCLIFFCOLLEGE.CA

**John Bowen**

■ A typical Tuesday night potluck and prayer night at House Blend starts with a potluck meal followed by corporate prayer and worship.

evolving blend of students and people on the margins. Together they “seek to develop rhythms of life that make loving God, loving each other and loving our neighbours sustainable.”

### Challenged by Poverty

Twigg Boyce says she’s been sensitive to poverty all her life, and is acutely aware that, as Scripture makes it plain, it’s a

priority to Jesus too. “If people don’t care about the poor, what Bible are they reading? We can all be challenged. We can all do more. That will look different from person to person. For some it means making it their life. For others it will be something different. Some will provide money.

“House Blend is clearly and unapologetically Christian,” she continues. “We connect with lots of people who have

lose sight of those priorities.

Because their centre is clear, they can be flexible about many other things, including worship. So worship at Liberty Village does not look like worship at Shaban Niku. And neither is like worship at House Blend, where they struggle with the question of how people with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder can worship with PhDs. There is no one size fits all. The style of worship is reflective of the culture in which it is set.

The sense of priorities in these new churches means buildings are not primary. Shaban Niku borrows an office building. Liberty Village meets in the Danceology studio. House Blend worships in the community house. Dash wryly notes his experience of a church plant out of someone’s living room growing far more effectively than a church in a traditional building. It’s hardly surprising.

Unlike most churches these are not primarily a gathering place for Christians, but a ministry to those outside the

Church. They really do exist for those who do not yet belong. Liberty Village sees the loneliness of people in huge, impersonal condos and offers community. House Blend ministers to the poor. Shaban Niku reaches out to immigrant Iranians. Among many other ministries Westminster distributes food hampers.

These churches are incarnational, their members physically present daily in their local communities. They don’t parachute into the neighbourhood to “do ministry” and then leave. They are embedded, there to stay. “The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighbourhood,” says The Message’s Eugene Peterson. These churches did the same.

None of the four appears to be the result of demographic research or of a strategic plan from a denominational head office. All were bottom-up, a response to a particular need and a focused vision, rather than top-down.

A couple of years back I was visiting

an evangelical Anglican seminary in the United Kingdom. In the course of conversation the vice-principal mentioned casually he thought all their students expected to be involved in church planting. I was amazed. “All of them?” He said, “Well, let’s find out.” So, as we did a tour of the college, he stopped students randomly and said, “Do you expect to be involved in church planting at some point?” And indeed, every one said yes, including one training for youth ministry and a PhD student. I was impressed. Then he said, “I wish our school could take credit for this. But, you know, it’s just our cultural reality in Britain these days.”

Increasingly, it’s our cultural reality here too. Meet the future. It’s authentic, it’s incarnational and it’s gospel centred. Yes, it’s tough, but Jesus never promised following Him would be easy. **FT**

**JOHN BOWEN** is director of the Institute of Evangelism and Wycliffe Serves! at Wycliffe College in Toronto.



SUPPLIED PHOTO

**Music director Nathan Poole helps plant tomatoes in the garden connected to the Bell Tower Community Café.**

Jesus, but who may not have community. Some of them have Jesus, but also mental illness or addictions or some other life-defining issue.”

Which means that life at House Blend poses many challenges.

“This is why our regular worship gathering is the way it is. We started it as a Bible study, but that doesn’t work well when someone has FASD [fetal alcohol spectrum disorder] and another person has a PhD.” Now they focus on what they can do together – a weekly potluck where the worship focus is prayer. “Everyone can pray,” says Twigg Boyce.

“We experienced at least one miracle, prayed with a diverse group of strangers who are becoming friends, gave away some Bibles and laughed a lot. And that folks is what House Blend is all about,” she blogged after a prayer gathering last fall.

**Cathedral Connection**

Two short blocks from House Blend, a sprawling, century-old limestone cathedral houses Westminster Church, a congregation of the United Church of Canada. The historic building is renowned for excellent acoustics and the organ peals that permeate the neighbourhood from a commanding bell tower.

It also houses a plant in a very old pot. It is an unlikely posting for Greg Glatz, a skilled guitarist who hosts a rather unpredictable radio talk show and has cultivated a persona as the rock ‘n’ roll preacher. He now works alongside the more staid Robert Campbell, who has been the primary worship leader and preacher at Westminster for 25 years.

A few months ago Glatz completed his DMin dissertation on missional church, under the direction of missional guru Leonard Sweet. Glatz is an advocate of what he calls GOOD church, a “Get-Out-Of-Doors” church where the work of the church is everyone’s business and ministry occurs in many places beyond the sanctuary.

This is a plant based on fellowship, food and service, including the Bell Tower Community Café. And the Bell Tower Community Garden. And the Bell Tower Community Walk. And, perhaps as early as this fall, the Bell Tower Community Clinic.

The church is becoming the connection for a web of community relationships that aim to bring people from all walks of life together to disrupt poverty by making good things together.

Every second Friday night volunteers gather to help distribute food hampers to nearly 50 families, enjoy free high-quality food supplied by area businesses, live music, and engage in conversation around the table.

“My vision for the Bell Tower Community Café is threefold – to invite, create and share,” says Meaghan Pauls, co-ordinator. “The invitation should be intentional and open to include and welcome all people into the space. I believe we should actively be creating connections and community, while at the same time experiencing the good food, coffee and music people have created.”

Glatz describes what is happening as an expression of “kingdom,” in which “our kinship with each other becomes visible, becomes tangible.” This is what he believes the Church will become.

“The idea of worship is important and remains important in our 21st-century postmodern context. I’m also hoping that we can reclaim a 1st-century premodern concept of worship,” he says, noting that the Apostle Paul appealed to Christ followers “to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship” (Romans 12:1).

“The café provides an excellent opportunity for people who are affiliated or not affiliated with church to participate in that form of worship. I love the complementary nature of Friday night and Sunday mornings,” says Glatz. “We’re working hard as ministers not to create two solitudes. We cross-pollinate.”

House Blend and Westminster Church share more than a neighbourhood. Although very different, their leaders consult with each other regularly about how they can best obey Jesus’ Great Commission in their community.

Both are keen to go and make disciples. Both are eager to recognize the work God is already doing within and among people around them, and to participate in that experience. Two plants. One big garden.

**Planting in Calgary**

by *Richelle Wiseman*



An Iranian church plant in Calgary blooms in hard soil.

**T**wenty people filter into a rented church space at 4:30 p.m. on a Sunday in Calgary. All of them are Iranian Christians here to witness a baptism. The church’s name, Shaban Niku, means “Good Shepherd” in Farsi, the language of Iran. This is a church that points to the face of Canada’s changing population and what the team believes is a New Testament model of church planting.

The Shaban Niku-Iranian Church of Canada usually meets in an office building in northeast Calgary in a room that fits 50 above a restaurant. But on this particular Sunday the community meets in a rented sanctuary, a more worshipful setting for a baptism.

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The stories of the woman to be baptized, and the woman who will baptize her encapsulate the risks and rewards of being a Christian from Iran.

Lydia\* greets arrivals at the door. She along with her husband Paul pastor this tiny plant. On any given Sunday there might be 20 to 40 people. (Of the estimated 15- to 20,000 Iranians in Calgary, less than 1 per cent are Christians.) Some members also meet in homes for Bible studies. Some fear attending a public church service out of concern for repercussions for their family back home in Iran.

Choruses in Farsi set to beautiful Iranian music fill the room. Lydia and Dana, the woman to be baptized, appear in long white gowns bearing a red cross. They are helped into the hot tub. "I saw lots of miracles in my life over the past few years and I have been waiting for this day," Dana says. "I am sure today that I am one of God's children." Her face radiates joy.

Dana's life turned around after a dream in which she saw Christ – a common phenomenon with Muslims who convert. Because dreams are held in high regard in Islam, they seem to provide an opportunity for the Holy Spirit to speak into the lives of Muslims about Jesus Christ.

Pastor Paul blows a shofar, a Jewish horn sounded as a warning, a call to battle and a celebration of victory. On this Sunday it is a spiritual victory.

Dana, a single mother, has spent three years being discipled by Lydia. Like almost all Iranians she was raised a Muslim. When she came to Canada she learned about Christianity.

"My baptism today shows that I really want to be a follower," she says. "It is not enough just to read the Bible. I want to live my full life for Jesus."

It is music to Lydia's ears. She began a home Bible study in 2006 in Calgary, and has not stopped teaching the Bible and reaching out to Iranians. She translates Bible study materials from Bible Study Fellowship International into Farsi.

She met her husband Paul at Bible College in Alberta. Both are ordained by the Christian Brethren. Paul also has a day job. So far, they have borne the bulk of the church's expenses personally.

"I was a fanatic Muslim evangelist," shares Lydia, whose life trajectory resembles that of the Apostle Paul's. Where she once fiercely promoted Islam and hated Christians, she eventually converted to Christianity. She has helped several family members leave Iran to find safe haven and Christianity in Europe.

"I was trained for Allah in the Islamic Army," she says. Train-

ing for combat, including the use of firearms, self-defence, military tactics, and misleading the enemy begins as part of regular curricula in grade school in Iran.

Though Lydia was prepared to go to the front lines in Iran's war with Iraq, as a young teenager she questioned her loyalty to the Iranian regime when her best friend was killed for disagreeing with the government. She left Iran, making the hazardous journey to Turkey, Greece and finally Canada, alone. In Calgary she entered a church one night where she experienced Christ for the first time.

Now growing the ministry is Lydia's passion. She is searching for a larger church space for Shaban Niku to meet. "Those who are sold out to Jesus want a place to worship," she says, Meeting in someone's home is not an option. People fear their house will be in jeopardy.

Some Iranians fear interactions with the government here because of their experience with the Iranian government. Some worry if they returned to Iran to visit, they would not be able to get back out. "We have had some experiences where people have said, 'If you get baptized, we will tell the authorities in Iran,'" says Paul. Others want to associate with Christianity because they believe it will help them with their immigration process.

"Iranians are the most open to the gospel of any of the other people from Muslim background countries," believes Gord Martin, executive director of Vision Ministries Canada, the organization providing relational support

and encouragement to the church. In Calgary, as in many other places across Canada, existing congregations often initiate church plants. Shaban Niku is organic, started by Lydia and Paul, not another congregation or denominational office.

Martin says that VMC has had an interest in Iranians for some time, and has been assisting the similar Iranian Spirit of Truth Church in Toronto. VMC is now helping Shaban Niku obtain charitable status.

Meanwhile, a few Iranians in Calgary, who have passed over the narrow bridge from Islam to Christianity, meet faithfully and quietly for mutual support and to worship God together in community. Their thoughts are never far from loved ones in Iran.

Shaban Niku is no ordinary church plant, if there is such a thing. The ancient practice of blowing the shofar still means here what it did in the Old Testament – a warning, a call to battle and a celebration of victory. **ET**



SUPPLIED PHOTO

**ALEX NEWMAN** of Toronto is a senior writer at *Faith Today*. **DOUG KOOP** is a Winnipeg-based freelance writer and spiritual care provider. **RICHELLE WISEMAN** is a freelance writer based in Calgary.

\* For security reasons, all the names of Iranian Christians in this article have been changed.

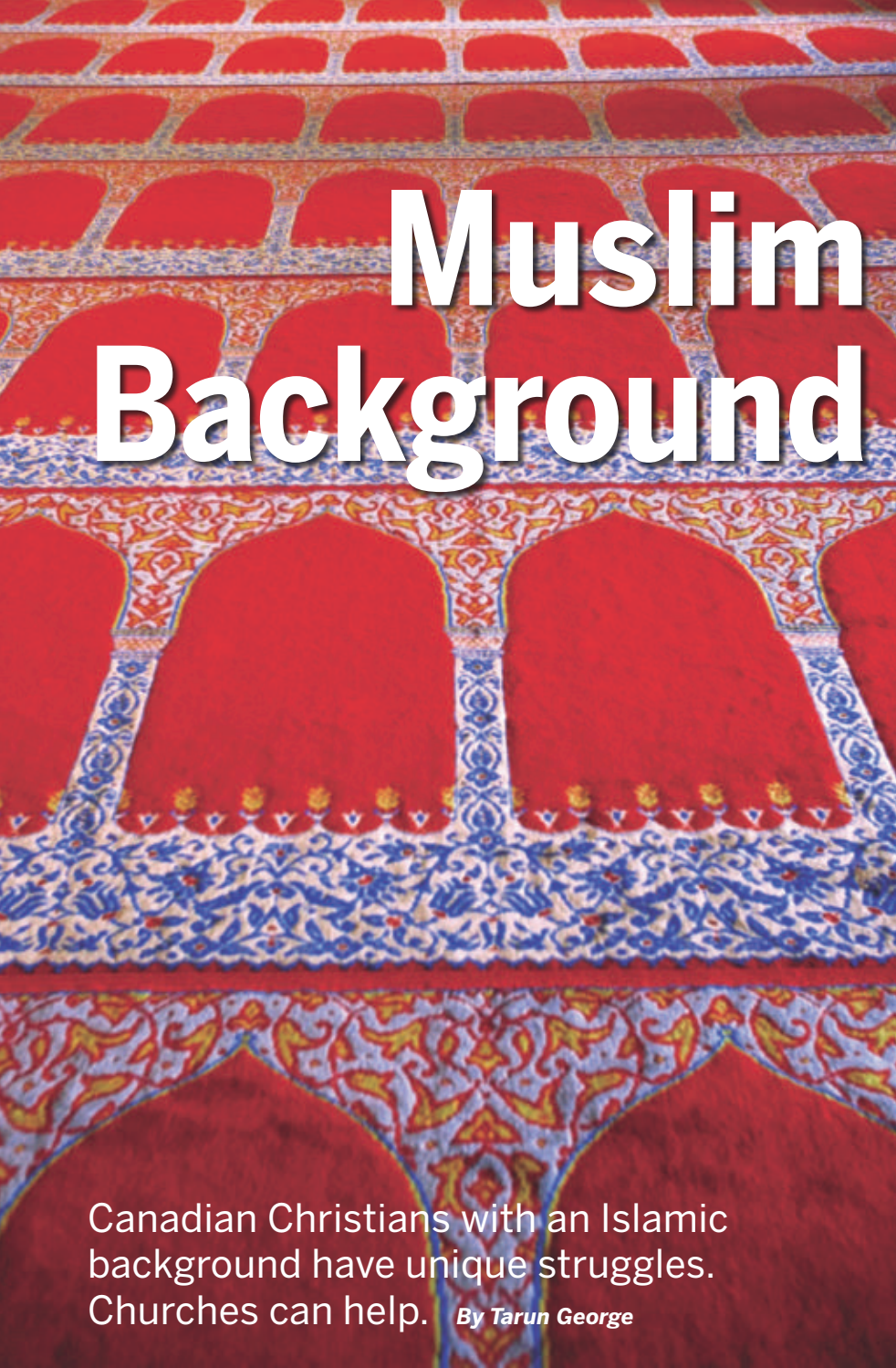


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– Joanne Weller is a *Faith Today* reader in Port Perry, Ont.



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# Muslim Background

## a Challenge

Canadian Christians with an Islamic background have unique struggles. Churches can help. *By Tarun George*

**W**agdi Iskander's life is one marked by God's transformative power. Born in the north of Sudan, he grew up a radical Muslim until he accidentally broke one of the Islamic laws and was cut off from his community. Disillusioned, prideful and angry with Allah, yet desperately wanting to be forgiven, he walked away from the mosque. Then he met Kamal, a Christian he had persecuted years before for sharing the gospel with him, and who for some

reason had now come back to find him.

Though Iskander thought Kamal would never understand, he decided to be honest about his need for forgiveness. Realizing Iskander had changed, Kamal told him the Good News of Christ again. And this time he was ready to listen.

Iskander is now a follower of Jesus. After facing persecution in Sudan, he escaped to Calgary where he became a church planter and pastor. On the phone, he speaks with the controlled enthusiasm of those who have been in tough ministry

roles for a long time. God has called him to train people just like himself – Muslim-Background Believers or MBBs – to spread the gospel, particularly among Muslims in Canada.

MBBs and Muslims investigating Christ face major challenges integrating into the Canadian Church. Now is a good time for Canadian Christians to reflect on our attitudes and places of worship – are they welcoming to one of the fastest growing religious populations in the country? More often than not, the answer is no.

### The Fear of Leaving

Possibly the biggest deterrent to Muslims coming to faith in Jesus is the fear of what they might lose. "Many MBBs get kicked out of their homes, and lose jobs, friends, family, everything" says Iskander.

Adding to that is the fear of physical persecution when a Muslim leaves his or her faith. As one MBB puts it the thought process is often, "I'm saved now, but to be safe here in Canada or back home, no one can know about my faith."

That fear not only hinders them from taking the gospel back to their Muslim communities, but also causes deep mistrust even within national diaspora churches in Canada. Iskander has seen many of these churches – of Iranians, Afghans or Nigerians – sharing the same language, culture, food and faith in Christ. It's beautiful. And yet, he says, they never fully trust each other. What if someone leaves the church and informs the relatives back home? Many immigrant MBBs prefer English-speaking churches where they will not be recognized.

### A Fearful Welcome

Where the Canadian Church should be a welcoming refuge for MBBs, instead it's hampered by its own fears. A much-discussed opinion poll by Angus Reid last year showed that the fear of Islam has grown significantly in Canada in recent years – including in Christian circles. Missionaries and MBBs in five cities across

PHOTO: WWW.DESIGNPICS.COM

# for Christians

Canada all report the same trend: Christians mistrust and misunderstand Muslims, particularly immigrant Muslims.

"If you start any program reaching out to Muslims, you will never get the whole church behind you," says Miles, a Toronto-based missionary (not his real name). "So many people have the notion that [Muslims] are invaders, diluting our culture and taking our jobs." The prejudice is pervasive and subtle, even where it's often not spoken. But it *is* felt by Muslims, which only heightens their mistrust of Christianity.

How did we get here? What happened to making "disciples of all nations"? And how can we overcome our prejudices and show Muslim communities the love of Christ? The solution, according to the missionaries *Faith Today* spoke with, is relational.

"Have you sat down and had tea with them?" asks Miles. "You'll never be in harmony with [Muslims] unless you spend time in their homes and they in yours." Over and over again, he has seen Christians pleasantly surprised when they interact closely with Muslims. The courses on Islam and Christianity he teaches at churches sometimes require Christians to befriend Muslims and share what they have learned. Some of them have even led their new Muslim friends to Christ.

The truth is that a community of believers plays a crucial role in keeping MBBs, or anyone really, strong in the faith. Ahmad, an immigrant MBB, has many friends who met Christ in their home countries, but have fallen away since coming to Canada. His own story illustrates that critical need for relationship.

## Searching for Community

Ahmad (not his real name) was born in Kabul, Afghanistan into a large, well-educated family. He grew up a staunch Mus-

lim, strongly against Christianity. After studying in the Soviet Union, he became a respected lawyer working for the United Nations. And yet, he knew he was a sinner inside. These "two faces" of his had always bothered him, but neither Islam nor the Soviet Union's Darwinism gave him a solution.

Everything changed when his father passed away, and Ahmad and his wife found themselves in Pakistan as refugees. With no job, no money and a failing marriage, one night at the very lowest point in his life he had a dream. A voice asked him, "Why are you against me?"

Vaguely aware this had something to do with Christianity, Ahmad woke up. He remembered an elderly American woman who had been inviting him to a Bible study. He had refused her many times, but now he went to see what it was all about. Over the

next few months, Ahmad read the Bible from Genesis all the way to Matthew, and as he did God opened his heart. When he believed in Jesus, he finally understood the true nature of his sin and the double life he had led. After that, as he says, he became "one person."

Ahmad soon moved to Canada with his wife and went to Bible college. There, God called him to a life of working with immigrants, sharing the gospel with them and helping them integrate into life in Canada. Whether they're recent immigrants or were



■ **Wagdi Iskander: Called by God to train Muslim-Background Believers or MBBs.**

born in Canada, it's the community aspect MBBs miss when they join a church.

"In a Western [country], they're suddenly in a church where they're expected to stand on their own two feet," says Randy Hoffmann of Vancouver, co-founder and chair of the Canadian Network of Ministries to Muslims (CNMM.ca). "But they're longing to belong to a *community*. They're used to deeper personal relationships where you're more in-

involved in each other's lives."

"It's not that this is absent in Canadian churches," he's quick to point out. "It just doesn't happen with the same intensity and depth that they're used to. So at times they feel like they're not being embraced, and read it as a form of rejection."

"You have to get MBBs involved in the church community," says Ahmad. "Invite them to serve with you, go to weddings, visit the sick, help people with their problems. And slowly that fear factor comes down."

## Misunderstanding Each Other's Cultures

It's not just the Canadian Church that is misinformed about Islam. Muslims are told all sorts of untruths and half-truths about Christianity. Almost everything that comes out of a Christian's mouth is usually misunderstood by Muslims. Their background and upbringing have almost inoculated them against standard gospel presentations.

"They're told that Christians worship three gods, and that it's blasphemy to think God would ever have a son," says Tom, a Montreal-based missionary (not

“I thought everything I was watching on Canadian TV was Christian, until I met you.”

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his real name). “So the moment we talk about Jesus being the son of God without explaining what that means, we’ve already lost them.”

“Some Muslims think the Trinity has Mary in it – father, mother and son. No Christian would ever suggest that, but the image gets reinforced.”

Muslims are often taught that Christians are immoral. Immigrant Muslims in particular think of Canada as a Christian country. And what they see actually take place here only strengthens their resolve against Christianity.

How do we break through this kind of misunderstanding? The answer is the same as before. Christians must refuse the usual model of preaching to Muslims while keeping them at arm’s length. We need to build friendships deep and involved enough that they see what following Jesus is really like. Only then will the walls be broken down between our communities.

Miles recalls a Muslim woman once telling him, “I thought everything I was watching on Canadian TV was Christian, until I met you.” How was her misperception corrected? Simply because over time Miles and his wife had been intentional about exposing their lives to her. This is exactly what’s needed. “Let Christians reach out by bringing Muslims into their homes,” he says. “Not necessarily their churches – first their homes.”

### **The Struggle Between Two Identities**

The sad truth is that the Church in Canada has done a lamentable job at this kind of welcoming. The way we “love” MBBs, says Ahmad, is often to try and change them into copies of ourselves – people who act like us, dress like us, talk like us. It fits what we think a Christian should look like. But it’s utterly misguided, and isolates MBBs from their own friends and families. Ahmad recalls how in his first five years of following Christ, he began hating Muslims. He thought they were evil until God changed his heart.

MBBs are often trying to reconcile two fundamental identities: their Muslim background, and their new faith in Christ. A new MBB is wondering, “How do I fit in? How do I relate to the church? How much of my own culture do I retain?” This

# ARE YOUNG PEOPLE LEAVING YOUR CHURCH?

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is compounded by many ideas left over from Islam, says Tom. He often sees new Christians trying very hard to work the Qur'an into what they now believe.

They need a safe space to think this through. Unfortunately, most churches are not yet that place. MBBs need churches that will understand them, love them, pray for them, continue telling them the truth about Jesus, but *not* push them to make cultural changes.

**Equipping the Church: “A Lot of People Doing a Little”**

In the face of all these obstacles, the easiest response for Christians is to throw up their hands and conclude it's pointless to try to reach Muslims. That attitude

in churches is itself one of the biggest obstacles. The number of Muslims coming to Christ across Canada is growing, and there are stories of hope in the ministries of all the missionaries *Faith Today* spoke with.

“We cannot allow the enemy to do anything to stop us reaching out to these

people in love,” says Randy Hoffmann. The ministry network he helped found mobilizes churches to do just that, for example at its next national conference, Nov. 6–8 in Richmond Hill, Ont. (details at [www.CNMM.ca](http://www.CNMM.ca)).

The need for training is great – most of us don't even know how to get started. And the need for equipping MBBs is even greater. As cultural missionaries they are perfectly placed to bring many in their communities to Christ.

As other Canadians learn what Muslim-background believers have gone through to follow Jesus, that can motivate us to care for them more. “The idea is to have a lot of people doing a little,” says Tom. Imagine, he says, what would happen if more of us developed a few deep relationships with Muslims. **FT**

**TARUN GEORGE** is a journalist in Toronto.


**“I told him I was looking for forgiveness. I thought he wouldn't understand because he was a Christian.”**

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# We Are a People of Place: Coming Home as a Follower

By Carolyn Weber



“**T**here are two ways of getting home; and one of them is to stay there. The other is to walk round the whole world till we come back to the same place,” writes G. K. Chesterton in *The Everlasting Man*, a classic essay from 1925.

When I left Canada almost 20 years ago to study at Oxford University, (flying, incidentally, from London, Ontario to London, England), I did not believe in anything beyond my own self-sufficiency. When I recently returned to live again in my hometown, I came back as a committed Christian with a localized case of cognitive dissonance, of stress caused by believing in two or more contradictory things at the same time.

Back on Southern Ontario turf, I found myself faced with the following conun-

drum: How to return and live with a faith where I previously had none and knew relatively no one with it? “Home” had now become the double-edged phenomenon Freud described as “uncanny”: familiar and yet unfamiliar at the same time.

The importance of place in relation to identity is a cornerstone motif in the Bible. From Genesis through Revelation, the human story is one of

**Sometimes the Great Commission involves being sent out, but sometimes it involves being sent back.**

dislocation and recovery, for Jew and Gentile. Moreover, places bear the names of insights, struggles and miracles, and people bear the names of

places which bore them. The Lord himself came with an address: “When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, ‘Who is this?’ The crowds answered, ‘This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee’” (Matthew 21:10–11). God entered time and space not as an abstract message

written across the sky in countless clouds, but as an infant born into a census, an existence pinned to a specific small town and lowly place.

While modern culture is arguably more transient now, we still wear our nationality as an identifier – it both identifies us and helps us identify with others. For instance, as a student of Romantic literature in a foreign land reading the Bible seriously for the first time, I remember the empathetic pang at Keats’ description in his “Ode to a Nightingale” of “the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,/She stood in tears amid the alien corn.” We hold affinities with this earth from which we were made.

We are put in families for a reason. Sometimes the Great Commission involves being sent out, but sometimes it involves being sent back. The stakes can appear so much higher in the latter. We often care more deeply about how we are received by these people we love. We take more personally what they think of us and our God. We

# of Christ



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can feel more vulnerable from an eternal consideration too, for we cannot imagine a heaven without those we love most in it.

Canadians own a reputation for being an apologetic people. That is not to say we are a sorry people, but rather a people who say sorry. We have all heard the old jokes about Canadians. Bump into them and they are the ones who apologize. Say something rude and they mutter some excuse for you before moving on with the conversation. I just had a friend tell me the other day about her trip to Cuba. For obvious political reasons you might not want to admit to being American there. She was on a tour, however, when the guide specifically recommended any Americans on the bus feign being Canadian. In response to the exclamations of how best to do that, the guide, who was also a local, in all seriousness suggested, “Whatever is said or done to you, say *you’re* sorry. Better yet, say it in French.”

So, when it comes to sharing our faith with others as Canadians, are we guilty of the

same charge? That is, when the Great Commission bumps up next to us, do we simply mutter an almost inaudible “*excuse moi*”?

An apology usually conjures contrition, as an admission of guilt and a request for forgiveness. But “apology” (or *apologia*, as it is still used in formal discourse, from its Greek roots) also stands for a defence. Tellingly, forgiveness and justification exist interlinked in one word, or interestingly when it comes to Christianity, the Word.

All of this becomes even more loaded when we think of how apologetics has become the popular term for the particular defence of the Christian faith. As I examined my own place as a Christian quite literally in this world, I began to realize my own apologetics back home were tried, and found wanting. Had I swung the evangelizing pendulum so far the other way now

as to be quiet – for fear of offending – about the glory of God? Frederick Buechner’s view on sharing the gospel gave me pause:

“One of the greatest temptations, of course, in trying to sell something is to put it in terms that people will find palatable and swallowable. To reduce it to something that others will find in their powers to believe. But maybe the best apologetics is to present the truth as it really is. Why not present the gospel in all its madness? Why not say things like, ‘Yes, you will be given your life back again. Yes, it doesn’t end with death. Yes, the kingdom will come. Yes, Christ will come down from heaven.’ Maybe people are hungry for these wild and mad things which some preachers attempt to pull down to earth” (*The Door Interviews*, ed. Mike Yaconelli, Zondervan, 1989).

As an ex-patriot convert, it was tempting to think God was something I went away and found and brought back. Much like you might tuck the forbidden piece of some famous landmark in your pocket, like an ancient coin from an archeological site or a shell from a faraway protected beach, only remembering to bring it out as a conversation piece, turning it around in your palm to be admired before dropping it back into a linty hole. I fell into believing that if others were to have this treasure too, all I had to do was insist they pocket their own piece of it.

But when I began to realize God could not be pocketed, nor could He be nationalized for that matter, all sorts of borders

## It was tempting to think God was something I went away and found and brought back.

began to disintegrate. Jesus teaches us the Father and Son live in each other, and in each believer. No matter where we are in this world, we are already “home” (John 14:1–12). Yet, as ones in this world and not of it, we believers remain necessarily uncanny ourselves. We live in a state both familiar and unfamiliar, in an eternal home in our hearts, but also as a people, at least on this side of heaven, tied to an earthly place.

When ministry involves returning home, we need to learn to speak our native language all over again, from the perspective of resurrection, keeping the familiar, but making it new. We are our brother’s keeper. It is up to each of us to discern our particularly local voice of evangelistic responsibility. In

his essay "The Weight of Glory," C. S. Lewis helpfully reminds us, "It may be possible for each to think too much of his own potential glory hereafter; it is hardly possible for him to think too often or too deeply about that of his neighbor. The load, or weight, or burden of my neighbour's glory should be laid on my back, a load so heavy that only humility can carry it, and the backs of the proud will be broken" (*The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses*, Macmillan, 1980 [1941]).

Surely this intersection of eternity with place is what the disciples experienced when they witnessed the risen Christ. The women who bore the earliest witness were thought by the others to be speaking nonsense (Luke 24:11).

How to begin spreading the Good News with those closest among them? In this sense resurrection embodies (or perhaps disembodies) the uncanny too. It offers mystery so profound as to be unspeakable until it first calls each of us by name.

As a Canadian and a believer, I have discovered I have all the more affinity with the uncanny. The borderland space of familiar/unfamiliar is actually familiar territory to

us. I began to see how my understanding is not so contradictory after all. Coming home with new eyes, returning to a place and seeing it differently, offers a tremendous gift.

Revisitation lays the path to resurrection. When we revisit a place, we bring back with us our prior memories of that spot fused to our longings since we left it. As a result, we understand ourselves and others in relation to our social (and so now too, spiritual) location, with more insight, compassion and hope. We leave the tomb weeping and we return to it, through it, transformed.

When we return to a place where we laid Christ's body as a sacrifice for reconciliation, should we, or should we not, be so surprised to find angels awaiting us there? I would hope the awe would never leave us – and yet should the fulfillment of such assurance startle? "Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves" (John 14:11).

Resurrection is the pinnacle of all miracles. Christ's own resurrection offers the template by which we will at some point in redeemed eternity enjoy full bodily and spiritual resurrection. But it also offers the miraculous rhythm by which we live the life of faith.

We best bear witness to the risen Christ when we bear witness to the risen Christ within ourselves. As a people of resurrection, we must live in the light of resurrection and share a language of resurrection. In so doing, as a people of eternity brought to a place for a time such as this, we must then ask ourselves: Where is my Jerusalem? And then particularly for Canadians, I think, we must appropriate our language of silence, of apology in both senses of the term – assuming together humility and assurance – to speak of God's grace in building toward our Jerusalem, wherever on this earth for the present it may be.

"Anyone with a sacramental understanding of the world knows that it's the small things that count," writes Kathleen Norris in *The Cloister Walk* (Riverhead Books, 1997). When we share the gospel, when we live the gospel, among family, friends and neighbours



PHOTO: WWW.LIGHTMAGAZINE.CA

**Carolyn Weber: No matter where we are in this world, we are already "home" (John 14:1–12).**

first, we localize grace. And as everyone eventually learns, and as we certainly know as a people acquainted with snow, great things consist of accumulated small things.

By now, I have become used to the surprise folks voice when they hear why I moved back and where we most recently left. First, when I explain I became a Christian while studying

abroad, people tend to say something like, "I've heard of someone losing her faith as the result of going to university, but never of someone finding it." I usually then share my conversion experience, trying, as the Apostle Paul advises, to temper my language to my audience, hopefully without defensiveness, but also without excuse.


Next, these Canadians standing knee deep in slush begin to shuffle their salt-encrusted winter boots and invariably ask where I moved from in the States. When I answer most recently from Santa Barbara, California, they look at me incredulously and exclaim more than ask, "Why!"

I always pause. I can't help it.

*Is it the way you can smell the changes in the seasons before you see them? Is it the sound of geese crying across the frozen lake? Or the silent work of maples shocking sap into pails when all else still seems asleep and unmoving? Is it how humidity mosses thundering evening air, the storm heralded by slowly building drops of rain? Or is it the crackle underfoot of leaves so bright as to seem you are walking on fire?*

And perhaps it is all of this, magnifying the blessing of having been sent back.

*If only I had the words to tell you.* I think of the line from Reverend John Ames, Marilynne Robinson's narrator of *Gilead* (Little, Brown Book Group, 2009), her beautiful book about faithful aging in one's hometown.

But all I do is smile and say, "It's home." 

**CAROLYN WEBER** is the author of the memoirs *Surprised by Oxford* (Thomas Nelson, 2011) and *Holy Is the Day* (InterVarsity Press, 2013). She lives in her hometown of London, Ontario, with her husband and four children. Visit her at [www.pressingsave.com](http://www.pressingsave.com).

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# Rethink. Reform. Abolish.

*Faith Today* Articles on Prostitution

## **Inside:**

Canada's Mean Streets

Are Morals Still Relevant?

Can We Help to Break  
the Chains?

How One Canadian Woman  
Defends the Dignity of Women  
Who Are Prostituted

[www.FaithToday.ca/FTFocus](http://www.FaithToday.ca/FTFocus)

## Be Equipped to Make a Difference

By Stephen Bedard, Bill Fledderus & Karen Stiller

**N**ow is an important time for Canadian Christians to be informed about the issues surrounding prostitution – and use our voices and knowledge to take action and influence change.


The following collection will help equip you by bringing together some of the best articles on prostitution that *Faith Today* has published. Original texts have been updated where necessary.

We weren't able to fit into this booklet all the great resources available from our publisher, The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC), so we have also compiled a more extensive collection, including selected EFC blog posts and other resources by EFC staff, at [www.faithtoday.ca/ProstitutionSupplement](http://www.faithtoday.ca/ProstitutionSupplement).

The Supreme Court of Canada has given the Canadian government one year to enact new prostitution laws. The EFC supports a legal approach called the Nordic model. It acknowledges that the vast majority within the sex trade are there not by choice. Instead of punishing prostituted women, the focus is on prosecuting the purchasers of sex with the aim of decreasing the demand for prostitution. Read on for more information about the Nordic model, and visit [www.theEFC.ca/ProstitutionLawReform](http://www.theEFC.ca/ProstitutionLawReform).

The goal of this *Faith Today* resource is to equip Christians with the basic knowledge we need to make informed choices about the future of prostitution in Canada – not just changing laws but getting involved to change lives. Another way Christians can equip ourselves is to attend one of the Defend Dignity forums the EFC cosponsors (details at [www.defenddignity.ca](http://www.defenddignity.ca)).

We hope all this will lead you to pray, of course; perhaps to communicate with your Member of Parliament; and to ask yourself what you can do locally. Some general guidelines for taking action on social issues are at [www.theEFC.ca/TakeAction](http://www.theEFC.ca/TakeAction).

May God bless Canada as our country rethinks and rewrites its prostitution laws. May the Body of Christ be enlivened with a vision for the ministry we might be called to in the areas of prevention, relief, transition and advocacy on behalf of some of our most vulnerable neighbours. 

# Canada's Mean After Dark in Toronto, Winnipeg &

Three writers in three cities report on life after dark for prostituted women and the Christians who reach out to them.

By Karen Stiller, Doug Koop and Andrew Stephens-Rennie. Sidebar by Julia Beazley. Originally published in *Faith Today*, Nov/Dec 2013.

## Toronto, at the Corner of Parliament and Winchester. 7:40 p.m. Sept. 19.

I did not expect Donna\* to look so normal.

In fact, she so much resembled the middle-aged woman next door, I wondered if Jan Rothenburger, my Yonge Street Mission contact for this story, had understood I wanted to speak with a woman who had worked – and left – the sex trade.

But there we sat in a Tim Horton's in Toronto's Old Cabbagetown, about to launch into what I feared would be a very awkward conversation.

There was no need to worry.

Donna, my age almost exactly, has spent the last 30 years in and out of jail. "Every time you get out, you have nothing and you end up prostituting to get a hotel room for the night," she explains.

And when drugs needed to be bought, her body needed to be sold, mostly to "businessmen on their way to work. They're the ones with cash in hand," she explains.

As she shares her story of colossal pain – and how drugs seemed to numb it out for years – Donna methodically tears up the plastic lid from her coffee and sweeps the pieces into a neat pile. "I need stability. I require it," she explains as she describes her days now filled with reading books and cleaning houses when the opportunity arises.

Although the list of people and circumstances she could blame for her life thus far

is long, Donna will not read from it. "I take responsibility for my own actions now," she says.

This is a fierce and tender woman. Life has taught her to rely only on herself.

Jan Rothenburger holds a fragile, fleeting opportunity to be trusted. She is a community outreach pastor whose congregation are the women and girls trapped in this life, or rebuilding a new one.

"I'm not what people expect a pastor to be. I never dress up. I smoke. I swear," says Jan. Donna laughs and says Jan fits right in. It's a big compliment.

Donna loves being with her grandchildren, newly, cautiously introduced into her life by a son willing to give her a chance.

"This might be the first time I make it," she says. Donna's eyes well up, but they won't be spilling over on this night. Pride clearly matters.

Donna tells me she visited a church in Brampton. "When the pastor found out I was from a halfway house, he wouldn't look me in the eyes. It wasn't welcoming." When I ask her what she would like "church people" to most understand about what she has lived through, she says, "People are all the same. We are all equal."

An old, dusty, bent-over man shuffles past our table. This is a classy Tim Horton's with a decorative tin-plated ceiling and nice lighting. He sticks out.

"This guy," says Donna, nodding her head in his direction, "I took him to a half-

\* Names have been changed to protect identities.

# Streets

## Vancouver

way house. I gave him my sandals. He was hungry. I gave him a bag of food and I sent him on his way.”

It’s like Matthew 25:35 (I was hungry... and you fed me) is being read out loud.

### **Buick of Hope**

Late into every Thursday night Jan drives slowly down Toronto streets, looking for the girls. Her Buick is hospital, confessional. It is Santa’s sleigh with outreach bags stitched from beautiful fabric piled on her car floor. They are stuffed with Kleenex, wipes, candy, hand sanitizer, a condom and Jan’s business card. Some girls ask for a bag in their favourite colour, or to match their outfit.

Jan’s car is also a laser beam that quickly finds the girls and women I slowly begin to see, half in the shadows, emerging, dressed to sell.

“Most of my relationship building is when they are not working. This is ‘Hi, how are you? We care about you,’” explains Jan. “They’re my friends, we hang out. We laugh, we pray, we tell dirty jokes. Honestly, when I go to regular church I have a hard time. I like that they are real. I want to be real.”

This does feel pretty real.

We drive by Regent Park and pull over to speak to Sarah\*, clearly glad to see Jan, but with little time to talk.

“I’ve gotta work. Bye, Jan. I love you,” she says warmly and pulls away from the window. It’s a very matter-of-fact meet and greet, as if we were chatting by a water cooler and Sarah’s meeting was about to begin.

This is not the Toronto I love. It is painful, dark, wrenching.

### **And Then Pain Fills the Car**

Cindy\* is standing with a crowd of men on a dark stretch of George Street. When she recognizes Jan, she comes over immediately and leans into the window. She wears what seems to be a housedress that is too big. A stuffed lion peeks out of her backpack as if it is a child she is



piggybacking around town. I wonder who it replaces.

Cindy's face crumbles as Jan asks her gentle questions. "How are you? Are you okay? What's going on?" Cindy's voice is soft, whispery in response. She cries and pleads with Jan to call her boyfriend to come down quickly. Her pain floats through the open window and begins to replace the oxygen in the car.

There is something very bad happening here.

Cindy's boyfriend, who Jan thinks might be a good guy, shows up. Jan invites Cindy to a Prayer Day coming up at church, which meets at Yonge Street Mission.

"You want to save her from hell? This is hell right here," says her boyfriend, pointing to the concrete sidewalk. "She's in hell now."

As we pull away from this dark, dark place, Jan says, "You never give up on anybody. I know she loves the Lord, I know

that. You just love the person. It doesn't matter if they smoke crack. You love them just the same." Later, we see Cindy weaving across the street, all alone.

It is clear the claws of addiction are sunk deeply into most of the women we see on the street tonight. I volunteer to put a necklace with an angel pendant on Heather, one of the final women we speak to. Jan wants her to have it.

Heather is funny, bright, engaging, and patient as she has to practically crawl into the front seat of Jan's Buick and lie across my legs as I struggle with the clasp. She is wearing a funky tweed cap, has alcohol seeping from her

pores, and says she doesn't come out very often anymore. She looks just like a friend of mine.

### Just an Addiction Away

More than once on this night I have felt it is only drug or alcohol addiction that stands between the streets they work on and the street I live on.

Eve\*, another friend of Jan's, free now of prostitution, confirms this hunch. She tried crack three times, and the third time it enslaved her. "The choice was removed from me. My addiction made me do it. It's not by choice I prostituted. To work on the streets, you're doing it for addiction."

Eve, again, strikes me as extraordinarily ordinary in appearance, in how she speaks, in her love for her children, in her gym T-shirt, headband and small silver earrings. And in her love for God, clearly tested, deeply true.

"I've always been a follower of Jesus Christ. When I went to jail when I was in



PHOTO: WWW.YSM.CA

Jan Rothenburger: "You never give up on anybody."

## Exit Strategist

Shona Stewart believes there is a way out of prostitution. She should know. She spent 16 years as a sex worker before shedding her addictions and finding satisfaction for her deeper spiritual cravings in accepting Jesus Christ as her Lord and Saviour.

Now she is putting her experience to work by assisting other women who are trying to exit the sex trade. "God has called me to help women – to help them understand that there is hope on the other side of a prostituted lifestyle, that there is hope in Jesus Christ."

Stewart is the director of Dignity House in Winnipeg, Man., a Christian and Missionary Alliance church initiative. Dignity House is a home where Stewart lives with as many as three women who are making the effort to escape the vicious trap of prostitution. She teaches an array of life skills and provides counselling which includes a thorough grounding in Christian discipleship.

"We need Christ to give us the thing we're missing – the love, the hope, trust in a loving Father who will bring us through all trials in life."

Getting out of the sex trade is never an easy process. "These women need to be loved each step of the way," says Stewart. It's not enough for Christians to just talk about



PHOTO: KEVIN YOUNG

Shona Stewart: "There is hope on the other side of a prostituted lifestyle."

good news. "Prostituted women need to see the good and mercy we talk about."

Stewart sometimes finds herself in tension with people on all sides of the prostitution issue. Many people simply avoid it or maintain that since everyone has a right to treat their body as they please, there's no point interfering.

On the other hand, there are the moralizers

– often in the Christian community – who slot sex sins into a special category and are insufferably harsh on prostitutes.

She has a message for the Church. "The Christian community needs to understand that the outcomes and successes will differ greatly from their ideal. If my house is not full, that doesn't mean we're not succeeding. When women I've seen and worked with come back and want to try again, that's a success."

Stewart is also a vocal advocate working for the abolition of prostitution in Canada through the Defend Dignity network. She tells her story to raise awareness and lobbies "for stronger legal and social deterrents to eliminate both the illicit demand for and the selling of sex."

"We need to educate men on the harm they're doing to girls and communities," she insists. **FT** –Doug Koop



Volunteers with Love Lives Here pray with a woman on the streets of Winnipeg.

PHOTO: HEATHER BAREFOOT

my addiction, I felt God was protecting me," she says. "Even when I went to the federal penitentiary [on drug trafficking charges] and got my sentencing, that was my saving grace."

Eve credits one woman who stuck by her and told her she saw something else in her. "She told me that she saw such potential in me. It only took one person to do that, having faith in me so I could have faith in myself. And if I can help one person, it's all worth it."

These days Eve is weaving back together her torn relationship with her sons. She tells me she listens to Christian music all the time, recites lyrics by heart. Track five of her Kirk Franklin CD is pretty much worn out.

"I feel like my life is rich. I've had people say to me they see wealth in me. I really feel like something wonderful is going to happen," says Eve. "I feel like I'm okay. I'm okay." **FT**

**KAREN STILLER** is a senior editor at *Faith Today*.

## Winnipeg. Sargent and Burnell. 11:00 p.m. Sept. 20.

A young woman hunkers on a store step with her head under a hoodie and a crack pipe in her hand when the sudden appearance of a middle-aged

man and woman bearing a thermos and sandwiches startles her back to the Friday night street scene.

"Oh, God!" she erupts, and hastens to let us know she's just fine and doesn't need anything – no food, no drink, no ride, no prayer. Then, for a moment she softens and gives us her name. It's Jasmine\*. "I'm a little embarrassed," she allows.

Yet no sooner are these welcoming words out of her mouth than one of her friends appears on the sidewalk. "Hey!" Jasmine calls to her. "Christians!" Her friend hauls her away. The wailing of sirens punctuates the late night noise of the street.

The Christians return to the Love Lives Here shuttle bus and move on to find other nighthawk souls who may be hungry or tired, lonely or afraid on a brisk September evening. Over the course of three hours we speak with about a dozen prostituted people. Some want warmth. Some want company. Some want a ride. Some want to be left alone. Some receive prayer.

On a dark residential street Stephanie\* steps aboard as soon as the bus pulls over. She's been here before. Something within her craves the coziness and safety of this little band of charismatic Christian workers who regularly give up their weekends to show kindness on the harshest streets of Winnipeg and extend a helping hand to

those who feel trapped.

Stephanie is just settling in to pray with a couple of women when Noreen\* bounds energetically up the steps and changes the mood on the bus in an instant. The two 20-something street workers bounce around like schoolgirls greeting each other after a long holiday. They are giddy in their exuberance and delighted by their chance meeting.

Noreen has just jumped out of a john's van. She reeks of alcohol, but she's in a happy mood and irreverently joins the prayer meeting that's forming at the back of the bus. Five women hold hands in a circle and begin to raise their voices in prayer. Noreen is gripping the arms and hands of Heidi, a volunteer who is speaking in tongues.

As one of the other Christians utters a more conventional prayer, Noreen interrupts with an admonition to "Wrap it up soon and say 'amen' so I know when it is over." When they finally do, Noreen is in hurry-up-and-let's-move-on mode. But before she leaves, she stops and turns to look into Heidi's eyes.

"I didn't understand a word you said." She pauses. "But I felt it. Thank you."

## Divine Sanction

Prayer and compassion are the currency of the little band of Love Lives Here volunteers. Before they head out to the streets, they gather together to pray to God for each other and the people they'll encounter. They believe there is work to be done, people to be saved and set free. "Give them another chance, Lord. Come against every darkness."

On the streets they are eager to offer prayer to any and all they meet. Many refuse, but others tolerate the request and some respond eagerly and gratefully. "There are a lot of 'Christian' girls out there," advises one of the volunteers. "They may have had an encounter at camp or somewhere in their childhood. They are just fine with Jesus." Some even welcome the anointing touch of oil and the soothing words of God's unending love.

Of course, not everyone is interested in the God talk. Jessica\* shivers on a dark corner on a sketchy street looking at the pickup trucks and boisterous men huddled a half block away. She is desperately unhappy, a hard-looking woman in her mid- to late 30s. "I need \$20, so I'm doing



PHOTO: ANDREW STEPHENS-RENNIE

■ **Volunteers with REED (Resist Exploitation, Embrace Dignity) hold an unusual communion service in front of Brandi's Exotic Show Lounge in Vancouver.**

this," she explains. Because she is cold she climbs reluctantly aboard the bus, complaining how "This isn't making me any money." The volunteers don't carry cash.

Addictions and a lifetime of hardships have brought Jessica to this tough place. As she sees it, renting her body for sex on this street corner is her only option. She doesn't want prayer. "I don't believe in God." When one of the volunteers asks if she sometimes gets mad at God for the way things are turning out, she says, "No. Like I said, I don't believe in God." She doesn't want food. She doesn't want a ride home. She accepts a pair of gloves and steps back onto the dark street.

### Saved

Our encounter with Carina\* is very different. We're rumbling along a thoroughfare when the Love Lives Here driver makes a sudden left turn, cuts through a parking lot and heads back the way we'd just come. "I saw a girl at the bus stop," he says as he pulls over.

Two volunteers, a man and a woman, step out to greet her. A few minutes later they return with Carina, who appears to be only 16 or 17. She'd been afraid, waiting for the bus. Men kept pulling over and propositioning her. That's not what she was looking for. She just wanted a ride home and was very grateful to be sitting in safe company. When she realizes she's with Christians, she says she'd been to church recently with a friend who'd gotten "saved."

"Have you been saved, Carina?" asks a veteran volunteer.

"No," she replies. "I'm not saved. I want to. I don't know how."

As the bus jolts and bounces towards Carina's home, a younger volunteer offers a brief and simple explanation of salvation through Jesus Christ and invites Carina to say a prayer with her. After the prayer the busload bursts into song. "Happy birthday, dear Carina, all the angels rejoice."

When Carina steps from the bus, her arms are laden with bags of sandwiches and chocolate milk. A new prayer scarf hangs loosely around her neck. She has an appointment to meet Heidi at a church luncheon in a few days, the same church she'd attended with her friend. She is smiling. "I'm so glad I met up with you guys," she says.

"Don't forget to tell others," says Heidi.

The Love Lives Here volunteers don't believe in coincidences. They see each engagement as a divinely ordained connection that was meant to happen. They believe they are planting seeds of hope and healing, even in the women who walk away or reject their compassion with cursing.

The encounter with Carina boosts the volunteers' spirits and bolsters their belief. Their intervention has given a vulnerable person another chance. It is an answer to their earlier prayer for "more light in people's lives, more flickers of hope."

They love the prostituted women

and men they meet, and pray that God would give them “a desire for greater and mightier thoughts.” They ask God to “put their feet on the right path,” and to “let them know they are valuable. They are diamonds.” **FT**

**DOUG KOOP** is a writer in Winnipeg.

## Vancouver. Hornby and Dunsmuir streets. 8:30 p.m. Sept. 9.

**W**hen I joined them, they were huddled together in a dimly lit doorway. Eleven or 12 of them, they spoke together, offering furtive glances as men got out of slowing cabs to head inside and upstairs. Passing scraps of bread and a single cup, the group’s voices lift above the din of a nearby restaurant, singing, “Hosanna in the highest, let our king be lifted up, hosanna in the highest.”

This is a communion service like none I’ve ever seen, in a place like few I have been. We are in front of Brandi’s Exotic Show Lounge around the corner from the prestigious Vancouver Club, overshadowed by sky-scraping bank towers, and surrounded by a plethora of boutique shops. Brandi’s has its own version of power-filled excess.

Brandi’s does not fit as easily into the caricatures of Vancouver prostitution often perpetuated by the news media and rock music. For good or ill, whenever discussing Vancouver’s prostitution scene, my mind inevitably strays to the stark image presented by Canadian rockers Billy Talent on their debut album:

Standing in the rain  
Milk carton mug-shot baby  
Missing since 1983  
Standing in the rain  
20 years of dirty needles  
Raindrops runnin’ through my  
veins.

## A Body Broken

But this is far from that. In the heart of the city, on a warm clear night, REED (Resist Exploitation, Embrace Dignity, [www.embracedignity.org](http://www.embracedignity.org)) will show me another side of Vancouver’s sex trade. They will also show me a brand new response. “This is the body of Christ, broken for you,” says the

young woman next to me as she tears bread from the loaf.

Michelle Miller, REED’s executive director, is invited often to speak about the end of trafficking. As a Christian abolitionist in the tradition of Josephine Butler, Miller is a determined voice in the movement to put an end to prostitution. And while REED

offers advocacy for and assistance to prostituted women, REED’s work also focuses on abolishing the systems that lead to oppression in the first place. This is why they are strong advocates for adapting the Nordic Model to Canada.

“For years,” Miller relates, “it was mostly women who came up to me after a talk.”

# Introducing the Nordic Model

By Julia Beazley

**O**ver the past few years, The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) has been working in partnership with other organizations in pursuit of reforming Canada’s prostitution laws. We are calling on the Federal Government to amend the *Criminal Code* to implement laws based on the legal and social framework of what is known as the Nordic Model of Prostitution Law.

This model, first enacted in Sweden, recognizes the vast majority of prostituted persons are not engaged in prostitution freely and willingly, and therefore focuses the punitive powers of the law on the purchasers and purveyors of sexual services – the johns, pimps and traffickers – while decriminalizing those who are being sold.

The sex trade operates according to simple market principles of supply and demand. As long as there is a demand for purchasing women’s bodies, there will be pimps, traffickers and organized crime ready and willing to guarantee a supply.

Sweden recognized that to abolish prostitution, they would need to focus their efforts on eliminating the demand for purchasing sexual services. They also understood prostitution and human trafficking are intrinsically linked, with trafficking rings established to feed the demand for paid sex.

Under this model of law, individuals who pay for sex are subject to steep fines and possible imprisonment. Those who are being prostituted are not charged, which facilitates their moving on from prostitution.

Along with the change in law, the Swedish government put in place a national strategy emphasizing social structures and systems to ensure that women who want to exit prostitution have the resources and supports available to them to make this possible. They also initiated a broad public awareness campaign to affirm that the purchase of sex is not just illegal in Sweden, but is considered violence against women and a direct affront to equality between the sexes.

The Swedish model is one of the most coherent and successful prostitution policy models ever developed. This model has proven quite successful in dramatically reducing prostitution and trafficking, and has been replicated in Norway, Iceland, and is in various stages of consideration in France, Israel and Ireland.

The Nordic model isn’t perfect, but the countries that have implemented it are committed to constant evaluation and improvement with the aim of ending sexual exploitation. In Canada, because of our constitutional division of powers between the Federal and provincial governments, there will be some unique challenges to its implementation, but it is both doable and the most effective, most just model developed to date.

The EFC released a framework report in December 2013 (at [www.theEFC.ca/OutOfBusiness](http://www.theEFC.ca/OutOfBusiness)) to suggest what a Canadian version of the Nordic model might look like. You can also find more resources including videos you can show in your church at [www.theEFC.ca/ProstitutionLawReform](http://www.theEFC.ca/ProstitutionLawReform). **FT**

**JULIA BEAZLEY** is policy analyst at The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.

But speaking at churches and college and university campuses in recent years, Miller noticed a growing number of young men who want to be involved. More often than not, they're wanting the rescue side, busting down brothel doors.

Miller bristles, "They say, 'I want this to be my career. I want to go kick some ass,' but when we suggest that they start a men against rape group on their campus, they inevitably leave." Asked to speculate on why they don't stick around, Miller says, "It asks something really different of them. It demands their vulnerability."

Miller and others in the abolitionist movement know the roots of prostitution run deep into a patriarchal culture founded on violence against women. Not content simply to rescue prostituted women, REED is looking further upstream to address both the individual and social causes of prostitution.

Miller hopes Christians will realize this isn't simply about men buying women in Thailand (although that's part of it), but that it has as much "to do with...male violence against women in Canada as well."

Krista-Dawn Kimsey has a laid-back, caring persona. Former worship pastor at The River Community Church in San Jose, California, she and her family followed God's call to establish a Christian community among the poor in Vancouver. Their Servant Partners training centre and internship program launched in 2010.

While ministering at The River, Kimsey took the opportunity to spend several successive summers serving in Bangkok in partnership with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. Each year her group included a prayer walk around the city's brothels as part of its orientation. Afterwards, the group reflected on ways they could respond personally and as a group.

On this night, Kimsey shares a story about her encounter with men doing outreach in the red light district. They were there to speak with other men, dissuading potential johns from offending. They'd talk to them, finding ways to humanize the women being prostituted. They'd get them to talk about their families – their children, their wives, their mothers. "Sometimes

they'd ask," Kimsey recounts, "What's your mother doing right now?" Affirming the humanity of both johns and prostituted women can be a challenge to our sensibilities.

And yet, the message behind the bread and wine shared this night on a notorious Vancouver street corner had to be one of redemption and restoration for all.

### After the Eucharist

After celebrating the Lord's Supper together in that most unlikely of places, I sit with Miller, Kimsey and a number of others in Kimsey's living room to discuss their simple, yet public act of worship in front of Brandi's. Drawing from her experience in Thailand, I ask Kimsey why the problem of demand doesn't appear to receive the same atten-

tion here in Canada. "It's almost expected that this is what men do and desire. It's normal," says Kimsey. "Look how quickly we got over Hugh Grant," or Ben Affleck, for that matter, whose engagement to Jennifer Lopez ended after he was caught in a tryst with a Brandi's girl.

Of course, not all men are pimps or johns. They're not all selling sex, and they're not all buying it. But that doesn't mean our culture or the Canadian Church is immune. Teaching a class on prostitution and trafficking entitled "Intelligent Love," Miller and other experts argued that we participate in the commodification of and violence against women in many more subtle – yet equally damaging – ways.

Jonathan Wilson, a member of that first Intelligent Love cohort, is also the Pioneer McDonald professor of theology and ethics at Vancouver's Carey Theological Seminary. For him, "Male and female relationships are at the basis of what it means to be human," and yet, sitting in Kimsey's living room, he argues, "Our identity as male and female is broken by sin. There's a lot of confusion in that."

As the group continues to reflect on the Brandi's service, Wilson hangs back. One of only three men in the room, Wilson spends more time listening than talking. He breaks his silence to say, "[One of the things] I've learned from Michelle and others is that as

soon as I speak, I'm speaking from a place of privilege and authority. It's just very difficult to work against that."

Wilson says, "This is the hard work I [and all men] have to do in the same way that women have to do the hard work of finding your voice, and silencing the voices that tell you you've said too much, or you're being too opinionated." These are more subtle forms of violence against women, but they're violence all the same.

"It's so obvious to me that it's male violence against women, but you have few men who want to actually do anything about that," adds Miller.

"What's more," offers Megan McFeeley, an intern with Servant Partners, "passivity is participation in continuing to uphold the institution of prostitution."

### A Show of Power

The celebration of Communion went by without a hitch. Members of the group had been prepared for a negative encounter in advance – whether with patrons, bouncers or police. The only member of the public who stopped for any length of time was Johnny, a young man recently released from prison. He stopped to ask for money, then remained with the group to pray.

Was good accomplished? No doors were broken down. No patrons were dissuaded from going inside. The cabbies may have raised an eyebrow, but who's to say? It all goes back to the way Miller initially framed the gathering. "I find the spaces around sex clubs to be very contested space," she says. In these contested spaces, one version of reality is being sold, but, "There's a lot more going on there that we don't see."

Staring up at the towers neighbouring Brandi's we are surrounded by the city's symbols of wealth, status and power. But the Christian symbol of the cross represents another form of power these Eucharistic protesters are well aware of.

"There's something I think connected to power in what we did as well," shares Kimsey. "People would prefer to knock down the doors of a brothel rather than give up their TV show at 9 o'clock to stand in front of one and have communion. And yet what we did tonight was very simple and very opposite to human power." **ST**

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**ANDREW STEPHENS-RENNIE** is a writer in Vancouver.

**Affirming the humanity of both johns and prostituted women can be a challenge to our sensibilities.**



# Two Days in June

## Are our laws on prostitution and euthanasia outdated?

By **Bruce J. Clemenger**. Originally published in Faith Today, Jul/Aug 2013.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Such a step would be regressive, not progressive. In the trajectory of recent history in the West – from the abolition of slavery to the development of employment laws to universal condemnation of

human trafficking – each stage involved rejecting practices that subjugate and exploit.

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

The day before the hearing, the Government of Quebec announced it plans to permit euthanasia in limited circumstances.

It contends euthanasia is a form of medical treatment – hence a provincial and not a federal matter – and the Criminal Code sanctions on euthanasia should not apply to medical treatment.

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

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

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

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



**Bruce Clemenger**

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

Are our laws restricting euthanasia and prostitution shackles on

our freedom? Or are they good news to the vulnerable who would otherwise be exploited?

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

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

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

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

# Can We Help to Break

The crisis over Canada's prostitution laws means now is the time to bring urgently needed improvements in law – and in our attitudes and ministries as individuals and as Christian institutions.

By **Karen Stiller**. Originally published in Faith Today, Mar/Apr 2011.

Every time something really bad would happen to Katarina MacLeod, 38, she would get a tattoo. The Toronto-area woman is covered from head to toe. "I thought if I covered myself, clients would be scared," she says. One tattoo reads "D.T.A.," which stands for "Don't Trust Anyone." Another is a black rose, dripping with blood. It says, "Love is Suicide."

Her clients included "lawyers, judges, construction workers, police, guys who want things done that they obviously can't do with their better half, and regular guys who come in and want some comfort."

MacLeod entered the "sex trade" by working in massage parlours at age 21. She had a few more years of life behind her than most girls do when they are first trapped, but what led up to it is agonizingly typical. "I was in an abusive relationship. I had been abused most of my life," she explains. "My father didn't have much to do with us. We grew up in the system."

MacLeod endured violent relationships with one bad boyfriend after another. She lived through abuse better called torture. If her life were a movie, you would want to look away, horrified by what was unfolding on the screen in front of you.

"I think what happened was because I was an abuse victim for so long – these kinds of people prey on the weak. You end up in this whirlwind of wanting to be accepted and wanting to be loved," she says.

A month after she had her fourth child, her 14-year-old eldest daughter told her she was being raped by MacLeod's current boyfriend – the father of MacLeod's new baby. "I needed a lawyer, so I started turning tricks. How was I going to pay the bills? I have these four kids, I need to pay rent. I need to make money. I have no education," she says. "I didn't know any other way."

She estimates 10,000 men bought her for sex during her years as a prostituted woman. Sometimes she would turn 10 tricks a night and work seven days a week.

MacLeod has been free of prostitution for two years now, and free of drugs for almost that long. "In selling my body I became a drug addict, popping pills. Every girl I've ever met in this industry has been abused," she says.

"Girls as young as 14, with moms that were drug addicts. Not one girl I met was stable. All of us did drugs; every single one was high. If you have a soul, you can't do this and feel no shame or not dirty. Feeling like that for so long, if you don't numb it, you're going to kill yourself."

Two years out is not a long time.

But MacLeod has turned her former life inside out trying to make sense of it. "I have gone through every emotion out there," she says. When asked the painful question – if she felt, with the vantage point of time, she could have made a different choice so many years ago – her answer is unequivocal. "No. I don't believe there was a choice. I had no one offering me help. I didn't have people close to me. I didn't know if there were resources. It didn't even cross my mind. What I knew how to do was sell my body. And that's what I did."

## An Un-free Choice

Derek Parenteau helps run STAND (Street Alternatives and New Directions) out of Yonge St. Mission in Toronto. STAND helps prostituted girls who are ready to begin the slow, painful climb off the streets and out of the massage parlours. "No one

is in it because they like it," says Parenteau. "They've been forced into it, either directly by a pimp or indirectly by financial need."

After years of working in this ministry, Parenteau has reached a conclusion, one he says is shared by "anyone who has credibility and is doing good work, whether Christian or otherwise." His conclusion: "That people working in

the sex trade are the victims. The others are sexual exploiters, the predators. If you really know what you are doing and you are really involved, nothing else makes

**“Prostitution is something that happens to you, not because of you.”**

sense.”

"Prostitution," says Danielle Strickland, pastor of a Salvation Army church in the inner city of Edmonton, smack dab in the prostitution stroll area, "is something that happens to you, not because of you." And it happens to Canadian girls when they are very young.

"The vast majority of women engaged in sex work get into it when they are still minors," says Greg Paul, director of Sanctuary, an inner-city ministry in downtown Toronto. "The median age is 15 or 16. If we say it is their choice, then we are saying that at 15, the majority of people who will be sex workers are making a clear, adult, non-pressured decision and saying, 'That's what I'd really like to do, is have men pay me for sex.' There's something drastically wrong with that picture."

John Cassells is managing director of Light Patrol, a mobile street program of Youth Unlimited in Toronto. The program has a focused effort called SafeLight "especially for young women whose lives have been affected by sexual exploitation." Safe-

# the Chains?

Light works with two groups of women who are prostituted: high track and low track.

Cassells explains: “We go to build friendships with the high-track girls. Those are the girls who are usually not dealing with mental health issues. It is an opportunity for them to be with someone who treats them with dignity, who knows about their life at street level. The low track girls are literally homeless, usually drug addicted and often have mental health disorders.”

What the two groups have in common – besides almost always being fatherless – is “that they are victims of violence. When you look at, not just the dangers, but the harm that comes to girls in prostitution, you can only conclude that it is a very violent and harmful environment,” says Cassells.

Julia Beazley is a policy analyst with The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC). In 2011 its Centre for Faith and Public Life in Ottawa published the discussion paper *Selling Ourselves: Prostitution in Canada, Where Are We Headed?* (available at [www.theEFC.ca/prostitutionlawreform](http://www.theEFC.ca/prostitutionlawreform)).

Beazley says Cassells is right about the violence. “Their stories are all the same once they’re in. Stories of degradation, dehumanization, violence and abuse. It’s horrific. The majority have no say, no choice. How can we call ‘choice’ a decision made out of desperation, for survival, or for utter lack of good, healthy choices?”

## Prostitution Goes to Court

Last fall it was almost impossible to look away as Terri-Jean Bedford, a dominatrix clad in leather, stood in front of media cameras and declared it “emancipation day” as three key provisions in Canada’s anti-prostitution laws were struck down by an Ontario court.

Bedford and her two fellow constitutional challengers presented prostitution as a busi-



# What You Can Do

- Get educated. Tap into the resources of organizations like REED ([www.embracedignity.org](http://www.embracedignity.org)), Walk With Me ([www.wix.com/timea77/walk-with-me](http://www.wix.com/timea77/walk-with-me)) and the EFC ([www.theEFC.ca/prostitutionlawreform](http://www.theEFC.ca/prostitutionlawreform)), especially for understanding the Nordic model.
- Write and call your MP requesting the Nordic model be implemented in Canada. The EFC offers tips on taking action at [www.theEFC.ca/TakeAction](http://www.theEFC.ca/TakeAction).
- Give this article to your minister, and then ask him or her to preach more often and openly on topics like pornography, prostitution and injustice.
- If you have children in your home, create an open speaking environment about topics like sex, marriage, pornography and how we view women who are prostituted. Discuss how pornography and prostitution are signs of God's good gifts gone awry.
- Stop viewing pornography. Get help from an experienced Christian counsellor or specialized ministry such as [xxxchurch.com](http://xxxchurch.com). More links available at [www.theEFC.ca/pornography](http://www.theEFC.ca/pornography) (and click resources).
- Financially and prayerfully support organizations on the front lines of helping women who are prostituted, like the organizations mentioned in this article.
- Pray for the victims of prostitution and for the men who buy them, that they would all be freed.

—Karen Stiller

ness and themselves as entrepreneurs of the erotic. They argued that what is called, almost always with a knowing smile, the world's oldest profession, can be made safer for women by dismantling the legal restrictions against living off the avails of prostitution, keeping a bawdy house and communicating for the purposes of prostitution.

But striking down those prohibitions – a legal decision that, it is safe to say, came out of left field for most Canadians – is “giving a gift to traffickers and abusers. That is the worst thing they can do,” says MacLeod.

During the Ontario case Robert Pickton's name came up. It was argued the serial killer who preyed on prostituted women in Vancouver's east end, brutally murdering at least 26 of them on his farm of horrors, would not have had access to the women he killed if they had been safely tucked away in a legal brothel.

Michelle Miller runs REED (Resist Exploitation, Embrace Dignity), a Van-

couver-based group that journeys with women who are being sexually exploited. “Don't you dare bring up Robert Pickton,” says Miller, “there's nothing that rattles my cage more than that.”

Miller says the women Pickton killed – plucked out of the neighbourhood where Miller spends most of her time – would never have been employed by a brothel in the first place; they would not have been classified as clean of drugs or disease. They teetered on the lowest rung of the slippery, desperate ladder that leads women so quickly into the ugly pit of prostitution – and makes it so incredibly difficult to climb out of.

There is not much that, in Canada today, could have kept them safe.

As shocking as it was for the Ontario court to strike down the prostitution laws, advocates fighting for the safety and rights of women who are prostituted view this moment as an opportunity.

Now we have a chance to reshape Canada's laws to reflect the unpalatable

reality of prostitution: the girls, boys and women trapped in its snare are victims – and something more has to be done about the pimps who own them and the johns who buy them.

## Hard Questions Can Create Good Laws

“It's time we start asking ourselves – as individuals, as churches, and as a nation – some hard questions about prostitution,” says Beazley. “We have all heard it said over and over that it's the world's oldest profession, but we know that in reality, as others have said before, it's the world's oldest *oppression*. And to what other injustice has our response been to tolerate or condone it simply because ‘that's the way it's always been’? Or worse, to legitimize or legalize it? None. While we may not always immediately recognize an injustice for what it is – once we do, we fight it. This is a fight whose time has come.”

The Canadian government has appealed the Ontario court decision [Read about the Dec. 2013 *Bedford* decision elsewhere in these articles]. Meanwhile the EFC, along with other individuals and concerned groups, is advocating an alternative legal framework known as the Nordic Model, based on Sweden's success in almost completely dismantling prostitution.

“The Nordic model,” explains Beazley, “is the best model out there right now.” Implemented in 1999, Sweden's *Law on the Prohibition of Purchase of Sexual Services* establishes prostitution as a form of abuse. It criminalizes the buyers, not the sellers. Pimps and johns are arrested and charged, while prostituted women are offered a strong exit network of support.

Within one year the number of prostitutes in Sweden decreased by 50 per cent.

“I totally believe in that Nordic model,” says MacLeod. “If you criminalize the johns and decriminalize the women, I think men will think twice.”

If Christians believe there won't be men sitting beside them on the pews on Sundays who need to think twice, think again.

“They are married men with kids,” says Danielle Strickland, of the johns who cruise through her neighbourhood. “They are your dads. The busiest time in our neighbourhood is before work.”

## Johns in the Pews

Michelle Miller in Vancouver concurs: “We see men driving through our alleyways at 7:30 in the morning. They have car seats in the back, and sometimes there’s a little fish sticker on the back of the van.”

John Cassells of Light Patrol says, “Probably most of the readers will actually be going to church currently with someone who visits prostitutes. They’re really the average guy. They cross those boundaries to think that they can obtain a position of power to go and choose who they will be intimate with. The position of the john is much more about seeking power and control than seeking a good and fulfilling sexual experience.”

Dion Oxford is chair of Street Level, the EFC’s roundtable on poverty and homelessness, and director of The Salvation Army Gateway in downtown Toronto: “When I was working out there more hands-on, there would certainly be men driving around in minivans with baby seats in the back. These are married, middle-aged men, some of whom were picking up boys; church men who are gay and married.”

If it’s shocking to think the johns come from your neighbourhood, remember, it might be the girl who lives next door they are purchasing.

“Where do these girls come from? They come from our neighbourhoods,” says Cassells. “They are going to school with our kids. It is the kid who you don’t let your child go to their house, and you don’t let your child invite them to yours, because you know there is trouble. That is the kid who is likely to get involved in prostitution.”

So, what is the Church to do?

A lot more, and quite a bit differently.

“We like to have a G-rated church, but as soon as you open the Bible, you realize Christianity is not always rated G,” says Cassells. “The Church needs to engage in this issue, and become aware that out of the many prostitutes and the many, many buyers, we all know people personally involved in prostitution at some level.”

The church indeed welcomes the broken and attempts to usher in healing, while at the same time facing injustice that would be easier to ignore – and opposing it. Prostitution is clearly such an injustice, where vulnerable women (and children

and some men) are abused to meet the unrestrained appetites of people with whom we cross paths daily.

## A Question of Justice

Evangelicals who work on this issue are calling the Church to shift its thinking from prostitution as an issue of morality – or of a perceived lack of it *in* the women who are prostitutes – and shift the conversation to one about justice – or the actual absence of it *for* the women who are prostituted.

“Like many of these kinds of issues it is important to fight it on the political level, but if we believe it is exploitation, then we have a big job to do as a church,” says STAND’s Derek Parenteau. “We need to give opportunity for people to get out. The average person I work with has a Grade 8 education; there are going to be barriers. If they have a kid at home and have known nothing else for the last 12 years, they’re going to need lots of help.”

Just as the Church is reaching out, it needs to look in, says Michelle Miller. “When I speak at churches, the first thing I do is make the connection with online pornography, which is just enormous in our culture. And as followers of Christ, we are called to go four or five steps further and look at the systems of power and abuse that make prostitution possible in the first place.

“One question that burns me,” says Miller, “is: Why is it that people who are so ready to care for and be passionate about fighting for justice for a kid who is being trafficked in Costa Rica will blame the aboriginal woman on the street corner in their own town?”

That is a good question.

For all the waking up and soul-searching the Church as a whole might need to do, the Church as community can, and does, provide a healing, restorative – if imperfect – place for women escaping prostitution. “People involved in sex work think that Christians are really inclined to condemn them. I think that’s been the truth, but not nearly as true as people think,” says Greg Paul. “There is also a great deal of com-

passion historically by people of faith to women trapped in prostitution.”

And, says Dion Oxford, “God is bigger than prostitution. But just because you’ve accepted Jesus into your heart doesn’t mean it will all go away.”

Katarina MacLeod knows that better than anyone.

“I realize that who I am now is who I should have been all those years,” she says. “I want the Church to realize that we are victims, and just welcome us like they would

welcome anyone else. I’m someone’s daughter, and that’s the way I want to be treated – like I am precious.”

Her real name, by the way, is not Katarina. “My old name I associate with violence and abuse and I am in the process of legally changing it,” she explains. MacLeod went to sleep one night, a little while after a friend supported her financially and emotionally deep enough and long enough to enable her to leave prostitution – and after years of her oldest daughter, a committed Christian, tell-

ing her over and over again God loved her. She heard the name Katarina in her mind. “I woke up and thought, ‘That is what I want people to call me.’ I knew that it had something to do with God telling me I was beautiful and pure.”

She looked it up and the name Katarina means “pure.”

Today MacLeod works with an organization called Walk With Me that helps victims of human trafficking. She speaks in Toronto-area schools, sharing her story in vivid, hard-core detail to wake up the students to the potential dangers they are in.

MacLeod had 58 tattoos before she got her final one, a little different from the rest. “My last tattoo, on the left side of my neck, says, ‘Grace.’ I didn’t have a word for what I received until my daughter said, ‘Mom, it’s grace!’” And Katarina said to her daughter, “That’s it!” **FT**



**Julia Beazley, policy analyst at The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.**

The *Faith Today* Interview:

# How One Canadian Woman Defends the



PHOTO: LINDSEY KAUTZ

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

*Originally published in Faith Today, Jan/Feb 2014*

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

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

titution law reform and aid to churches working with victims and municipal legislation.

**FT:** The word "abolition" doesn't get used very often, outside of talking about slavery. I'm assuming it's an intentional choice to use that word?

**GG:** It's come to take on its own meaning when you talk to groups like us involved in the issue of human trafficking with its most common end point of prostitution.

We believe that tackling this thing by dealing with the demand end of things is the way to go. We believe we can end prostitution if we end the demand for it. It's the belief that we can put an end to this much like Wilberforce did in England with slavery. With modern-day slavery we can end it if we take a serious look at demand.

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

**GG:** That really is the face of it. It's any

# Dignity of Women Who Are Prostituted

man. I think people often think it's the Robert Picktons and the guys who lurk in dark alleys. It's any man. We use the statistic of one in nine men in Canada buys sex. That's a statistic we found from the journalist Victor Malarek [author of *The Natashas: The New Global Sex Trade* (Penguin Canada, 2004) and *The Johns: Sex for Sale and the Men Who Buy It* (Arcade Publishing, 2011)]. I've

got a number of survivor friends. They tell me it is the dads with the three car seats in the van, to the judge, to the policeman. It can be anybody.

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

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

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

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

**GG:** It's about knowledge. Our audience is church people. When people come to

understand the face of prostituted women in our country, they move to compassion. The number one reason a woman is in prostitution is poverty. And that becomes a huge factor as to why she can't get out.

Most girls who start are 12 or 13 years old. People who are working on the front lines tell us there are now girls as young as seven or eight. That's not child prostitution, that is child sexual abuse. What

kid is making a choice at that age?

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

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

it on a résumé to get a regular job? First Nations women are the face of prostitution in Canada. You've got all those factors of colonization and racism.

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

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

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

**GG:** It can work two ways. Sometimes it can be when the pimp tries to get the girl completely dependent on him. So, she doesn't enter it addicted, but that becomes a part of it. It's another form of exploitation. Some gals are addicted because it's the only coping method to endure what

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

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they are enduring. Prostituted women in our country have a mortality rate 40 per cent higher than the national average. Addiction is another trap.

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

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

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

There's got to be some way they can make income. And with addiction there

has to be someone standing beside them as they go through rehab.

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

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

**FT: One woman interviewed for the story I mentioned earlier felt she was judged at church when the pastor found out about her former life.**

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

We have to reach a place of loving

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

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

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

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

**GG:** We do information forums. We come in and we bring in one of these gals to tell their stories. We partner with the EFC and Julia Beazley comes with her knowledge of the law. We're ad-

vocating for the Nordic model and Julia does a piece on that. We have a Calgary police officer travelling with us now. He's passionate about speaking to men and adds a great component by talking about pornography. We try and find a frontline organization in the local area doing great things with the gals. People need the local groups right there to connect with.

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

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

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

**FT: Do you ever have people who just don't want to hear about this issue?**

**GG:** I think what I've seen is God at work in such miraculous ways again and again

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**FT: Thank you.** **FT**





# Shocking Statistics on Bible Reading

A new Canadian survey suggests there's major work to be done.

By Alex Newman

PHOTO: WWW.DESIGNPICS.COM

**A**lthough Bible literacy, or its lack, has been on the radar of Christian leaders for some time, there was no hard Canadian data to support the observations – or know how to proceed, says Scripture Union president Lawson Murray.

The situation changed three years ago after a conversation Murray had with Rick Hiemstra, a research expert at The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC), about the “bigger picture of culture and church.”

That conversation launched a collaboration between the EFC and the Canadian Bible Forum, a new group that includes Bible League Canada, the Canadian Bible

Society, Every Home for Christ, Gideons International in Canada, OneBook, Open Doors, Scripture Gift Mission, Scripture Union Canada and Wycliffe Bible Translators.

After a full literature review, countless discussions with senior leaders of the participating ministries to develop the right 80 questions, and interviews of 4,500 people across the country, the data was charted and analyzed and has just been released as the Canadian Bible Engagement Study. Financial support for the project came from participating organiza-

tions and from Stronger Together, a group of Christian foundations and individual donors ([www.strongertogethergrants.ca](http://www.strongertogethergrants.ca)).

## Most Christians either seldom or never read the Bible.

The Canadian Bible Engagement Study has found some bad news, some good news and a few surprises.

First the bad news: since 1996 there's been a dramatic decline in regular Bible reading (from 28% reading at least weekly to just 11%) and weekly church attendance (from 27% to 16%). Specifically, only 5% of Canadians report reading the Bible daily, just 14% read at least

once a month, and weekly Bible reading is down by 60%.

What's surprising – and distressing – is that most Christians either seldom or never read the Bible, a decline evident not only in the historic Protestant and Catholic churches, but among Evangelicals too. It was also surprising to discover the decline was even sharper among older people than youth.

Speculation about whether some Bible reading was occurring online instead led to a set of questions about access to apps, Hiemstra says. But this was found to make little or no difference to Bible reading frequency, and the roughly 220 million Scripture downloads are largely by people who attend church.

The most important finding of the study, however, is the undeniable link between Bible reading and church attendance. Simply put, the more people attend church, the more likely they are to read the Bible, *and* to believe it is the inspired Word of God.

Furthermore, certain kinds of church communities have a greater influence in encouraging Bible use than others. The

## Less Christian?

<p><b>14%</b> of Canadians read the Bible at least once a month (down from 28% in 1996)</p>	<p><b>18%</b> of Canadians strongly agree that the Bible is the Word of God (down from 35% in 1996)</p>
<p><b>5%</b> of Canadians read the Bible daily (down from 9% in 1996)</p>	<p><b>67%</b> of Canadians self-identified as Christian in 2011 (down from 83% in 1991)</p>
<p><b>16%</b> of Canadians attend religious services at least weekly (down from 27% in 1996)</p>	<p><b>Sources:</b> Canadian Bible Engagement Study, 2013; God and Society in North America Survey, 1996; National Household Survey, 2011; and the Canadian Census, 1991.</p>

study suggests a link between increased Bible reading and those churches that explicitly present the Bible as a true, authoritative, relevant message – and not only within religious services, but also “in the broader life of the church,” says Hiemstra.

Churches that most strongly encourage Bible use do more than refer to Scripture in sermons – they offer a culture where conversations about the meaning of the

Bible take place, especially face-to-face conversations in small groups. “We perceive the world very differently when there is no electronic,” Hiemstra asserts. “The challenge, of course, is always to find the time to get together.”

Predictably, the same is true at home, and parents who read the Bible more themselves also read more to their children. Even factoring in differences between traditions, Evangelicals proved more likely to read the Bible to their kids.

The bottom line, as Murray puts it, is “Church attendance and engagement with the Bible go hand in hand. You will have a healthy church if you have healthy engagement with the Bible, and the reverse is true – a church that has little engagement with the Bible will fall apart.”

Although the study shows such a rapid decline in both Bible reading and church attendance, questions about why weren't asked. Both Hiemstra and Murray have ideas about why Canada went from 90% of the population identifying as Christian in 1981 to 67% in 2011.

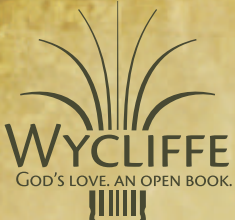
Hiemstra believes 20th-century science and technology, which allowed us to determine and verify the unseen, helped push aside faith, which formerly explained the unseen. “The sense of immediacy that comes along with our current modes of communication – send out a text message or a phone call and expect an immediate reply – affects how we approach prayer,” says Hiemstra.

People start to wonder why God seems not to be responding instantly to our messages, “and that changes how we communicate with Him.”

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Murray adds that living in a postmodern world – with its distrust of authority, rejection of objective truth and the embrace of tolerance – has resulted in the view that Scripture isn't relevant to modern life. It's a cultural skepticism that has invaded the pew as well.

"The study shows that even when people haven't read the Bible, they don't trust it. So we need to ask the Church at large how you or your congregation can advocate positively for the Word of God, and bring the message [of truth] back to our churches."

This situation has taken decades to develop, so it's not going to be fixed overnight, Murray reasons. He figures turning it around will be a 20- to 30-year project.

Judging by the findings from the Canadian Bible Engagement Study, the answer lies in the Church community. Hiemstra says, "Community is the incubator for confidence in the Bible and conversation about the Bible, and can either promote or discourage confidence in the Bible."

Not such a radical answer, considering that historically the Bible was always read in a communal setting – as opposed to privately – and that Scripture is the story of God's community of people, he adds. Community alone isn't enough for a church to have health and growth. Conversations and the setting to inspire confidence in the Bible must also be in place.

Every faith tradition has different approaches to the Bible, but if the study is to be believed, all of them should be increasing their communal Scripture reading because the study shows a clear link between reduced Bible reading, and thus reduced discipleship, when a church does not read Scripture together.

"We need to address what people believe about the Bible," concludes Hiemstra. "Action follows belief. If people accept that the Bible is reliable, trustworthy

and relevant, they'll read it."

Murray's hope for the study is to generate enough healthy dialogue to "fuel the perspective in Christian leaders' minds that Scripture has to be at [the] heart of everything we do, with Jesus as ultimate focus. Scripture ensures that

we can be Christocentric. After we presented our findings, a pastor from Windsor called me, asked if the stats were true and asked, 'What can I do? We have to turn this around.' I'd like to see that response multiply across the country." **FT**

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

## The more people attend church, the more likely they are to read the Bible.



**Lawson Murray says, "Church attendance and engagement with the Bible go hand in hand."**

PHOTO: SCRIPTURE UNION CANADA

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# The *Faith Today* Interview With Bob Kuhn, President of Trinity

**T**WU's proposal for a school of law, although approved by the Federation of Law Societies of Canada, has ignited debate in Canada over topics including discrimination, a school's right to have students sign a community covenant, and of course, religious freedom. The Council of Canadian Law Deans has spoken out against TWU's plans for a law school.

Here are three articles that shed light on the controversy. In the first, Bob Kuhn (BK) speaks with *Faith Today* senior editor Karen Stiller (FT) about freedom of religion, what TWU's students think, the personal nature of the attacks and where he believes Canada is heading. Then, Justin Cooper shares his expertise on the implications for other Canadian schools, and staff from the EFC Centre for Faith and Public Life share theirs on the legal backstory.

**FT: Were you surprised at the outcry from the law deans?**

**BK:** The answer is yes and no. I'm surprised it's become the issue it has. My surprise is really the degree to which the opposition is grounding its positions on an ideology, as opposed to taking into account some of the legal and logical perspectives.

**FT: Listening to some of the comments made by the opposing side, I'm thinking it must be frustrating**

**to be labelled the way you and TWU seem to be. How do you deal with it personally?**

**BK:** It's been challenging at times because of the nature of it being a personal attack, in part. Certainly some of the commentary has been to use the language of the day – "intolerant" and worse. I've received personal threats and the like. I would characterize it as hate mail. The challenge is you can't respond in sound bites and make it a meaningful discussion point.

Those people who find it easy to respond with a sound bite mentality tend to gather the attention of others, but don't tend to generate much in the way of reasoned dialogue. Much of our opposition is not interested in reasoned dialogue. They are interested in ideological purity.

**FT: You've been publicly labelled homophobic, intolerant and closed minded.**

**BK:** And bigoted. Admittedly, sometimes it feels a bit lonely. It's not hard to identify the fact that a lot of people do not want to stick their head up for fear of getting it shot off. I recognize that.

Some lawyers who may have made submissions to the different law societies say they can't really do that because their firms might be critical, or it might damage relationships with clients or partners.

You have to come to realize that you may have to represent people who may feel they can't use their voice. On the other hand, I've had tremendous support from people I haven't even met who say they are praying for us daily and for our school.

My job is to represent the school. The school has a leadership role in this that we need to maintain. Even in the evangelical Christian community there is a great diversity of opinion on this issue, mainly because I don't think it has been thought through and taught about.

**FT: You recently spoke before the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society, which was holding hearings to determine whether it should recognize degrees from TWU. How was that?**

**BK:** I was pleased that the meeting took place and that we were allowed to make

oral submission. I think generally the dialogue went well. I didn't feel that anyone was not willing to have a reasoned discussion at the meeting.

**FT: Where is the TWU student body on this issue?**

**BK:** I think there's a broad diversity of views, which is in some respects healthy, in others reflects a lack of real understanding as to what is at issue here, what the arguments are for and against a particular position like that one set out in our community covenant. We are not a homogeneous community. It generates a lot of discussions, which we've had, on the issues of sexual ethics, sexuality and gender identification issues. We've done as best we can I think to educate in an open, broad, academic freedom context without constraining the discussion. That's led to some pretty interesting points of view – some reflected through students we've had who are gay or lesbian. It's been worthwhile to have these discussions.

**FT: Why would a student from the LGBT community want to attend TWU?**

**BK:** Just because there's an LGBT community member that has an affinity with the Christian environment, that doesn't mean they'd agree with our perspective. It would be unusual under the current social values context or worldview for a married same-sex couple to want to come to TWU. I think that would be unusual, but not unheard of.

**FT: This discussion gets framed as a**

**Canada is becoming a secular humanist environment in every conceivable way.**

# Western University

## **standoff between religious freedom and the right to not be discriminated against based on sexuality. Is that what this is?**

**BK:** Section 2A of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* identifies the fundamental freedom of conscience and religion, which in my view is called up in a significant way in this case, as it was in the B.C. teacher decision. [A 2001 Supreme Court ruling found in favour of TWU's application for a school of education in a similar debate.]

It's an interface of two apparently conflicting perspectives. Is there discrimination against same-sex married couples? The position taken by Trinity Western – is this a question of religious freedom and therefore discrimination against those with religious views on same-sex marriage? That is the very narrowest view of this. The opposition would argue that we don't have any rights outside of our community. Once we venture into public forum, we have to comply with all publicly identified rules, if you will. Including treating people who are married but in civil context as if there were not a religious position in relation to that particular status.

## **FT: It seems pretty clear, but where do you think Canada is heading on these issues?**

**BK:** In my view there is no question that we are becoming a secular humanist environment in every conceivable way. Secular humanism has become a type of religion that tolerates no alternative.

It is broad, inclusive in some sense, but very exclusive in others. If you have a religious view that is not part of the secular norm, especially an evangelical perspective, especially on social issues such as homosexuality, there is no question that it is becoming a problem to maintain those views and to be tolerated.

I think there's a key indicator in this, if you read the 2001 decision [Supreme Court decision finding in favour of TWU's right to have a school of education], and say, "How can anyone read that decision and not apply it to the current fact pattern?"

That decision was made 13 years ago.

PHOTO: TRINITY WESTERN UNIVERSITY



In 13 years people have come to the conclusion 'that was then and this is now.'

To me, that speaks volumes that the discussion on Charter rights could generate a completely different conclusion in the minds of some people we assume are thinking the issues through. In many respects it doesn't have liberality to it. It has a restrictive nature.

A very interesting book I've been reading, *Is God Intolerant? Christian Thinking About the Call for Tolerance* by Daniel Taylor, deals very well with the language we are using. Words like "tolerant" and "discrimination" mean very different things than how we use them.

The opposition to the law school is framing TWU's position as being intolerant without recognizing its own intolerance. It becomes a nomenclature problem, a definitional problem. The term "bigot" is thrown about with abandon, the same as "discrimination."

We've defined discrimination in terms so broad, it becomes a mantra.

**FT: Why should the average Canadian care about this case?**

**BK:** I think it has huge significance for religious freedom in a country heading in the opposite direction. The general trend of secular thinking means that understanding and appreciation of religion of any kind is probably at its lowest in modern history.

We have increased secularism to the point that religion must be confined to something you can believe in and espouse in very carefully chosen terms. Beyond that you face regulation and limitation of rights that we would have considered very strange 25 years ago.

There are so many indicators that suggest that this case, if it is found against TWU in a courtroom, indicates a trend that religious folks need not apply because your personal religious views, once expressed in a public environment, become a grounds for disqualification.


If TWU can't have its law school, there is only one reason that has been identified as having any merit in the public eye – because it has a differing view than secular society regarding the issue of same sex-marriage.

**FT: The nature of pluralism seems to be up for debate.**

**BK:** You used to be able to talk about biblical terminology with some common level of understanding in Canada. These days the whole area of religion is barely discussed and not understood by most. Most people don't understand the critical nature of religious freedom in the country. They are prepared to jettison Christianity and other religions they may find adverse to the secularism that prevails. Anyone who stands up for any issue opposed to secularism is anathema to secularism.

The opposition's perspective is that because of these six words [in the Community Covenant] TWU has no place to play in a pluralistic society – which defies both the definition and intent of pluralism. We're all for pluralism as long as everyone agrees.

It relies on a perverse definition set out in sound bites and accepted by the Canadian public as if it were the only position logically and reasonably available. It's a shame, really.

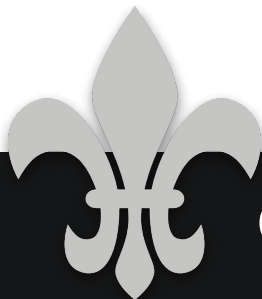
**FT: Thank you, Bob.** 

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# Implications for Other Christian Schools

By Justin Cooper

PHOTO: WWW.DESIGNPICS.COM

**T**he ongoing debate about the legitimacy of Trinity Western University's new law school should give us all pause, especially those involved in Christian education. This is a key fault line in a clash of worldviews that is playing out in our day.

As the social consensus increasingly shifts in favour of a more open sexual ethic, a radical element in our society is seeking to use this to force a rebalancing of the relationship between individual human rights related to sexual orientation (guaranteed in section 15 of the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*) and the rights of institutions with a religiously based identity, particularly universities – rights that are recognized in human rights legislation as well as the Charter.

The approval of TWU's law school has brought back the arguments of a decade ago when this issue surfaced in relation to its teacher education program. At that time, the Supreme Court of Canada upheld TWU's freedom to offer this program in the context of its community standards.

Among other Canadian institutions like TWU, only Crandall University has

faced something similar when objections were raised to a capital funding grant from the City of Moncton. (The current Supreme Court case concerning Loyola High School in Quebec, though related to religious freedom, is not about this issue.)

However, that could all change if the radical view takes hold in the national and provincial treatment of educational institutions. If the radical view that TWU law graduates ought not to be recognized to practise law in certain provinces prevails, other similar programs could be targeted, such as Booth University College's Bachelor of Social Work program, which is recognized in Manitoba but has a national reach.

More ominous is the claim that TWU's law school is not academically credible because of its faith basis and related community standards, particularly regarding sexual activity and marriage. This would shift the argument from the individual to the institutional level, and raise the prospect

that such institutions are not legitimate because they don't subscribe to generally accepted sexual morality.

Such a claim is not limited to one professional degree, but rather has implications for all professional and traditional academic degrees granted by both Christian and secular institutions. If it prevailed and were left to stand, it would put pressure on Christian universities and graduate schools to

dumb down, in wording or in substance, moral standards that reserve sexual intimacy for traditional marriage.

This would undoubtedly lead to long and costly legal battles, and regardless of outcome this could be damaging for the credibility of these institutions. It would force changes that would undermine the Christian ethos and academic integrity of these institutions.

Further, if this criterion were made a condition of being included in national and/or provincial student financial assist-

**More ominous is the claim that TWU's law school is not academically credible because of its faith basis.**

ance programs, then virtually all Christian postsecondary institutions would be hurt financially. Questions about Christian elementary and secondary school requirements could follow (Loyola High School, for example).

Given these possibilities the Christian educational community and Christian community in general, as well as all those who value the freedoms associated with Canada's pluralistic and democratic society, would do well to rally around TWU and the issue its law school represents.

While this issue should also lead us to reflect on the ethos and practice on our campuses as we seek to enfold into our communities those who struggle with sexual and other issues, more importantly it is a strategic opportunity to make the case, not so much for Christian morality, but for the freedoms essential to a democratic society.

To see the religious freedom of Christian academic institutions curtailed will move us more into the realm of systemic persecution, at least in certain professions (interesting how TWU's nursing school has

not had similar difficulties), and possibly more widely. If such freedom were also restricted for other Christian organizations and churches, the consequences would be even more fundamental and extensive. May God grant us wisdom and courage to be faithful in these challenging times. **FT**

**JUSTIN COOPER** of Hamilton, Ont., is executive director of Christian Higher Education Canada, an association of three dozen Christian postsecondary institutions.

## Legal Precedents Support TWU

By Staff at the EFC Centre for Faith and Public Life

**T**he legal questions being raised about the proposed TWU law school are simply rehashing issues that have been settled by the Supreme Court of Canada and Parliament.

Public questions by regular Canadians are understandable, but lawyers (for example, the provincial law societies conducting their own reviews to determine whether to admit graduates of the TWU law school to practise law in their jurisdictions) should know better.

Here's a quick summary of how these issues have been decided in the past, clearly in TWU's favour.

Most of the concerns about the establishment of a Christian law school were previously raised about TWU's development of a Christian teachers college. Legal objections reached the Supreme Court of Canada in the 2001 case *Trinity Western University v. British Columbia College of Teachers*.

That Supreme Court decision applied the balancing principle it established in a 1994 case, *Dagenais v. CBC* – when two protected rights come into conflict, a balance that respects both rights is necessary (rather than ranking one ahead of the other).

Among other things, the court concluded that:

- If TWU's community standards could justify denying accreditation, there would be little to prevent denying accreditation to members of a church with similar standards. (para. 33)
- A diversity of views in Canada should be respected. (para. 33)
- Freedom of religion, conscience and association coexist with the right to be free of discrimination based on sexual orientation. (para. 34)
- It would be contradictory to conclude private institutions are protected if their graduates were simultaneously considered unworthy of fully participating in public activities. (para. 35)
- There is nothing in the TWU Community Standards that indicates graduates will not treat homosexuals fairly and

respectfully. Graduates from the TWU teacher education program (operated jointly with Simon Fraser University) have become competent public school teachers, and there is no evidence before this Court of discriminatory conduct by any graduate. (para. 35)

- It would be contradictory to say students have freedom of religion if exercising their beliefs meant they would be denied the right of full participation in society. (para. 35)

These conclusions readily also apply to a law school. No one has suggested valid legal reasons why they would not apply.

In 2004 the Court applied the balancing principle in *Reference re Same-Sex Marriage*.

Taking the Court's advice in the reference, Parliament spelled out in the *Civil Marriage Act* that there should not be discrimination against an individual or group on the basis of holding an opinion on marriage that differs from the legal definition in the Act, including opinion founded in religious belief. The preamble reiterates "the freedom of members of religious groups to hold and declare their religious beliefs and the freedom of officials of religious groups to refuse to perform marriages that are not in accordance with their religious beliefs." The body of the Act includes similar guarantees.

In the light of these legal precedents, many of the same issues were reconsidered by the two accrediting bodies that granted permission for the new law school last December, namely the Federation of Law Societies of Canada and the British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education.

Now the issues are again being reconsidered by several Canadian provincial law societies.

Looking at the big picture, it should be clear to all involved that the challenges to the TWU proposal are an appeal to emotion, not an appeal to law. **FT**

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# The Subversive Hope in Canada's Pro-Life Movement

Increased compassion and activism among Canadians are hopeful signs for the pro-life movement.

By Richard Erlendson

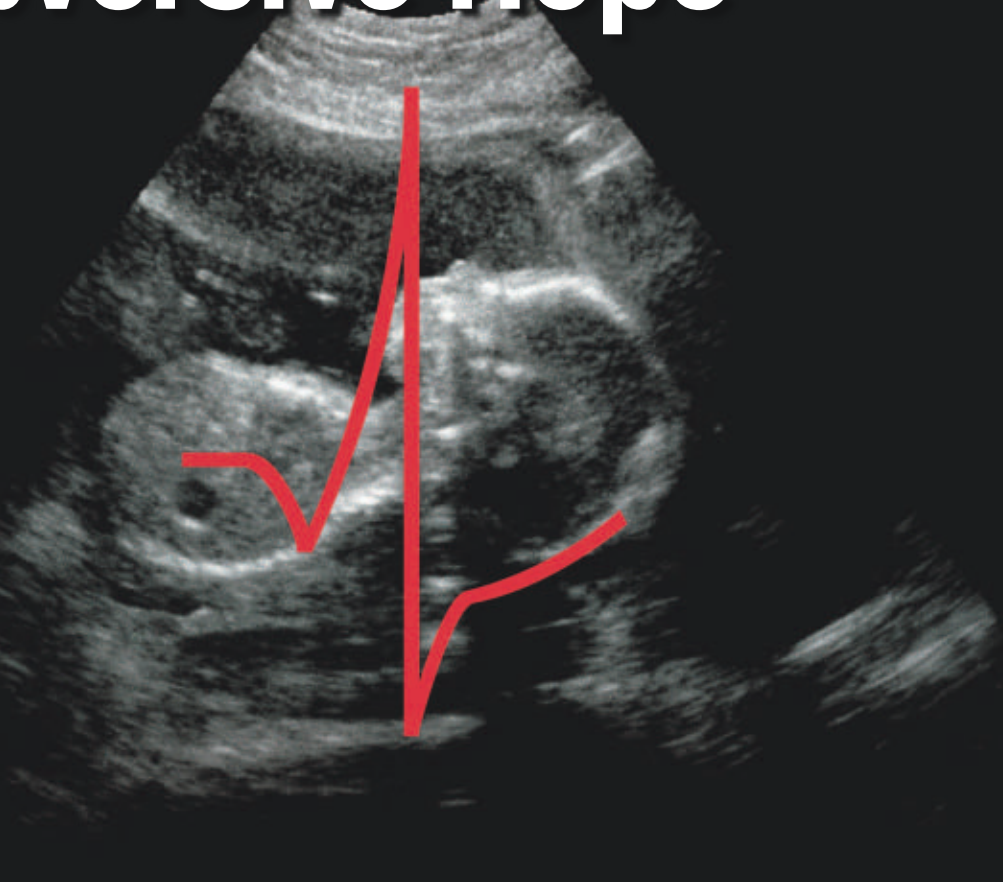


PHOTO: WWW.DESIGNPICS.COM

**M**ore than anything else, Dr. Marvin Fritzier is hopeful about the future of the pro-life movement in Canada. That's good news. After all, he's one connected Canadian – a Christian professional near the end of a four-decade career as a researcher, educator and leader involved in governance of high level institutions.

Fritzier is professor of medicine in the departments of medicine, and biochemistry and molecular biology at the University of Calgary medical school. He's also a former eight-year board chair of Calgary's mega Centre Street Church, a former board member of Ambrose University College and Seminary in Calgary, and has been chair of the government-based Alberta Research Innovation Authority for nearly a decade.

Fritzier's lifelong study of cell biology has bolstered his belief in the value of human life.

"I am compelled by the biochemistry that is so remarkable. I walk out of my lab after looking at the results of my research

and say, 'My findings absolutely confirm my faith. The complexity of life, the ways a cell works – this absolutely did not come about by chance.'"

So, is Fritzier hopeful that scientific advances will strengthen the pro-life movement in Canada? Surprisingly, no. His hope, on the human level, is based elsewhere.

He points to developments in three- and four-dimensional ultrasound imaging and in-uterine videography, for example. (He has a copy in his office of a 3-D ultrasound image he made in 1971 at the beginning of his career.)

Such science has not, in his opinion, resulted in widespread increased support for the idea of the fetus as a living being worthy of not being aborted.

"This is closer to art than science," he says. "It hasn't moved people in their

thinking about the fetus in society. It didn't when it first became available, and it hasn't in recent years when the resolution of images improved dramatically."

Why then is he so hopeful? His most passionate observation comes from the graduate students he works with in his lab.

"They are so much more socially conscious and socially aware than just a few years ago," he says. "They are interested in being involved in social issues. For example, it's not unusual for a stu-

dent to say, 'I'm going to Peru to work with the poor for five months.' They're not asking if they can go. They just thought they'd let me know. These are the new young people in Canada," Fritzier observes.

"They're very caring toward each other and about the world we live in."

**“The complexity of life, the ways a cell works – this absolutely did not come about by chance.”**

These new attitudes are widespread, he says. He sees them as a sign society is changing – and changing in a way the Christian Church and its related institutions are naturally poised to lead. “That’s what we [Christians] are supposed to be: social innovators.”

If we would take the principles Jesus espoused, says Fritzler, “both in what He said and what He did – and practise them, our world would be changed. Christ valued every aspect of humanity, especially those who were denigrated.”

A new activism on the part of today’s Christian young adults – there are thousands who join the annual March for Life event in Ottawa each May ([www.campaignlifecoalition.com](http://www.campaignlifecoalition.com)) – and a new compassion even among non-Christians herald major social change, he says.

### Personal Influence

Dan Reilly is an assistant clinical professor in the department of obstetrics and gynecology at Hamilton’s McMaster University medical school. And like Fritzler, he says

his Christian faith informs his pro-life philosophy. “I recognize that all people at all levels of development have intrinsic value and have been made in the image of God,” he says. “No person or circumstance can change the fact that to God we have great value.”

Reilly thinks science will never produce evidence that will bring people into the pro-life camp. “The moral status of the fetus is established within a worldview rather than from experience or evidence.”

Instead Reilly remains hopeful for the pro-life movement in the same way as Fritzler. He views the two sides of the abortion debate as in a decades-long stalemate, and finds his optimism in young people who are less interested in protest than in being helpful.

“I think personal influence is a better strategy,” he says – better than looking to science or even to the courts to bolster the pro-life movement.

“Let’s help people re-engage this matter. Let’s have conversations with people, one-person-by-one-person conversations. And let’s continue to develop and support pregnancy care centres across Canada,” a phenomenon he believes could eventually change the moral fabric of Canadian society.

### Pregnancy Care Centres

A small town girl, Lorna Sewell (now 58) became pregnant in 1978 when she was 16. Sewell’s experience was one of disenfranchisement, isolation, shame and rejection.

“I remember lying in our rumpus room, and I had an out-of-body experience. I could see myself down there, devastated. It was brutal. Looking back, I feel so bad for that girl.”

Her son was given up for adoption shortly after birth. “There was no conversation about my choices,” she says. And then it became a tightly guarded secret. Sewell only recently told her siblings – two of whom were pregnant at the same time.

Sewell eventually became connected with the Calgary Pregnancy Care Centre

after a presentation at her church, and she signed up to train to be a volunteer and peer mentor. A musician, she recently organized a concert in support of the centre.

“If I’d had anything even remotely similar to what is offered at the Pregnancy Care Centre, I would have been so much better prepared for what happened to me. I had no prenatal care. No information was offered. Nothing. My life would have been so different. Secrecy is poison to the soul,” she says.

Jutta Wittmeier is the director of the Calgary Pregnancy Care Centre.

“Unresolved grief impacts choices. Grief bleeds into everyday life. It impacts society. It impacts the Church. It’s shame based. It’s guilt ridden,” she says.

One service offered at the bustling centre with 10 full time staff and 150 volunteers involves “helping men and women recover from the unresolved, disenfranchised grief that is the unexpected result of abortion.”

The centre provides services to 850 visitors annually, including crisis pregnancy counselling, a 24-hour help line, sex education, support groups, maternity and baby resources, peer counselling, prenatal classes, referrals to community agencies, and parenting classes.

“Change comes after months and years of support. We believe in walking with our clients, many of whom are abortion-vulnerable,” says Wittmeier.

“When we support women, we see lives change. We see life better for them, and we see life better for their children. We see them move forward in healthy ways. When we take women through a grief journey, we see them come out the other side as changed people. There are layers and layers of people carrying this pain,” says Wittmeier. “This has to impact us as a society.”

### Compassion Brings Changes

Bruce Clemenger, president of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC), has been involved in Christian activism for al-

**A new activism on the part of today’s Christian young adults and a new compassion even among non-Christians herald major social change.**

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for our most vulnerable citizens, we have seen some setbacks but also some tremendous examples of God at work in the hearts and minds of a new generation of advocates. I see increasing numbers of Canadians identifying with, and living out, the biblical idea that all human life is valuable, not because of what it can or cannot do, but because it is a gift from God.”

Paul Chamberlain, associate professor of apologetics, philosophy and ethics

care centres across the nation.

He cites British parliamentarian William Wilberforce, who successfully led the battle to end slavery in the British Commonwealth and across the world. “When Wilberforce began his struggle, slavery was accepted as commonplace in his country, and, in fact, the economy was built around both slavery and child labour. Today both are unthinkable,” says Chamberlain.

The Alberta Pro-Life organization recently changed its name to The Wilberforce Project.

Christians, says Chamberlain, should “hold the same non-condemning attitude that Jesus displayed toward the woman caught in adultery as outlined in John 8. Jesus made a point of explicitly not condemning her as a person. We should follow that example.” **FT**

**■ Clockwise from above: Lorna Sewell, Dr. Marvin Fritzier and Jutta Wittmeier. When pregnancy care centres support women, we see lives change, says Wittmeier.**

most three decades. He too is also hopeful about the pro-life movement today.

“Over the 50 years that the EFC has helped Christians in Canada advocate

at Trinity Western University, agrees the compassionate work of God’s people offers a powerful influence in society – and specifically names the work of pregnancy

**RICHARD ERLENDSON** is a freelance writer and photographer who teaches journalism at Mount Royal University in Calgary.

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## Creativity Through Our Work

Businesspeople are called to do more than make money.

**G**rowing up, all I ever wanted to do was business. I was drawn to the creativity of business – making and marketing a new product, designing a building or structuring a deal, while simultaneously creating jobs that never existed before. Many of my friends, however, saw work as a burden – a necessary evil to allow us to do what we want and buy what we want.

I became a Christian later in life, after 20 years in the business world. As I started to explore the Christian faith, one of my first areas of concern was the role work and business played in the Christian understanding of life. I was reluctant to become a Christian because I thought churches taught only that poverty is good and wealth is bad. This did not sound enticing to someone who had made work and business priorities in life.

As I studied the Bible looking for a response to my concern, I always seemed to come back to Genesis. The first book of the Bible is important because it relates God's original intention for creation. I found ideas that helped me in each of the first three chapters.

In the first chapter we are told God created the world (Genesis 1:1), which makes Him a creator, a maker, a producer. He also created man and woman in His own image (Genesis 1:27), giving us an innate creativity. He backs this up through the first mandate we are given, which is to "be fruitful and increase in number" (Genesis 1:28). He calls us to recreate and reproduce.

The second chapter lets us know God rested on the seventh day (Genesis 2:1–2). God is a worker who rested, so being made in His image we too are workers who are called to rest. Interestingly, we are not called to work as an afterthought or as a result of the Fall. Instead, we learn that before we were even created God intended man to work the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:5b). In His second mandate for us, we are also told, "The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it" (Genesis 2:15). God's original intention for us was to actively participate in His creation, not only by

helping to build it up, but also by taking care of it.

It is not until the third chapter that work becomes a problem. It's only after Adam and Eve disobeyed, causing separation from God, that both childbearing (related to the first mandate) and work (related to the second) became difficult (Genesis 3:16–19). God did not curse procreation or work, but instead cursed childbearing and the ground, only then making them painful and toilsome.

In a fallen world work has indeed become more difficult. We live in a materialistic and goal-oriented society in which the accumulation of wealth is often seen as the primary objective and benchmark to success at work and in business.

But God has given us the gift of work as an opportunity to participate in His creation. We should therefore seek to understand our vocational calling and to put in 100 per cent of our effort to live it out. For most of us that won't be in paid Christian ministry, but will be at home or school, in the workplace or in professional activities – and we should embrace that. Paul told us, "Whatever you

do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving" (Colossians 3:23–24).

So my friends weren't quite right in their view that work is only a burden. We are created for work and stewardship and we glorify God by doing it the best we can with the gifts and abilities He has given us. Although being promoted at work or launching a new product can be good worldly priorities, our ultimate priority should be our relationship with God.

It was disobedience and pride that separated us from Him, but through the blood of Jesus and the work of the Holy Spirit we can be reconciled with God. We should always strive to build that relationship. We can't enjoy Him on Sunday and leave Him at home on Monday morning. Every day we should work as ones wanting to hear Him say to us, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness" (Matthew 25:23). **FT**

I was reluctant to become a Christian because I thought churches taught only that poverty is good and wealth is bad.

**STEPHEN DEKUYPER** is a chaplain for King-Bay Chaplaincy in Toronto ([www.king-bay.com](http://www.king-bay.com)).



PHOTO: OLIVET BAPTIST CHURCH

# Big God in a Small Town

Olivet Baptist Church is doing big things in the small town of Meaford, Ont.

People often expect big things to take place in big cities. But sometimes it is in the small towns that God does His big work.

Meaford is an Ontario town on the shores of Georgian Bay. Many of the people who live there are retirees from other communities. Meaford is also a military town, which brings in members of the Canadian Forces – but only for a few years at a time.

Although Meaford's population has been holding steady around 11,000 over the past few decades, Olivet Baptist Church has doubled in size. Bruce Jones has been pastoring at Olivet ([www.olivetbaptistmeaford.com](http://www.olivetbaptistmeaford.com)) for 16 years.

Churches benefit when pastors stay for such a long time, he says. "After five years you are just starting to know the congregation. The longer you are at a church, the more you understand the congregation and the community."

The mission of Olivet Baptist Church is "being and doing what matters to Jesus." Currently, this has translated into special

emphases on children and seniors.

Perhaps Olivet's best-known program in the community is KidZone. When Jones arrived at Olivet, there wasn't much of a children's ministry. "God opened our eyes to the need," says Jones. The church responded by developing an after school program.

A KidZone school bus brings children from the two elementary schools in Meaford to the church. Many of these children are from non-church backgrounds, which allows the church to make connections with the parents as well. This program has also allowed the church to build relationships with the schools.

Olivet's version of vacation Bible school (VBS), a

### About Olivet Baptist Church

- **Meets at:** 55 Ivan St., Meaford, Ont.
- **Founded:** 1942
- **Denomination:** Fellowship of Evangelical Baptists
- **Weekly attendance:** 120
- **Average age:** 50



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community outreach that churches commonly offer in daytime in the summer, piggybacks on KidZone. It is offered during the school year, after school. "We did not plan it this way. It really started because of the schedule of the people who came to run it. But having VBS after school has been tremendously successful," says Jones.

Olivet has also begun to put more resources, such as time and leadership, into their ministry with seniors. They are also offering more opportunities for adult ministries through small groups and fellowship times.

Ministries require volunteers, and yet many people look forward to the challenge. "Olivet welcomes people to get involved with a ministry, for example junior church and worship team. That is where I belong," explains church mem-



PHOTO: OLIVET BAPTIST CHURCH

■ Churches benefit when pastors stay for such a long time, says senior pastor Bruce Jones.

ber Michelle Ruest. She also finds working together for the Kingdom builds friendships. "Olivet makes me feel alive. People are warm and friendly," she says.

Olivet has made an impact on people, including newcomers like Lynn and Jim Paterson. "We've grown with the great teaching and preaching," says Jim, "and are enjoying the fellowship and worship on Sunday as well as Monday nights at a home group. We see that Olivet has an inten-

tional outreach to the community, as well as open doors and a desire to welcome people in." **FT**

**STEPHEN BEDARD** of Cambridge, Ont., is associate editor at *Faith Today*. Is your congregation or denomination an EFC affiliate? Join today at [www.theEFC.ca/affiliate](http://www.theEFC.ca/affiliate).

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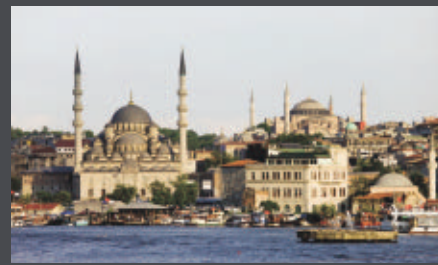
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# Bahrain: An Oasis for Christians

Imagine a small country somewhere between Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Iran. Would such a country be likely to invite contemporary Christian singer Michael W. Smith to perform at a concert held under the patronage of a government minister?

Can you imagine such a country holding an annual multifaith dialogue to compare and discuss religions?

Such actions would be considered an abomination elsewhere in the Arabian Gulf region.

But such events happen in Bahrain, a tiny nation of one million people – over 80 per cent of them Muslim. The Smith concert was held last year, organized by Bahrain's churches along with the Bahrain Society for Tolerance and Religious Co-existence.

Such events can challenge our stereotypes of what life is like in the Middle East, especially for Christians.

The island of Bahrain is wedged between Qatar and Saudi Arabia, the stronghold of Sunni Islam. It is fastened to Saudi Arabia by a 37-km-long causeway, which carries up to 80,000 vehicles a day.

The 50-km-long island is also home to the United States Navy's Fifth Fleet, a buffer against Iran, across the water just 190 km to the east.

Iran once ruled Bahrain, but was chased out in 1783 by the Khalifas, a Sunni Muslim tribe that has now ruled for over 200 years. However most Bahrainis are Shia Muslims, like the people of Iran.

These Muslim groups in Bahrain generally coexist, but differences can boil up, as they did February 14, 2011, when thousands of protestors took to the streets in a "Day of Rage" that at first glance seemed to mimic the other popular Arab uprisings of the time.

The protest in Bahrain was in response to an initiative to expand the police force using recruits from Sunni nations. The Shia viewed this as an effort to exclude them economically and religiously.

Previous efforts by the king to include the Shia in the political process were seen



as insufficient by the protesters. While the king has remained conciliatory toward the majority Shia, elements within the royal family are not willing to make concessions.

After the initial protests in 2011, Bahrain invited other Gulf nations to help, and Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates responded with troops.

More commonly, visitors experience Bahrain as a place like the Las Vegas of the Gulf. Its restaurant chains, major brands and nightclubs welcome visitors from the neighbouring countries that deny alcohol to their citizens.

Fresh water springs have supported successive civilizations for millennia. In the early days of air travel, Bahrain was a stopover for flights between Europe and Asia.

This open atmosphere extends further. Churches have considerable freedom. Samuel Zwemer, well-known Christian missionary to Arabia, arrived in Bahrain in 1892, where he and his wife buried two of their six children in 1904. Zwemer and his colleagues in the Arabian Mission set up a clinic that matured into the American Mission Hospital. It was the first

hospital in the wider region and this year is opening two other clinics.

The National Evangelical Church is adjacent to the American Mission Hospital and shares facilities with its seven congregations, each of which speaks a different language. Dozens of other churches serve thousands of expatriate Christians. Bahrain also has three Christian bookstores, with stock in many languages to supply residents in Bahrain and visitors from neighbouring Gulf countries.

Christians comprise 10 per cent of the total population. Only about 1,000 of these 90,000 Christians are Bahraini, with some descending from Christian families who immigrated from elsewhere in the Middle East. Bahrain also has a number of Christians from a Muslim background.

May God preserve this island kingdom and continue to use it to build His Kingdom. **BT**

**ADELE BLYTH** (a pseudonym) resides in the Middle East. She has been living in and around the Arab world for over 25 years.

## On Our Knees

For basic facts about Bahrain and suggestions to incorporate in your prayers, visit [www.operationworld.org/country/bahr/owtext.html](http://www.operationworld.org/country/bahr/owtext.html).

# Preparing Students for Life and Ministry



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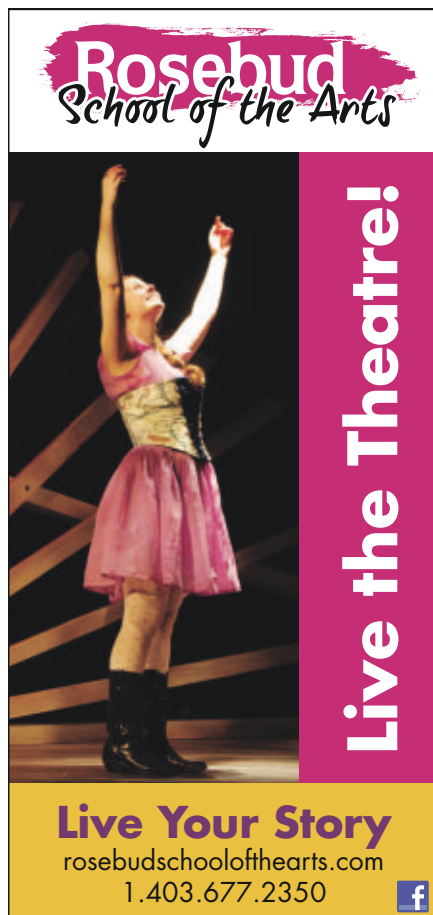
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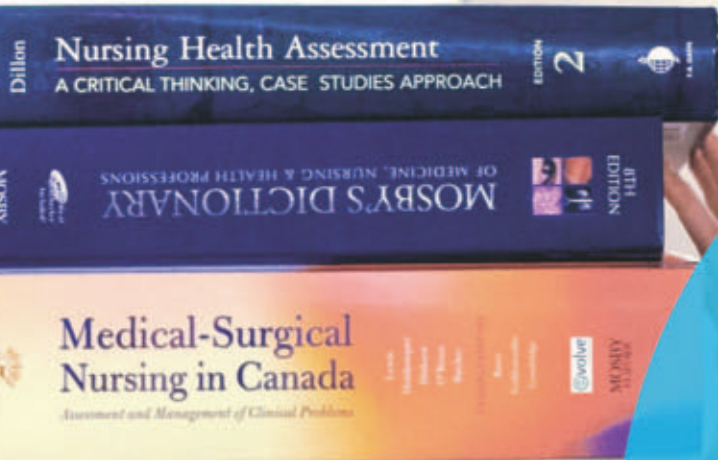
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## Are We Going Overboard on Purity?

The current conservative trend may be causing more problems than it's solving.

**F**our Duggar girls – teens from the homeschooling reality show *19 Kids and Counting* – have just released their first book. Garnering the most press attention is the little tidbit that they will save not just sex, but also their first kiss for their marriage.

I have several friends who have saved the smooching for the ceremony, and they're very glad they did. I certainly don't think there's anything wrong with it, though the thought of hundreds of people watching me kiss for the first time is more intimidating than romantic. But I still find the whole movement a little perplexing.

My mother grew up in a very conservative rural Manitoba community. They kept the Sabbath sacred, didn't wear makeup and certainly didn't dance. But kissing, at least when you were engaged, was fine. Today, though, large swaths of Christianity seem to be more conservative than our parents' and grandparents' generations were.

What's going on?

I think it all started with Joshua Harris' *I Kissed Dating Good-Bye: A New Attitude Toward Relationships and Romance* (Multnomah Publishers, 1997). That book spread like wildfire through the Church. Dating, which had been one of the main attractions of youth groups for decades, became a dirty word.

Yet, while I agree there's little benefit to high school relationships (an opinion I am so glad my teenage daughters shared), *Boy Meets Girl: Say Hello to Courtship* (Waterbrook Press, 2000), Harris' follow-up on courtship, still left me a little uneasy. He and his now-wife didn't kiss until they were married. They really only did that famous Christian side hug every evangelical teen has perfected. And Harris has a list of strict guidelines they followed so as to not feed lust.

Lust is a real battle, yet this movement to grab it by the throat and throttle it until it's dead seems like overkill. We have purity ceremonies where we ask girls to stand with their dads and pledge not to have sex until marriage. We give endless talks on modesty, discussing hemlines and cleavage and how high T-shirts should be (two finger widths below the clavicle, apparently). I do believe in modesty. The world would be a much better place if everyone agreed that leggings are not pants. But in our eagerness to combat the sexual revolution, do we do more harm than good?

That's the question Amanda Barbee asked recently in her viral article "Naked and Ashamed" at [www.theotherjournal.com](http://www.theotherjournal.com). She says the evangelical church has made teenage girls ashamed of their sexuality, and this causes much sexual dysfunction later. As a sex and marriage author, I certainly see where she's coming from. We spend so much time telling girls, "Don't do it! Don't even think about it!" And then they get married and suddenly some switch is supposed to go off that lets them view sex as a positive thing.

What makes it especially problematic is the way we frame the whole issue. Boys are walking hormones who will lust all over anyone in a tight sweater. It's your job to keep him from lusting! Girls' sex drives are barely mentioned, while boys are presented as testosterone-induced drones, rendered helpless by cleavage. Girls become responsible not just for their own purity, but for boys' purity too. Sex becomes something boys want, but girls have to fight against. No wonder so many girls grow up ambivalent about sex.

Barbee's article didn't offer an alternate approach. Yes, we're shaming girls too much, but purity is important. Sex before marriage damages you both spiritually and emotionally. We do need to teach our kids to wait.

Or do we? Maybe that's the fundamental problem with our current approach. My teenage girls' biggest complaint about youth events is that they always centre around three messages – don't have sex, don't drink and don't cut or starve yourself. But if we really want kids to make good choices, maybe we should stop teaching them to do the right thing and start introducing them to Jesus.

I spoke recently with a 19-year-old woman who didn't date in high school, but is now in quite a serious relationship at university. When she and her boyfriend were first discussing boundaries, they decided not to define how far they should go, because as soon as you draw a line, you immediately rush to it and start flirting with it. Instead, they decided they would begin every time they're together by focusing on Jesus. Make Jesus the centre, and the rest will follow.

We have become so scared teens will have sex that we have created a purity culture centred on rules and shame, rather than Jesus. Yes, we should be modest. Yes, we should be pure. But we'll achieve that much faster by having a relationship with Christ than by memorizing a bunch of rules.

I'm convinced that Christian kids often rebel because we put too much energy into teaching rules and not enough into showing them how to love Jesus. Rules don't win people to God – Jesus does. And He's the only one who can help us create a purity culture anyway. **FT**

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**SHEILA WRAY GREGOIRE** is an author and inspirational speaker ([www.sheilawraygregoire.com](http://www.sheilawraygregoire.com)).



## Time Well Spent?

Loving couples can still be at odds about spending time together.

**H**al was going great guns with the snowblower. He'd arrived home from work, waved happily at his wife through the living room window, hauled his machine out of the garage and set about clearing the drifted-in driveway. As he blasted his way along the sidewalk, he remembered his neighbour had taken care of his snow the last time he was out of town. So he cleared her driveway too, whistling as he worked.

He was still humming softly as he put the machinery away and clomped cheerfully into the house, anticipating a nourishing meal and an equally contented companion. But that's not what happened. He was met instead with a frosty silence and a cold supper sitting lonesome on the table.

Hal was baffled and chagrined. How could these good intentions have turned out so badly? How had Charlene got a message that tools and neighbourhood activities were more important than she was?

Most marriages have moments like those. When two individuals wed, they bring their idiosyncrasies and their expectations, their hormones and their histories into the relationship. It takes time and attentiveness to work out the nuances of life together, to be sensitive to the needs and desires of each other. And a very common area of contention has to do with how husbands and wives spend time together.

Hal was learning the hard way that Charlene wants to be at the top of his list when he returns home. She had been expecting real time with him, and he'd simply thrown her a cheerful wave. Rightly or wrongly, she felt she was receiving leftovers – just like the cold and lonely meal Hal now faced.

### Surplus

Jim has had similar experiences in his marriage, and there are times when he is very conscious and conscientious about making sure he and his wife Carol have quality face-to-face time together. She really likes that, and he really is a devoted husband, which doesn't mean they always see eye to eye – not by a long shot.

A couple of years ago, the two of them spent a long weekend driving over 2,000 km across three provinces – and back again. Those long hours of travel afforded them lots of opportunity to listen to CDs and engage in quality

conversation. It went swimmingly.

Once they got home, however, a difference of opinion soon became apparent. As Jim saw it, the time together had built a large surplus of hours dedicated to Carol he could gradually draw from as he focused on a host of other demands on his time. Carol thought otherwise. She still needed the daily attention. It was not a happy conversation when Jim realized the van time was purely bonus. It had no carryover value at home.

In another home Laurie sometimes wants John to come and watch TV with her. She would like the two of them to spend some undemanding moments relaxing side by side. But unless the program really interests him, John would rather be puttering at some project. As his restlessness grows and he starts making going-elsewhere noises, she begins to pout. "I just want to be with you." In his mind, being in the next room or anywhere in the same house would serve just as well as sitting in front of the screen. They are not of the same mind on this matter.

### Harmonious Home

How can Hal, Jim and John begin to address these awkward (and typical) situations in their homes?

Actually, they are already well on the way if only because each of them truly desires a loving, companionable relationship with his wife. It troubles them when the harmony of the home is threatened, and they're willing to work at making it better. That's important, and not to be taken for granted. All too many husbands don't care enough to even try.

A word from the Scriptures supplies wise counsel to living in a godly relationship: "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others" (Philippians 2:3–4).

Giving frequent, undistracted attention to your spouse can help avoid the leftover time phenomenon. This, along with a little planning that lets her know you think about her first, will make your times together more comfortable and your ability to release each other to alternate activities more likely.

Daily attentiveness – including little rituals and habits you can share – makes the idea of building a surplus unnecessary. These small practices are worth the effort. Nobody really wants to be lonely, especially when you share a home with someone you love. **FT**

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**DOUG KOOP** is a Winnipeg-based writer and spiritual health specialist.



## Rethinking Christian Science

What's good about the religious group founded by Mary Baker Eddy?

**T**wice in the last year some North American leaders in Christian Science have helped me rethink my views on the controversial religious group founded by Mary Baker Eddy. In part they have been responding to the assessment of Christian Science I offer in my book *Nelson's Illustrated Guide to Religions: A Comprehensive Introduction to the Religions of the World* (Thomas Nelson, 2009).

Here are four questions I've been asking myself as I've probed my earlier critique. Am I willing to admit mistakes? Do I stand by my perspective? Do I regret anything I wrote? Have I learned anything from my new study? For each question the answer is yes.

Before we get into the detail, one starting point is crucial. Christian Science is *not* Scientology. Shirley Paulson, a leading Christian Science scholar (and one of my recent dialogue partners), begins every talk she gives on Christian Science by noting that huge identity mistake.

Christian Science was started by Mary Baker Eddy in 1879 while Scientology was founded by L. Ron Hubbard in 1954. The central text of Christian Science is *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* (published in 1875) while Scientology has its focus on *Dianetics*, the best-seller published by Hubbard in 1950. Christian Science is based in Boston while Scientology's international headquarters is in California. For the record, the famous actor Tom Cruise is a member of Scientology and not the group connected with Baker Eddy.

Looking back, I know the basic facts I offered about Christian Science are correct. Baker Eddy was born in New Hampshire in 1821. She claimed the turning point of her spiritual life came in February 1866 after she experienced divine healing from life-threatening injuries after a fall on the sidewalk. She started public teaching of her own healing views in 1870.

The movement grew rapidly in the final two decades of the 19th century, with missions to Canada by the end of the century. The Mother Church in Boston was dedicated in January 1895, and the movement published the first issue of *The Christian Science Monitor* in 1908. Baker Eddy died in 1910 at age 89 in her home near Boston.

Further, I stand by my linkage of Baker Eddy with what is called the Mind-Science tradition and the work of Phineas Parkhurst Quimby (1802–1866), a pioneer in the field

of mesmerism in the United States.

Also, I do not regret drawing attention to ex-Christian Scientists like Doug and Rita Swan and Caroline Fraser, who have exposed the darkest side of Christian Science practice as it relates to neglect of the health needs of children.

Taking faith to an absurd level, various Christian Science parents harmed their children by adopting Baker Eddy's theories that sickness was not really real. For example, Ashley King died in Arizona in 1988 because her parents refused to have her bone cancer treated.

Last, but with sadness, I remain totally convinced Christian Science makes major errors related to Baker Eddy, the nature of God, the reality of evil, the deity of Christ, the personhood of the Holy Spirit, the atonement, the resurrection, and the authority and interpretation of the Bible. We are not talking doctrinal trivia here.

To be sure, these theological blunders are not about explicit denial of Christian truths, but rather major misinterpretations caused by unquestioning allegiance to Baker Eddy and the Christian Science system.

So how have I changed after new study and reflection? I now wish I had written in a softer tone about my concerns and given more space to the high ideals of Christian Scientists. The latter realities became obvious in the long conversations I had with Shirley Paulson (who lives near Chicago), as well as Denis Hall and Wendy Margolese, two well-known leaders in the Christian Science community in Canada.

All things being equal, Christian Science members are loving, caring, gentle and generous. On this last point, Hall and Margolese came to my class – and Margolese came with Paulson a second time – even though they knew I was very tough on their tradition.

As for new learning, I am glad to report that Christian Science members are now being far more careful in relation to medical treatment for children in Christian Science homes. Twenty and 30 years ago, there were high profile cases of deaths directly linked to parents refusing to take their children to doctors and hospitals.

The resulting political, legal and criminal firestorms led the Mother Church to moderate practices regarding children with life-threatening illnesses. The changes here are part of a growing openness and self-criticism in the movement, a major improvement that is a sign of hope for future conversations.

Evangelical influence in that conversation will go much better as we moderate our tone, lower our voice and speak truth in love, a love so winsome that truth can be heard. **FT**

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



## Canadian Churches and Armageddon

Evangelicals played a key role in the Great War. What have we learned in the hundred years that have passed?

It was a war that was not supposed to happen. Growing tensions in Europe were obvious, but recent developments in international arbitration had fuelled hopes that differences between imperial powers could be resolved peacefully.

A hundred years ago, Canadians entered the summer with little inkling of the utter disaster looming just over the horizon, and were unprepared when they found themselves at war on August 4, 1914. Armageddon had arrived.

The war in Europe rapidly militarized all aspects of Canadian life as “total war” became a grim reality. The Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) grew to be a potent fighting force. Canada eventually sent close to 620,000 troops (roughly 8 per cent of the Canadian population) and experienced 60,000 dead and 173,000 injured.

In one month alone at the Battle of Passchendaele the CEF suffered 15,000 casualties. The overall cost of human life for all combatants during the entire war was staggering – over 8 million dead and 21 million wounded – out of 65 million mobilized.

No aspect of Canadian life was untouched by the war. Churches were no exception. The war eventually impinged on every facet of church life related to identity, ministry and aspirations.

As for identity, those who supported the war had no need to prove to anyone they were “true” Canadians. Most Evangelicals took pride in their loyalty to nation and empire. Conscientious objectors such as Quakers and Mennonites, or those who opposed conscription such as French Catholics, faced derision, violence or even arrest for their alleged lack of patriotism. German Lutherans encountered hostility even when they supported the war effort.

Regarding ministry, there was no escaping the seemingly insatiable demands of total war. Pastoral responsibilities to soldiers and their families swelled as the war dragged on and the casualty list grew longer. The shortage of men for leadership put myriad stresses on local parishes and seminaries, and the theological issues raised by a God who allowed such horrors to continue year after year gnawed at faith in a benevolent God.

As for aspirations, the war’s supporters believed the war

to be fought for high ideals such as righteousness, freedom, civilization and an end to the genocide of Armenian Christians. While there were excesses – such as recruitment from pulpits, the language of holy war, and even jingoistic support for empire [thinking your own country is always right and agreeing to aggressive acts against other countries] – the churches’ support was just as often nuanced and critical, shaped by either the classic just war paradigm of just cause (*jus ad bellum*) and just means (*jus in bello*) or pacifism’s outright rejection of violence. Many anticipated that the sacrifice of sons and wealth would lead to a renewed and reinvigorated Christianity and nation, and the “war to end all wars” would usher in a new world order.

The war failed to revive faith. International peace was also elusive, with civil war and military conflicts continuing unabated into the 1920s. Canada’s last known veteran of the war John Babcock died in 2010 without ever seeing the much-touted promise of a new world order.

Almost every conflict in the 20th century can be traced back to the Great War. The secularization of the West and demise of Christendom was accelerated by the catastrophe.

Despite the horrendous impact of the war, there is hope that a century later we have learned a few lessons from what was often portrayed as Armageddon. At the risk of appearing to be a Pollyanna, there have been a few encouraging developments in that regard.

First, the move to the margins of Canadian life has meant churches are freer to criticize. They have become less trusting of politicians when it comes to war, and act more as prophets who hold governments to account than priests who bless.

Second, Christians on both sides of the war and peace debate seem to be kinder to one another, a virtue not always exhibited during the war. Pacifists have allowed for expressions of remembering and honouring during Remembrance Day services on November 11. Just war proponents have come to see pacifists not as cowards or unpatriotic, but fellow Christ followers who differ when it comes to applying the Sermon on the Mount.

Finally, the idea of a warless world ushered in by military victory seems to be a thing of the past. Certainly the Great War should teach us the futility of that expectation. It is still deemed okay to hope for a new world order – but one ushered in not by bombs and bullets, but by the return of the Prince of Peace. **FT**

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**GORDON L. HEATH** is associate professor of Christian history at McMaster Divinity College, and is editor of the recently published *Canadian Churches and the First World War* (Pickwick, 2014).

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## How Firm a Foundation?

Evangelicals used to be notoriously hard. Have we become inoffensively soft?

I was raised, as perhaps you were, in a hard-edged religion. Right was right, wrong was wrong. “Compromise” was an evil word, and “liberal” was applied, well, liberally to everything and everyone we weren’t.

As Sunday School tots we cheerily announced our binary view of the world. “One door and only one / And yet its sides are two. / I’m on the inside, / On which side are you?” As youth, we learned sex was strictly for married life (thus launching all of us into casuistry, a word we never heard, regarding “how far was too far”). As Bible school students we learned the Four Spiritual Laws, or Steps to Peace with God, or the Bridge illustration, each of which made it starkly clear that you were either “saved or lost.” If you were lost, you had better come to Jesus, “the Way, the Truth, and the Life.”

And – oh, yes – we knew the scriptural reference: John 14:6. We knew lots of Bible verses, and lots of Scripture references, and the books of the Bible in the correct order, and the Ten Commandments, and the Beatitudes, and much, much more. Over yonder among the Christian Reformed and the serious Lutherans and Presbyterians, they also knew their catechisms. (We Brethren didn’t know what a catechism was, but it sounded Catholic and was therefore bad.)

The jokes and ironies abounded about “growing up born again.” We would avoid sex *because it might lead to social dancing*. We wouldn’t use the devil’s playing cards, or sing the devil’s music, but we would play Rook and support the many Christian knockoffs of rock and pop. And so on.

So silly. So extreme. And now, outside a few tiny enclaves, it’s all gone with the wind.

Now we have kids growing up in evangelical churches – the best churches, not just the worst – who would have trouble confidently providing a reference for any biblical quotation at all. Now we have many (most?) of our youth not conferring secretly about how far is too far, but about whether to have an abortion or how to tell their fiancé(e)s about their sexual history.

And we have churches full of adults who couldn’t present the gospel coherently and briefly to a friend or neighbour if they had a gun to their head or a willing soul at the kitchen table.

Those nice people in those other religions, or my friends who profess no religion at all but call themselves

“spiritual” – surely they’re not going to hell. How can there even be a hell, really, given the goodness of God? So there isn’t. Whew.

Those nice people having sex outside marriage. Surely they love each other, and God’s all about love, right? So that’s that. Welcome aboard!

After all, doesn’t it say in the Bible – somewhere – that God is love, and we shouldn’t judge, and justice and compassion are what really matters, and we’re all forgiven anyway?

So church discipline now smacks of mere social control. Bible memorization is as passé as any other kind of memorization. Evangelistic formulas are mocked as simplistic, while even more reductionistic propositions (such as, “We’re all children of God” or “God made me, and He doesn’t make junk”) take their place.

We’ve seen all this before – liberal Christianity in the mainline denominations a half-century or so ago. They reacted against what they saw to be the excessive hardness of their tradition by opting for increasingly flexible softness. And we contemporary Evangelicals are following nicely in their train.

The right response to rigidity is not pliancy. The right response is firmness. And *variable* firmness, exercising good judgement about what can be cheerfully enjoyed as creative diversity, or prudently tolerated as legitimate difference of opinion, or fervently proclaimed as the gospel, or fiercely opposed as sin.

We all, of course, think we’re already making just the right judgements about what belongs in what category. We’re all in favour of appropriate firmness.

The evidence against us Evangelicals, however, is growing as core teachings – the reality of hell, the narrow scope of legitimate sex, the exclusivity of salvation through Jesus Christ – are all in play.

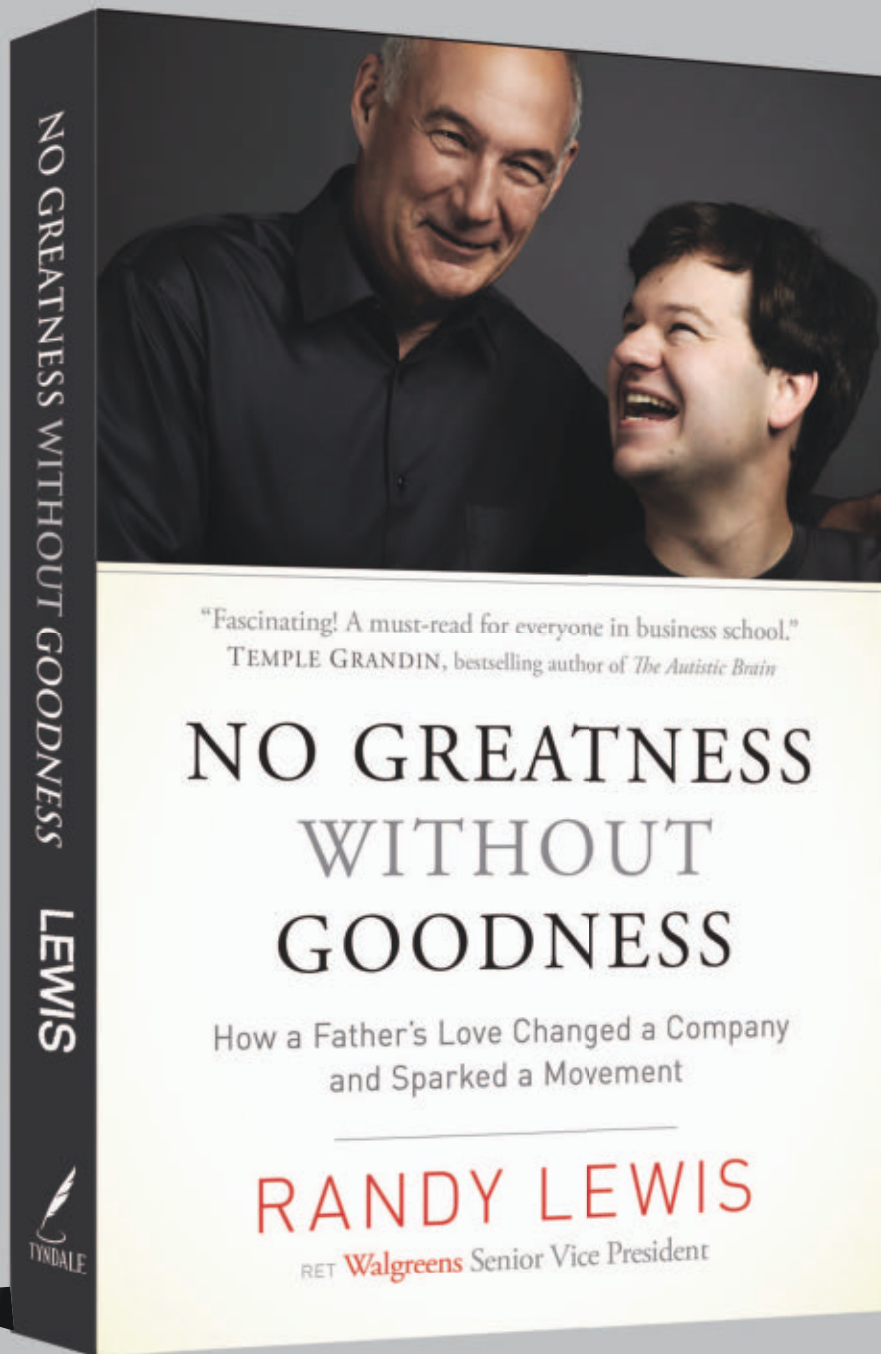
We need better teaching and preaching to help us discern what belongs in what category. We need a greater determination to seek God to do what He wants, rather than just to get Him to do what we want Him to. We need to decide whether we actually are sinners who can be deeply wrong even about our strongest moral and intellectual intuitions. Or if, like liberals, we think the best of contemporary reason and experience can be relied upon to guide our religion.

We needed to escape our excessive hardness, yes. But we’ve come a long way fast – too far, in fact, and now should pause to reconsider our path. **FT**

---

**JOHN STACKHOUSE** teaches at Regent College. His latest book is *Need to Know: Vocation as the Heart of Christian Epistemology* (Oxford, 2014).

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A photograph at the bottom of the page shows the silhouettes of several people from behind, holding up glowing neon signs. On the left, a person holds a large cross. In the center, a person holds a glowing tablet. On the right, a person holds a large heart. The background of the photo is a soft, hazy light.

[hil.so/college](http://hil.so/college)

CONTACT: [Aaron@hillsongcollege.com](mailto:Aaron@hillsongcollege.com), Sydney, Australia, +61288535200





# SHAD

**\*ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:** OUR FIRST EVER  
**CANADIAN CHRISTIAN**  
**UNIVERSITY GUIDE**  
**YOUTH SPOTLIGHT**  
**THE RETRO REVIEW**

## EDUCATION

Technology and teaching methods are quickly evolving, but with so many ways to learn, where does God fit in?

issue **4**  
MAY/  
JUNE 2014

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SENIOR EDITOR  
Tristan Bronca



EDITOR IN CHIEF  
Joel Gordon



EDITOR IN CHIEF  
Benjamin Porter



Let's begin with an obvious statement: a lot of commencement speeches suck. They're boring, chalked full of ponderous, snore-inducing life advice – a 1,000 clichés packed into a half hour. Yet the good ones are so much more. Take, for example, the one writer David Foster Wallace delivered to the graduating class at Kenyon College in 2005 that later became known as *This is Water*. The title comes from a "little didactic parable" he tells at the beginning of two young fish swimming along. "They happen to meet an older fish swimming the other way who nods at them and says, 'Morning boys, how's the water?'... Eventually, one fish looks at the other and goes 'What the hell is water?'"

The speech revolves around something Wallace called "our natural default setting," or the tendency each and every one of us has to think of ourselves as the absolute centre of the universe. Our education, he says, gives us an opportunity to see things differently or, put another way, to acknowledge something as obvious as the water a fish swims in.

It may seem like an unimaginative point but the speech is brilliant. That's because Wallace perfectly articulates the difference between knowledge and awareness. Sure we *know* that other people matter, but in our most irritable moments – when it truly matters – it's very difficult to be *aware* of it. The true value of our education is that it helps us override that "default setting." It gives us choices about how to think so we might be able "to experience a crowded, hot, slow, consumer-hell type situation as not only meaningful, but sacred, on fire with the same force that lit the stars."

In this issue of *LIA* we look at some of the ways we are educated. We bring you our first ever Canadian Christian University Guide to help the faithful young people moving into the next phase of their educational careers. Then, in our cover story, Joel Gordon sits down with Shad to find out what "Love Means," and finally Mark Fisk speaks with two Christian educators who are trying to maintain God's Love in the secular system.

- Tristan Bronca, Senior Editor of *LIA*



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LOVE  
MOVE  
MENT



# THE CANADIAN CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY GUIDE

It's May and for those of our readers moving on to post-secondary education, it can be an anxious time. There are counselors to speak to, campuses to visit and rankings to consult. Even if you haven't already committed, we know you've started looking, but we doubt you've heard very much about the Christian universities around Canada. That's why we at *LIA* have put together our first edition of the Christian Canadian University guide. It's a primer on a few schools that deserve the consideration of faithful men and women embarking on the next step of their educational lives.



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[www.twu.ca](http://www.twu.ca)



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[www.columbiabc.edu](http://www.columbiabc.edu)

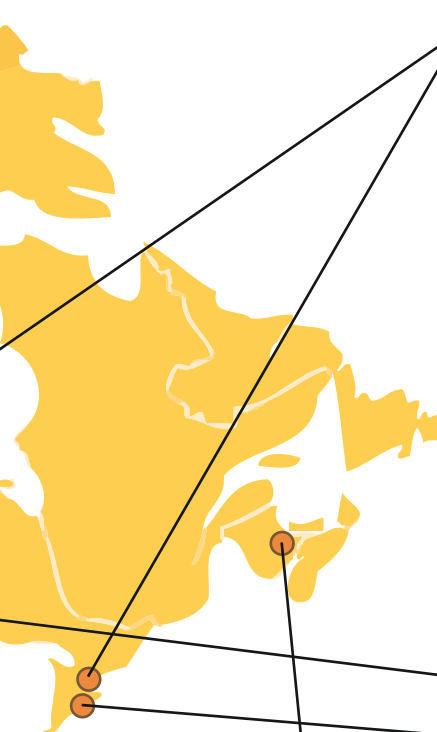


**Providence University College**  
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Located about 45 minutes southeast of Winnipeg, Providence University College offers a bachelor of arts degree with a choice of majors in Bible & practical theology, arts & sciences, and professional studies. The Providence student body represents over 15 Church denominations and 22 countries. Its mission is to educate students to think, live, and serve as Christians in society.

[www.providenceuc.ca](http://www.providenceuc.ca)

# CHRISTIAN GUIDE



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**Tyndale University College**  
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[www.tyndale.ca](http://www.tyndale.ca)



**Crandall University**  
Moncton, NB  
The faculty, staff, and students in the community strive together to pursue God's kingdom both academically and spiritually. Furthermore, Crandall University offers the lowest tuition of all the Christian universities in North America that offer bachelor degrees in business and science.

[www.crandallu.ca](http://www.crandallu.ca)



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**Canadian Mennonite University**  
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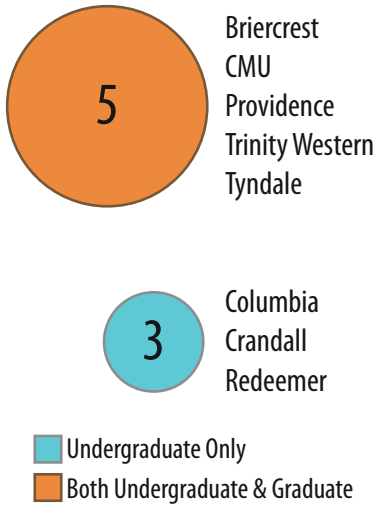
[www.cmu.ca](http://www.cmu.ca)

# THE CANADIAN CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY GUIDE INFOGRAPHIC

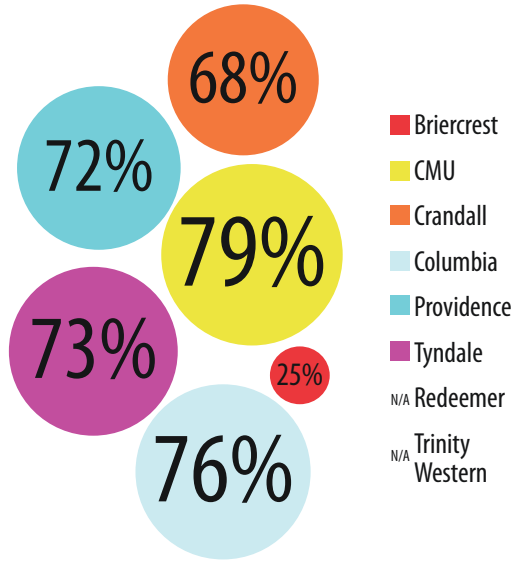
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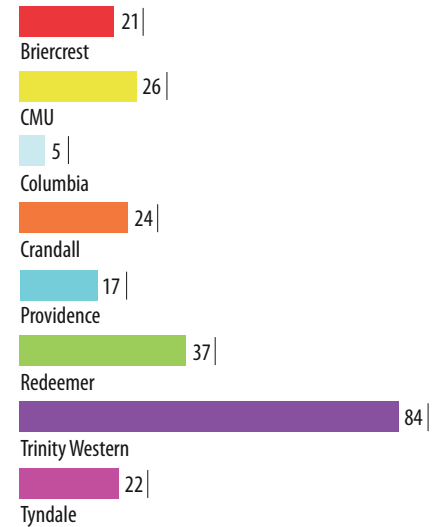
## Degrees Offered



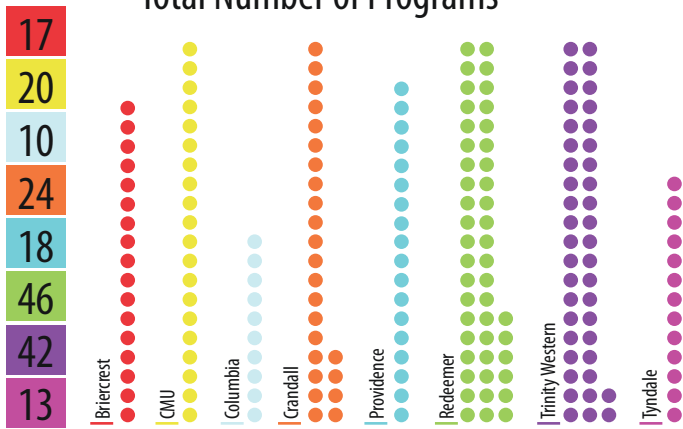
## Retention Rates



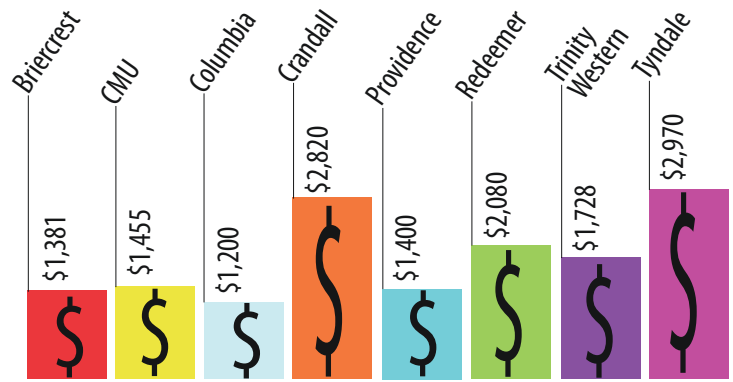
## Full-Time PhD Faculty



## Total Number of Programs

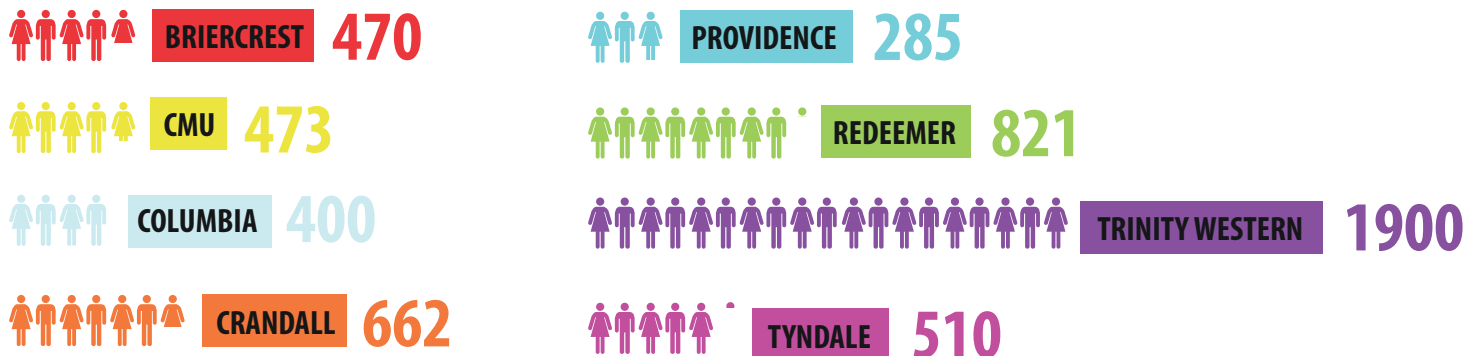


## Annual Cost of Residency



## Student Body

Full-Time Students (x100)



# FAITH. FAMILY. FLYING COLOURS.

Editor in Chief  
Joel Gordon



When CBC Music recently identified the 25 greatest Canadian rappers ever, Maestro Fresh-Wes and Shad were listed as number one and two respectively. Maestro, the king of Canadian hip-hop and Shad, the Juno-winning prince met on a track called "Praise Da Lord" which opens with a prayer sampled from Spike Lee's film, *Miracle at St. Anna*:

"As a nation of your children who glorify your name in victory. Amen."

Shad has had more than his share of musical victory, but to list all his accolades wouldn't fit his style. That's because the Kenyan-born London, Ontario raised artist is as humble as he is talented. Over a silky mix of samples and cuts echoing "Praise Da Lord," Shad smoothly enters the track with his verse:

"...translate the truth for 'em in the booth, you see, if this was the day they wrote the Scriptures it would be hot sixteens and beautiful motion pictures."

"Hot sixteens" is hip-hop slang for a 16-bar verse. When I asked Shad about this line, he was convinced that real truth can be effectively communicated through music and film, today's most popular mechanisms for storytelling.

"They're the languages we're most fluent in," he says. "I think that's why music speaks to people and why people love it so much – it really connects on a deep level that goes beyond language. It can be very honest."

Shad drops a ton of heart-felt truths wrapped in clever lyrics in his latest album *Flying Colours*. The subject of love is one of the great truths and mysteries that Shad tackles in the album, exploring its many shades and textures in the song "Loves Means." It was this song that initially connected me to Shad through his collaborator on the track, Eterna, who was also named one of Canada's 25 greatest rappers. When I re-connected with her, she told me she was working on a project



about love with Shad called “Love Means.” A couple months later, they were both nominated at the 2011 Juno Awards for Rap Recording of the Year. Shad went on to win for his album *TSOL*.

The song sat on a shelf for months until Shad started to write some lyrics for another track about love to a different beat. That’s when he remembered the project with Eternia.

“I dug it up in my email and I ended up playing the verses side by side. When I saw the beats were in the same key and that they worked together so beautifully...I took that as a sign and ran with it.” With that, “Love Means” became one of last tracks he decided to include on *Flying Colours*.

Trying to figure out what love means is a heavy feat for a single song, but this track never gets self-absorbed. Verse three of “Love Means” borrows from the structure of 1 Corinthians 13, a biblical passage that explores the many facets of love. In fact, many of the songs in *Flying Colours* are speckled with specific references to his faith.

What does Shad say about going to church as a child?

“I liked it,” he reflects. “I don’t know what came first, my interest in spiritual things or my going to church and being exposed to these things, but I think I always appreciated the space to consider life on a deeper level.” Even today, he continues to grow in his faith as a member of a church with a beautiful tradition of

literature, scripture, and ritual. “They’re wonderful reminders of a way of life and a path of resistance,” he explains. I asked him if he’d recommend a young person seek out a church community to grow in their faith. Shad’s answer is clear:

“As far as what **LOVE** means well I can read a line // From the dictionary, but I think I need to redefine // I need to live it to know it // That means I gotta give it and let it be given back to grow it // I gotta sow it to get it, like really get it I gotta show it // Not just talk about it like a lot of poets // A.K.A. moi.”  
- Shad, “Love Means”

“I would definitely suggest to anyone who sees something beautiful in the story of Christ and wants to live that, to do that with other people.” He says other people are important in this process because it allows us to appreciate the beauty of the experience. “We’re meant to see God in each other,” he says. This love for things eternal has stayed with him throughout his career. You can almost hear it in his music. He flows with a humility that can only come from above.

While his faith has played a major role in shaping Shad’s identity and work, his family has also been a major influence, but not in any musical sense. “I didn’t really grow up in a super musical household,” he says. “On



Eternia shares a moment with Shad on the Juno red carpet



an unconscious level, I was digging pretty deep [in my music], trying to find some grounding and looking for something to contribute. That was a place I'd arrive a lot of times...family."

As he got into music, the values, principles and love that were present throughout his childhood remained. "They were in my corner and I never had to worry about gaining my parents approval, it was already there. In their wisdom, they gave me some space to figure things out on my own."

---

"Here's for an education, it's a celebration" Shad says on the track "Fam Jam." He holds a masters degree in Liberal Studies from Simon Fraser University and he understands the value of education in his pursuits. He's consistently using his lyrical innovation to shed light on social phenomena such as racism, immigration, and the quest for love.

Shad explains that he sees love as a guiding principle in these pursuits – that "even in the context of sin, for me, I understand it as something you know in your heart." In the final lines of "Love Means," Shad illuminates a layered and profound portrait of love:

"...it's in death and new life when love is made; it's when you're unashamed and finally unafraid; when you confront the pain; face death and you'll see in the end only love remains."



Writer  
Steve Norton



# THE FIFTH ESTATE

 **RETRO  
Review**

(2013)

*Starring Benedict Cumberbatch, Daniel Brühl*  
*Directed by Bill Condon*  
*Rating: 3.5 (out of 5)*

It has been said that knowledge is power, but who is responsible for it?

In this age of the Internet we have access to information unlike ever before. At any moment we can find out almost all that has been written on almost any topic we choose. We can access family records, shop, bank, or video chat with someone halfway around the world. The modern age has been about celebrating our ability to connect as we enjoy a constant influx of new information.

However, these capabilities come with their own set of problems. Governments peer into personal email accounts in the name of national security, often violating the trust of the people it is trying to protect. These practices remind us that we live in a world where 'right' and 'wrong' are subject to a delicate balance. We want access to information but we also expect a certain amount of privacy. What we sometimes fail to realize is that when protection and privacy are at odds, simple ideas about right and wrong become very complicated.

This moral ambiguity lies at the heart of *The Fifth Estate*.

*The Fifth Estate* tells the story of Julian Assange (Benedict Cumberbatch) and the rise of his infamous website, WikiLeaks. Seeking justice for the oppressed, Assange and his partner Daniel Domscheit-Berg (Daniel Brühl) play the role of freedom fighters that use their website

to release secure documents that reveal corruption within corporations and government. The tiny organization begins to grow as more people join their cause and greater numbers high-ranking authorities are called to account for their sins.

By focusing on the development of WikiLeaks rather than Assange himself, *The Fifth Estate* calls into question the true nature of justice in the Internet age. The technology has shrunk the world around us and provided a means to call for justice in places where it has been absent. Not only did Assange give ordinary citizens that opportunity but he gave them the chance to do it under the veil of anonymity. "Give a man a mask and he will tell you the truth," Assange proclaims. However, these principles of free speech and anonymity also raise question about the boundaries of justice. For example, can an action be 'good' if it places the lives of others at risk? Isn't that level of honesty sometimes reckless?

Films like *The Fifth Estate* are humbling because they also reveal our own sin. It

is usually far easier to point out the actions of another – be it governments or our neighbours – than it is for us to acknowledge our own brokenness. As Christians who desire to see God's Kingdom enacted in our world, we too must be conscious of our own hearts and practices so that we do not inadvertently work against these principles. Like Assange, we have been called by Christ to cry out for justice in a world of suffering and cruelty. But we must not neglect the damage we ourselves are responsible for. Although he argues passionately for accountability for others, Cumberbatch's Assange remains distant from those closest to him, revealing little about his own history and secrets.

Cumberbatch's Assange is portrayed as both hero and villain – one who reveals truth but endangers others in the process. And despite the shades of grey surrounding the rightness or wrongness of his actions, one cannot help but empathize with his bold spirit, demanding corporate and government accountability.

After all, courage is contagious.





# -Love Captured-

Writer  
Christina Porter



Looking back through my walk with Christ, I have consistently struggled with loving others. No matter when or why, my failure has always been rooted in selfishness. I fail to think like Christ therefore I fail to love like Christ. While His Love was meaningful because of His sacrifice, it doesn't mean love always has to be painful. With the right outlook, it can be fun without being selfish. To see what I mean, try this challenge.

## CHALLENGE

Materials needed: the list of actions, a marker, paper, a bit of spending money.

*Step 1* - As a youth group or with your friends, take those materials and the list below to a mall, a school, or a small community and set up a time to regroup.

*Step 2* - Complete as many of the activities on the list as possible in the time you set, keeping in mind the purpose is to act in the genuine interest of others, not necessarily to finish all of them.

*Step 3* - As you complete the activities mark the spot with a Love Movement logo and take a picture.

*Step 4* - Regroup and pray for the individuals that you encountered.

## ACTIONS

Help bring someone's groceries to their car.

Buy someone a coffee and muffin from a coffee shop.

Sit down with a stranger and learn five things about them.

Sweep the floors in a retail store or a classroom.

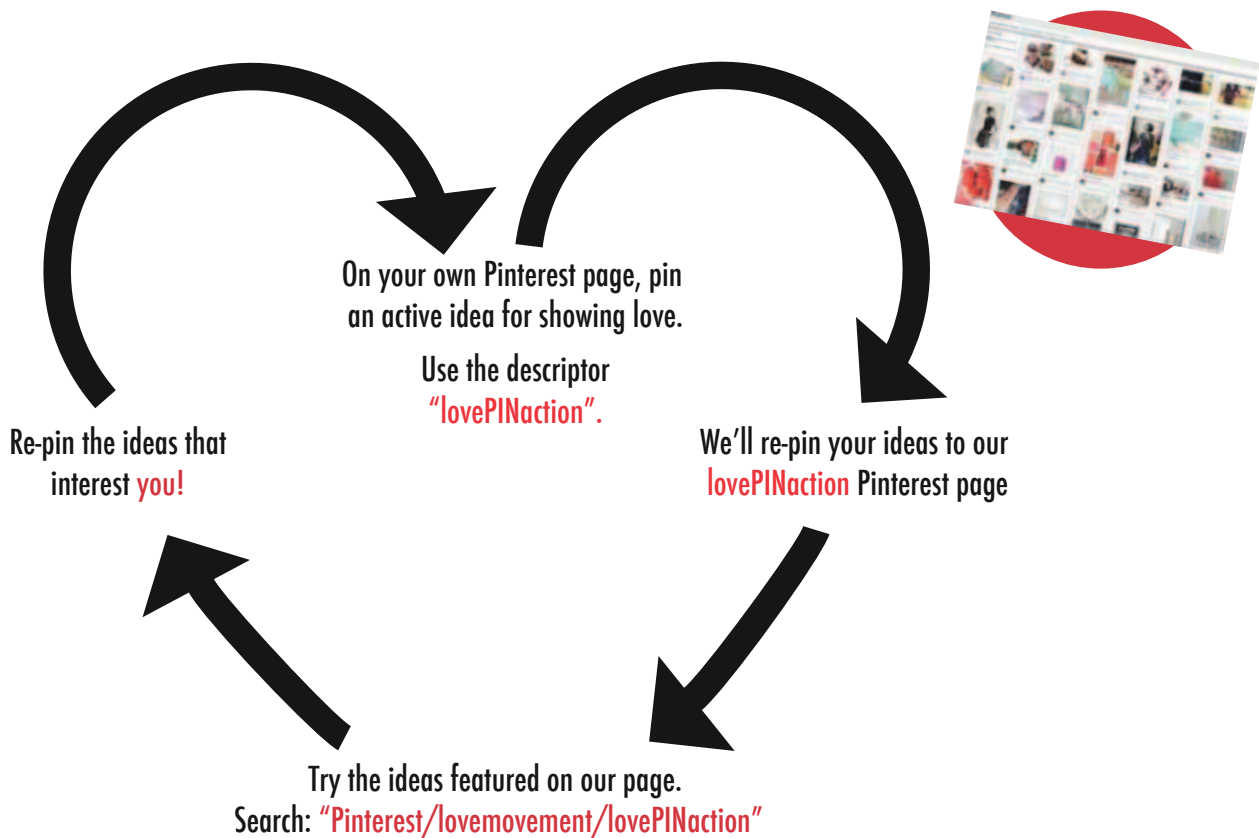
Buy lunch for a stranger in a food court or cafeteria.

Give a note of anonymous appreciation to someone you see being kind to someone else.

Buy a bag of hugs a pass them out.

Wait in a line at a busy store and when you get close to the front, offer another shopper your place in line.

When you're done, post the images to Pinterest. While you're there, check out how we're trying to spread the love.





# MAN ON A MISSION

Writer  
Christina Helvadjian



At 17, David Salama has already been called to serve in Kenya twice. He is a missionary, a young man spreading the word of God in a far fetched part of the globe. But like most other 17-year-olds, David is now caught up in more ordinary but no less important tasks, preparing applications for university programs across the country. He wants to study physics.

David travelled to Kenya with the Coptic Orthodox Church. The country is located on the coast of the Indian Ocean in eastern Africa and has long been associated with high crime rates and government corrup-



tion. As a result, the preparation process for mission trips is intense. "We start by spending five to six months together prior to the trip," David says. "This gave us a chance to build community before departure. We did different things each time we meet like watch movies or have prayer and Bible study."

The goal of this kind of preparation was to teach these young people to face issues together as a unit. Each of them was encouraged to keep a journal, writing every night to reflect on the things they learned and how they felt during the trip. David remembers a story from the first few days when they went out preaching in the Kenyan slums. He admits that at first, he wasn't keen on the idea, but then the Holy Spirit moved him to volunteer. "The

words began to flow out of me," he says, "my heart was racing so fast." Others were impressed and David was in shock at how easily he stepped out of his comfort zone into this bold ministry. David found it refreshing that most were open to God's word which, in turn, inspired a change in himself.

"It's not for them to grow but for us," he says. While David has no plans to return to Kenya in the foreseeable future, he does hope to be back one day. Until then he'll continue to grow wherever his studies take him.

To learn more about missions in Kenya please visit: [www.copticmission.org](http://www.copticmission.org)

# A Word from our Teachers



Teaching is a process. It's about fostering relationships and inspiring passion. It can take hours of individual communication and observation to do well but when it is, it can leave an indelible mark on the students. This is especially true of Christian teachers who have a responsibility not only to educate but also lead by example in matters of faith and morality. Today, however, those teachers face the challenge of doing so in an environment where they cannot share their faith explicitly.

Denis Lopes is the Vice Principal of Woburn Collegiate Institute in Toronto and his wife, Leonor Lopes, is the Vice Principal of Eastern Commerce Collegiate Institute and Subway Academy One, an alternative secondary school and part of the Toronto District School Board. I spoke with them about the rewards and difficulties of being Christian educators in secular schools.

**Mark Fisk (MF):** What do you love about being a teacher?

**Leonor:** I love making a positive difference in the lives of young people and watching their faces when they have those "aha" moments. I also love preparing lessons that engage students.

**Denis:** Interacting with students and hearing their stories, hopes and dreams. Also, seeing them acting on their enthusiastic and energetic ventures and succeeding.

**MF:** In what ways do you reach out to students who are causing trouble?

**Leonor:** By building relationships with them. Most students will respond well when they trust you. Teach them an appropriate way to act and let them know they are valuable despite their behaviour. If their behaviour continues to erode, they may have to go elsewhere. No one person's behaviour should poison the atmosphere of the school.

**MF:** When things get really bad and a student nears suspension or expulsion what do you try to do?

**Denis:** Stay calm. Acting out of anger or impulse may end in a loss of dignity, trust and respect. I also ask myself if the student is testing me in areas of character, trust or faith and if they're acting out of frustration, fear or anger? What do they need at this moment, someone to say "stop" or someone to listen?

**MF:** In what ways do you try to mentor your students and/or fellow teachers?

**Leonor:** By being an example, even behind closed doors. It is important to act with integrity and make fair decisions and stick to them. I try to have the courage to do what is right even if it's unpopular while being mindful of student and staff needs. It's also important to try and speak scriptural truth without using Christian lingo. For example, I tell students they are valuable and that they have a future (Psalm 139 and Jeremiah 29:11). Some students have never heard such truth about themselves.

**MF:** In what ways do you see teaching as an act of love?

**Leonor:** Teachers have a phenomenal impact on the lives of young people. We possess the power to build them up or bring them down. Teachers don't choose their students and some are hard to love but we try to impact all students for good, especially the ones that are difficult to love.

**Denis:** Teaching is relational, it does not exist outside of the relationship between student and teacher. The teacher is entrusted with the immense responsibility of guiding and mentoring these young people and to do this, a teacher must be selfless.

**MF:** As Christians how do you love people in an environment that doesn't allow you to share your faith?

**Leonor:** A school environment provides ample opportunities to show God's Love. Sharing my faith is not necessarily speaking about Jesus but living His Love. This Love may be

foreign but it attracts people and my goal is to create natural opportunities to share the source of this Love. At such times, I just speak and allow God to do the rest. It isn't so much about sharing my faith as it is about living it.

**MF:** What would you tell young men and women who are thinking about becoming teachers?

**Denis:** It is the greatest profession and it's not to be taken lightly. There is no place to hide. You need to account for the hundreds of decisions you make every day and it's a career that can demand more time than there are hours in the day. But, if done for the right reasons, there is no greater enjoyment than working with young people whose

potential has yet to be fulfilled. Do not expect to be noticed or thanked. Do not enter this profession for praise or glory. You may be forgotten, overlooked, and credit given to others but the joy of seeing young people fulfill their potential is immeasurable.

**MF:** What does it take to be a teacher?

**Denis:** The crazy thought that you could make a difference and the desire to be fearless in sharing who you are as a person. Students need and want a good teacher, a genuinely caring and selfless adult who guides them in the learning process by demonstrating the truth of serving others.



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