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CANADA'S CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE

SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2014

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# Faith Today's new look

*What a creative joy it has been to give this magazine a makeover*

**F** *aith Today* is one of Canada's top Christian magazines, but maintaining excellence – on behalf of you, the reader, and of the God we all serve – requires a regular influx of new life.

The beautiful magazine you now hold owes a lot to top-notch designer Janice Van Eck (www.janicevaneck.com), who reworked and then polished every inch.

The redesign process also included a lot of editorial brainstorming about what elements should stay in *Faith Today* and what could go. We discussed, we met, we emailed, we called, we clipped and we cut. And we listened. Janice in particular listened carefully to our friendly debates about how *Faith Today* could be made better.

She agrees with us that reading a magazine is more than just digesting information. It should be an enjoyable experience of discovery, learning, sharing – and of course flipping pages to see what comes next.

She brought her art to the words. We are so grateful.

Ultimately, we want you to experience *Faith Today* as a way to be connected with other Canadian Christians – informed, challenged, stretched and nourished.

Our new tagline is not shy: *Faith Today* – Canada's Christian Magazine. That's because there's no other publication like it – Canada-wide in scope, trans-denominational in


breadth, tucked firmly into the mission of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, telling the stories Canadian Christians love to read.

Here's a little of what you can experience with this issue – and all the ones to come:

- A beautiful new layout with lots of breathing room to tell stories in inviting ways.
- A new At Issue page summarizing what you need to know about social issues. Succinct and immediately usable information.
- Revitalized arts coverage including a Reading the Bestsellers review plus a reproduction of an artwork by a Canadian Christian.
- Thought-provoking Canadian writing in History Lesson, Messy Faith and Business Matters as well as in longstanding favourites such as Religion Watch and Christ & Culture in Canada.
- More of the great features and interviews you expect – plus a few other surprises.

*Reading a magazine is more than just digesting information. It should be an enjoyable experience of discovery, learning, sharing – and of course flipping pages to see what comes next.*

Whether you're a long-term reader or a newcomer, welcome aboard! We seek to serve you with every story we put together. We thought of you through every step of our redesign journey. Let us know your thoughts at editor@faithtoday.ca. /FT

 Bill Fledderus of Hamilton, Ont., and Karen Stiller of Port Perry, Ont., are senior editors of *Faith Today*. Stephen Bedard of Cambridge, Ont., is associate editor.


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**New at Blog.FaithToday.ca**

AT LUNCH, eaten in the cafeteria, it wasn't the waiters who served us drinks – Pope Francis served Geoff Tunnicliffe, secretary general of the WEA, and me. His presence undermines pomp or circumstance. –from “Lunch With the Pope” by Brian Stiller

FAITH TODAY asked a variety of Canadian Christian leaders about what they hope to read over the more relaxed summer season. Read on for the initial responses! –from “What We’ll Be Reading This Summer” by Dave Toycen, Marg Gibb, Eric Frans, David Johnson and more

WE ALL have certain ideas about the way the world works, like “religion is the main source of conflict in the world,” or “lower taxes lead to economic growth,” or “people are basic-

ally good.” But do these ideas fit with reality? Studying history is one of the best ways to find out. –from “5 Reasons You Should Bother With History” by Kevin Flatt

THOSE OF us who write and edit and lay out the articles in Faith Today are aiming for the highest quality. We believe we're doing what God is calling us to do. But what if nobody else thought so? –from “Awards Remind Us What We've Got” by Bill Fledderus

I WAS deeply touched by how Major Denis Bujold uses Scripture to tend to the hearts of the walking wounded soldiers he chaplains. He quotes Psalm 22.



Images like being poured out like water, hearts turning to wax. Bones out of joint. Surely, surely, there is a way for the Church to help put what is broken back together again. –from “Writing ‘The Walking Wounded’” by Karen Stiller

OF COURSE there is no role for apologetics in keeping youth engaged with church, you might say. You can't argue people into the Kingdom of God! Apologetics was for an older generation. But this skepticism toward apologetics is based on a misunderstanding of what apologetics should be. –from “Youth Ministry Should be Unapologetically Apologetic” by Stephen Bedard

**Supports Trinity Western**

Re: The Faith Today Interview With Bob Kuhn (May/June 2014) YOUR ARTICLES are extremely thought provoking. They encourage us to see how God is moving in all areas across Canada.

As an alumna of Trinity Western University, I really appreciated your focus on their recent court issues, giving this serious matter the attention it deserves. Hopefully it will move your readers to act in a tangible way to help support their fight.

Paula Gulick  
Palmer Rapids, Ont.

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

MILESTONES

**APPOINTED**



**Chris Barrett** as national director of the Navigators, an international movement known for discipleship and mentoring on university campuses, in business and

beyond. He succeeds Eric Stolte, who led for ten years. The Navigators came to Canada in the early 1960s, and currently Navs Canada has about 80 staff serving here and abroad.

**Paul Heidebrecht** as director of the new Centre for Peace Advancement (CPA) at Conrad Grebel University College. The Mennonite Savings and Credit Union CPA is located at the University of Waterloo. Dr. Heidebrecht,



guiding relations with government on public policy. (Interim director at MCC Ottawa is Jennifer Wiebe.)

**Ed Wilson** as the permanent executive director of International Justice Mission Canada, after seven months as acting director. He succeeds Jamie McIntosh, who left the organization in December after 12 years to join World Vision Canada as vice-president, programs and policy.

**OPENED**

**The Sarah Tracy Centre for Women** who struggle with addiction, mental illness, and/

or criminal activity. This 26-room residential substance abuse treatment program is based in Tracy, N.B., and operated by Bridges of Canada, a Christian charity that also operates Bar None Camp, prison chaplaincy ministry and more.

**RENAMED**

**Ambrose University** is the new name for Ambrose University College. The interdenominational school, affiliated with The Christian & Missionary Alliance in Canada and the Church of the Nazarene Canada, is based in Calgary and has 700 undergraduate students in arts and science, 120 in theology and about 80 in graduate studies at Ambrose Seminary.

**Square One World Media Inc.** is the new name for Family Life Network, the Winnipeg-based media organization formerly known as



## From Facebook.com/FaithToday

Let us not lose sight of the fact that God is not dead! We don't dare put God in a box.  
—Helena Swanson

Being a pastor is work enough, but many pastors work for both the church and another employer. —from a link to a story from MBHerald.com

You may be tired of hearing about the FIFA World Cup, but have you heard of the Homeless World Cup? —from a link to a story from Salvationist.ca

The University of Calgary has allowed the appeal of seven students who were found guilty, in 2010, of nonacademic misconduct for having set up a pro-life display on campus. —from a link to story at jccf.ca

Worship leaders are passionate about leading. But we need times to rest and recharge or else eventually we'll be dead.  
—from a link to a post at ChrisFromCanada.com

Mennonite Brethren Communications and the Gospel Light Hour. It produces Christian materials in Arabic, English, Low German, Russian, Spanish and Ukrainian.

**The King's University** is the new name for The King's University College, a trans-denominational school of 700 students in Edmonton. It offers Bachelor degrees in the arts, humanities, music, social sciences, natural sciences and commerce/management, as well as an education after degree.

## EXPANDING

**Booth University College** in Winnipeg has announced a \$2.6 million expansion plan, enlarging its capacity to serve the educational and training needs of The Salvation Army. Currently it has about 250 students.



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# KINGDOM MATTERS

The latest news, notes, ideas and analysis from the Canadian Christian community



## Faith in the motocross pit

A young Canadian covers new ground with a unique ministry

**WHEN IT COMES** to extreme sports like motocross, Josh Snider is no stranger. On two wheels since he was five, it was natural for Snider, now 32, to look for a

way to mesh two of his greatest passions – dirt biking and his love for Jesus. He founded Redemption Racing in 2010 as a way of bringing his faith to the tracks.

Snider, a professional Canadian racer from Zurich, Ont., had previously been a part of Team Faith, a Christian motocross team from the United States. When cross-border sponsorship issues arose, he decided to start his own Canadian faith-based team.

“On the outside looking in, we’re no different than any other race team,” says Snider. But each member of Redemption Racing is a Christian, with the goal of not only giving the race their all, but letting their actions and speech point to Christ when given exposure for their talents. “We’re able to use high-profile athletes who create a lot of excitement and hype for fans and spectators. For them to be a role model, that’s the idea behind it,” says Snider.

The night before each race, Redemption Racing holds what Snider calls a “tent gathering” in their pit area. “I don’t really like to call it a ‘Bible study’ because I feel that kind of scares some people away, but that’s really what it is,” he laughs. “It’s not really structured. It’s open conversation. It’s whatever goes.” In the morning, Snider is also given the chance to share a short prayer and encouraging word with everyone gathered. All riders are invited. But, says Snider, “The ministry doesn’t really stop there because you’re in contact with others throughout the day.”

Conversations and relationships are important in the tight-knit motocross community, where Redemption Racing’s goal of ministering through relationships has earned them a well-known and well-respected presence, says Snider. “Shoulder-to-shoulder conversation. I find that goes a long way.

“What we’ve really seen grow is the chemistry between us and our oneness of vision of what we want to see,” Snider says. “Slowly but surely, every year, God’s blessed us with more and more support, and it’s been growing.” —KATE YANTZI

PHOTO: COURTESY OF REDEMPTION RACING



## From exclusion to welcome for those with disabilities

It's time for churches to be intentional in inclusion

### "FAMILIES WITH DISABILITIES

never have a lukewarm experience at church. It is either a really good or a really bad experience," says Erik Carter, associate professor of special education at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee. Carter was in Canada as a keynote speaker at Building Communities of Belonging, one of two conferences held recently to equip the Canadian Church to more actively welcome those with disabilities. Churches, says Carter, need training.

Centre Street Church in Calgary hosted Umbrella 2014: National Disability Ministry Equipping Conference in April. In May, the Building Communities of Belonging conference was sponsored by Christian Horizons and hosted by Harvest Bible Chapel in Oakville, Ont.

Chantal Huinink experiences life with spastic quadriplegic cerebral palsy. She spoke at both conferences. "I hope that families affected by disability are encouraged by my experiences of belonging in a faith community, and gain a positive sense of what church involvement could look like," says Huinink.

Steve Bundy, a speaker at Umbrella and vice-president of Joni and Friends, an organization that seeks to promote Christian ministry in the disability community, emphasized the Church's need to move farther along the journey of fully welcoming those with



The Umbrella 2014 conference was held in Calgary in April.

disabilities. "I hope that churches will be inspired, convicted and equipped to welcome and include those with disabilities into the Body of Christ," says Bundy. "As those who represent the Kingdom of God, we must follow the heart of the King by including those with disabilities into the life of the Church."

Inclusion and the experience of belonging are countercultural messages according to Huinink, and a message that needs to be sent to "sectors of the population who are generally excluded."

Inclusion is the trajectory the Church must be on. "My vision is that the Church would lead the way in setting the example of inclusion and empowerment for those affected by disability. For this to happen, it will require a shift in the culture of the Church to move from an 'us' and 'you' mentality to a 'we' mentality. We all together make up the Body of Christ," says Bundy.

Both conferences suggested churches can start this journey by a commitment to embrace those with disabilities as full participants in the church family. —STEVE BEDARD

## Inspiring ideas from Canadian churches



Most church libraries are open only a few hours weekly, but **The Dwelling Place (Cranbrook Christian Centre) in Cranbrook, B.C.**, has made its library available all week. Their library is "online" and "gigantic," featuring over 2,000 discipleship videos for kids, youth and adults.



Churches often struggle to fill vacant ministry positions. **Parkview Alliance Church in Vermilion, Alta.**, has created a Ministry Opps page on their website to not only advertise vacancies, but help congregants use their passions, serve God, love others and make a difference. The website lists over a dozen openings involving opportunities featuring varying levels of commitment and requirements.



A church's annual report is usually a form of one-way communication. **Willingdon Church in Burnaby, B.C.**, wants to use its annual report to hear from the congregation. Their report includes a page called "Your Story," asking readers to respond with "how God has transformed or touched your life this year." Responses can be submitted by email or at the church building.



Garage sales are everywhere, but **Bradford Baptist Church in Bradford, Ont.**, added a twist. "The Great Giveaway" held in downtown Bradford is a giant garage sale in which everything is free. Each guest received three free tickets upon arrival, which they could use to claim the items they were interested in. Approximately 3 tonnes of regifted items found a new home, with 90 per cent given to those in need.



**Summerside Community Church in Summerside, P.E.I.**, practises what it preaches about Sabbath. Every seven weeks the church takes a break from all midweek activities to rest. During each of these seven-week periods, they give a "Sabbath Offering" to a local or foreign need. —DARRYL DASH



Visit [www.faithtoday.ca/inspiringideas](http://www.faithtoday.ca/inspiringideas) for more. Does your church have great ideas to share? [editor@faithtoday.ca](mailto:editor@faithtoday.ca)

## Gideons International in Canada strikes new path

New level of control and direction for ministry

**THE NAME MAY** be the same, but just about everything else is different for The Gideons International in Canada ([www.gideons.ca](http://www.gideons.ca)). The 103-year-old organization has undergone significant, fundamental change in the past three years.

The Gideons International in Canada became autonomous in early 2011, a result of the parent organization – The Gideons International family of ministries (based in Nashville, Tennessee) – severing ties. The split was fallout from the Canadian ministry needing to fulfill

director of communications.

Warkentin's statement alone speaks to change. Whereas the international organization permits only men from business and the professions, today's Gideons in Canada includes men and women from all vocations.

The Canadians now also have control and direction of all funds raised here, and are establishing a network of church and ministry partnerships around the world.

Warkentin says a younger leadership team has brought new strategies and energies, helping to build relationships with a younger generation. Among their innovations – they've shifted to the New Living Translation of the Bible, created a youth program called SendMe to connect the gospel through Christian students to

their peers in school, and created a smartphone app called NewLife that's designed for evangelists and seekers.

"Change is always hard, especially for an organization with a century of history and legacy," says Warkentin. But, "The changes that have been made in the past three years are a reflection of the need to recalibrate a 100-year-old ministry for greater effectiveness and relevance to a changed world. The mission is the same, the cause is the same – sharing the gospel with the Word of God. It's how we do it that needed to be changed."

—PATRICIA PADDEY

*...a younger leadership team has brought new strategies and energies, helping to build relationships with a younger generation.*

Canada Revenue Agency regulations that they maintain control and direction of donor funds, an arrangement unacceptable to the international policies of the Nashville organization.

But with the change came new freedoms for the Canadians to chart their own course. Today, The Gideons International in Canada defines themselves as a nondenominational ministry dedicated to sharing the gospel with God's Word on a global basis. "In Canada, we do this primarily through a national membership of evangelical Christians who volunteer their time, resources and passion for the cause," said Kelvin Warkentin,



## Evangelical Anglican seminary reaches out to Canadian churches

**WYCLIFFE SERVES!** is a new initiative from Wycliffe College, an evangelical Anglican seminary on the University of Toronto campus. Officially launched in May the initiative offers resources, conferences, courses and more to churches across the country to strengthen the Church for mission, says John Bowen, the Wycliffe professor and author who leads the endeavour. Wycliffe Serves! is meant to be a bridge between academia and the Church.

"Seminaries are by nature introverted. We send our bright young people to churches, and the Church receives a fine product. But we don't think that is enough," says Bowen. "Wycliffe Serves! is helping an introverted seminary turn extroverted. We have resources that we can offer church leaders."

Some of those resources predate the initiative, others are new. There will be an emphasis on mission and evangelism, leadership, preaching, congregational renewal, children's and youth ministry, lay education and church planting, according to Bowen.

Conferences and seminars on clergy wellness, annual preaching days, help for urban churches, and courses and seminars on children's catechesis are all on the agenda. Wycliffe Serves! has also partnered with the United Kingdom-based Messy Church (an organization focused on reaching families who are not in church on Sundays) and will promote that program in Canada.

"This initiative will help our partnerships with non-Anglican organizations and churches," says Bowen. "What we are offering can help empower any church of any denomination, their laypeople and their clergy." —A. A. ADOURIAN



PERCENTAGE OF CANADIANS WHO SELF-IDENTIFY AS CHRISTIAN



24,000

ESTIMATED CHRISTIAN CONGREGATIONS IN CANADA

## A house is not the only home for Toronto ministry

WHEN DALE MINISTRIES was threatened by closing doors in 2012, director Erinn Oxford opted to tear down the walls rather than break up the close knit family in her care. The ministry, an outreach to a hundred or more significantly marginalized people in downtown Toronto, she explains, is more a circle of friends who look out for each other than just another social organization.

What started as a potential tragedy has turned into a gift, she adds. The single financial source Dale relied on for its budget decided to implement a declining formula to encourage the ministry to be sustainable. Although the community itself was doing well and growing, tithing isn't something they were able to do. To extinguish as much expense as possible, Oxford knew the space Dale Ministries leased had to go.

"Luckily it was summer," Oxford says, "so we'd be able to continue meeting even if it had to be in a park. They understood because they know what it means to be transient."

So while she knocked on doors looking for free space and donations, the community set about purging belongings. Within days Bonar-Parkdale Presbyterian church donated free space, as long as the community brought its own kitchen things, including fridge and freezer.

Oxford also managed to secure a wide variety of ministry partners, a development she believes wouldn't have happened in their former situation. In addition to the Presbyterian church, Dale Ministries now partners with a few Anglican communities in the neighbourhood, a community health centre and a local Salvation Army thrift store out of which they run a drop-in. Dale is also now part of a community garden and an initiative that harvests fruit from public and private fruit trees for those in need, including members of Dale.

"There is always hope that a person will experience healing and have their circumstances change," says Oxford, now an expert at making the best of changed circumstances. —ALEX NEWMAN



The Dale Ministries works in Toronto's Parkdale neighbourhood.

## NOTE WORTHY



### PRODIGAL PASTOR KIDS NOT SO DIFFERENT

"Prodigal Pastor Kids: Fact or Fiction," a 2013 study by American researchers the Barna Group, reports that pastor kids are not more likely to leave the Church as adults than their peers. Pastors with children aged 15 or older said the following was true of their children: 40 per cent experienced a period where they doubted their faith; 33 per cent are no longer actively involved in the Church; seven per cent no longer consider themselves Christian. Pastors said the top reason for their children's struggles was unrealistic expectations placed upon them by the Church.

### CONGREGATION FORGIVES MAN WHO ACCIDENTALLY BURNS DOWN BUILDING

A 42-year-old man burning leaves and yard debris has been charged under the Wildfires Act for allowing that fire to destroy the United Church in Starbuck, Man. Minister Cathy Maxwell said that grass fires from burning garbage are part of living in rural Manitoba, and that church members forgive him. "Folks have just embraced him and he's talked to a number of our members. What I have seen, for the most part, is people putting their arms around him," she said.

### CHURCH HEADS UP SYRIAN RESCUE MISSION

Fairview Alliance Church in Fairview, Alta., is raising money to sponsor a Syrian Christian refugee family of five from a Syrian refugee camp. The family has received multiple death threats from family members,

ultraconservative Muslim elements and the public at large. The church aims to raise \$32,000 for the family's first year in Canada, and to help them adjust to Canadian life.

### ANGLICAN CHURCH FACES THREAT OF EXTINCTION

The Anglican Church in Canada may be only a generation away from extinction, says a just-published assessment of the Church's future prepared for the Anglican Diocese of British Columbia. The report says that Anglicanism is declining faster than any other denomination. "The status quo is not an option," the report says. "A culture change is necessary for the Church to continue."

### CANADIANS BELIEVE DEATH IS NOT THE END

Half of Canadians believe in life after death, with only two out of ten ruling out the possibility altogether, and 53 per cent believe people who have died could be aware of what is taking place in our lives, according to a study by Reginald Bibby, professor of sociology at the University of Lethbridge. Bibby says it's puzzling that "belief in life after death persists, despite a substantive decline in religious beliefs and behaviour."

### NONRELIGIOUS ARE STILL "SPIRITUAL SEEKERS"

Those who identify "none" as their religion are more religious than previously thought, according to new research presented at the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences in May. Although the number of people who do not identify with a religion has grown from 10 per cent in 1985 to 25 per cent today, this "may not necessarily be coupled with a complete decline of other types of religiosity," according to Sarah Wilkins-Laflamme, a Canadian doctoral student at Oxford University. —DARRYL DASH

From VISION...  
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Our vision of a Christian retirement community within York Region is now becoming a reality. Construction is anticipated to start soon and an excellent choice of suites is still available. We expect suites will sell out once the building process commences.

We eagerly look forward to our Spring 2016 anticipated occupancy.

To become part of our exciting new community, contact us at 905-591-3491 or visit our website.

See how you too, can become part of 'The Meadows.'

The Meadows  
of Aurora

www.themeadowsofaurora.com  
York Region Christian Senior Homes Inc.  
15600 Leslie St., Aurora, Ontario L4G 7C4  
info@themeadowsofaurora.com  
905-591-3491

A Christian Seniors Lifestyle Community



## Kelowna studio brings faith to dance

A DANCE STUDIO in Kelowna fuses a passion for dance with a love for God. The results are a studio that is unique, nurturing and thriving. Laura Elliott is the artistic director of Creator's Arts Centre. "Naomi [Bothe, the founder] thought she could put this new meaning she found in dance and Christianity together, and go out there and change the world," says Elliott. The studio's vision is "created to create and called to impact the world through the arts."

Although Creator's is a Christian organization, they serve a wide demographic. Not all of the faculty and students profess to be Christians. "We believe that is what God calls us to do," Elliott says. "But we invite everyone who believes in these things to come along with us."

Creator's is actually a registered charity and offers training in many creative disciplines – from classical ballet to acrobatics. Elliott says the studio encourages students to be disciplined, compassionate and to build good character, along with excelling in dance and the creative arts.

"I had options of going to other places," explains Deborah Klassen, mother of a Creator's dancer. "I wanted my daughter to have that background of using dance as a gift and being guided in that. I wanted her to feel that appreciation from being with others who recognize dance as something that you can offer to other people."

"Everything in our lives is to create this beautiful picture that the master artist is weaving together," says Elliott. "Even if we don't see the finished product, in the end it really is something beautiful." —MARIE KEERY

Visit [www.faithtoday.ca/KingdomMatters](http://www.faithtoday.ca/KingdomMatters) for more. Have a story to share? [editor@faithtoday.ca](mailto:editor@faithtoday.ca)

PHOTO: CREATOR'S ARTS CENTRE

Rejoicing  
in  
Hope

IDOP  
Canada

International  
Day Of Prayer  
for the Persecuted Church

November 9, 2014  
Romans 5: 1-5 [www.idop.ca](http://www.idop.ca)

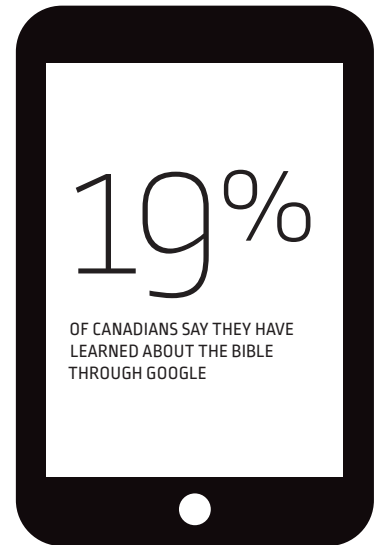
# Canadians and the Bible

Revealing insights related to the recent Canadian Bible Engagement Study



**61%**

OF CANADIANS SAY THEY HAVE LEARNED ABOUT THE BIBLE THROUGH SERMONS



**23%** OF CANADIANS SAY THEY HAVE LEARNED ABOUT THE BIBLE THROUGH FORMAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



**1996**

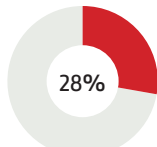
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**2013**

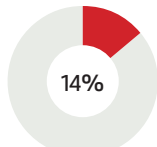


**54%**

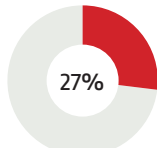
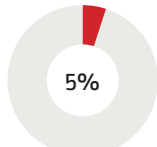
OF CANADIAN EVANGELICALS REFLECT ON THE MEANING OF THE BIBLE IN THEIR LIVES AT LEAST WEEKLY



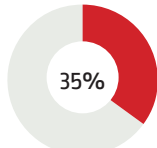
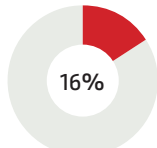
PERCENTAGE OF CANADIANS WHO READ THE BIBLE AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH



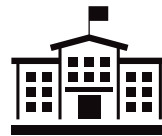
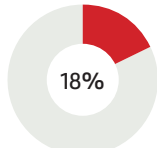
PERCENTAGE OF CANADIANS WHO READ THE BIBLE DAILY



PERCENTAGE OF CANADIANS WHO ATTEND RELIGIOUS SERVICES AT LEAST WEEKLY



PERCENTAGE OF CANADIANS WHO STRONGLY AGREE THAT THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD



**53%**

OF CANADIANS SAY THE BIBLE HAS NO PLACE IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

v.

**41%**

OF CANADIANS WHO SAY THE BIBLE SHOULD BE TAUGHT IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS, BUT ONLY AS LITERATURE

**IN 1870** 3,097 OF ONTARIO'S 4,566 NORMAL, GRAMMAR AND COMMON SCHOOLS REPORTED THAT PUPILS READ THE BIBLE DURING SCHOOL HOURS



**HAVE A PLAN**

THOSE WITH A BIBLE READING PLAN – OF ANY KIND – ARE

**4**

TIMES AS LIKELY TO READ THE BIBLE AT LEAST A FEW TIMES A WEEK COMPARED TO THOSE WHO CHOOSE PASSAGES RANDOMLY



# Five decades of collaboration

*It's time to reflect on how God has blessed us*

It was 50 years ago this fall that a group of evangelical church leaders came together to form a national evangelical fellowship in Canada. They were deeply concerned about the theological drift they saw occurring in seminaries and pulpits in Canada. Likewise they were concerned about the shifts they saw taking place in Canadian society and wanted to foster an evangelical voice that could speak into the culture.

At the same time Pierre Berton was finishing his study of the Canadian Church commissioned by the Anglican Church of Canada. In *The Comfortable Pew: A Critical Look at Christianity and the Religious Establishment in the New Age* (McClelland and Stewart, 1965), he argued the Church in

Canada had become too complacent and had lost its prophetic voice. (Notably, he excluded Evangelicals from his analysis – he was actually quite dismissive of their role in contemporary Christianity.) He called churches to focus less on being part of the Canadian establishment and more on progressively championing social causes.

The founders of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) took a different approach. They wanted to gather around a strong and unambiguous commitment to the central truths of the Scriptures. They adopted the statement of faith of the then World Evangelical Fellowship (now the World Evangelical Alliance). They envisioned bringing together evangelical Christians, denominations, ministry or-

ganizations and congregations for mutual encouragement, study and collaboration in the advancement of the gospel of Jesus Christ in Canada and abroad.

This was quite an ambitious project. The goal was to gather Christians from across the Protestant spectrum – from Pentecostal to Presbyterian, from Anglican to Christian & Missionary Alliance. Participants would adhere to a common statement of faith, and pray, study and minister together for the sake of the gospel. Today it's easy to take for granted what was envisioned, and what was forged 50 years ago. Risks were taken to cross denominational lines and bridge theological differences, and over the years the expression of unity and collaboration has deepened.

## News FROM THE EFC

### The EFC at prostitution law review

The EFC presented its views on major new legislation on prostitution before a House of Commons committee in July. Parliament could pass Bill-36 this fall. Read the submission at [www.theEFC.ca/ProstitutionJuly2014](http://www.theEFC.ca/ProstitutionJuly2014).

### Crucial court cases this fall

In October the EFC will intervene in a Supreme Court case about Canada's laws prohibiting euthanasia and assisted suicide. The EFC already intervened in this case ([www.theEFC.ca/Carter](http://www.theEFC.ca/Carter)) before the B.C. Court of Appeal, which upheld the constitutionality of the current laws.

A second EFC Supreme Court intervention concerns religious freedom, specifically whether

prayer is permissible prior to government functions such as town council meetings. Does state neutrality mean any religious observance is unconstitutional?

Thirdly, the EFC has applied to intervene in support of Trinity Western University in its court challenges in Nova Scotia and Ontario. Law societies in those provinces have decided not to allow graduates of TWU's proposed law school from practising law. TWU is an affiliate of the EFC.

Prayer and other support of these EFC legal interventions are indispensable.

### Will Canada stop Quebec euthanasia law?

After Quebec became the first province to legalize euthanasia, the EFC sent a letter to the federal government urging it

to ensure euthanasia is not practised in Quebec. Read about the EFC's opposition at [www.theEFC.ca/bill52passed](http://www.theEFC.ca/bill52passed).

### Pray for Iraq

The EFC Religious Liberty Commission issued an alert in July at [www.theEFC.ca/alerts](http://www.theEFC.ca/alerts), and in August the EFC took the extra step of calling its affiliates to pray about anti-Christian violence and the related humanitarian crisis in Iraq, caused by militants from the Islamic State terrorist group (formerly ISIS).

### Bible use questioned

The EFC's Rick Hiemstra appeared on the TV show *100 Huntley Street* in July to talk about the Canadian Bible Engagement Study. He was joined by Scripture Union's Lawson Murray and Bible

League Canada's Paul Richardson. Link to the video at [www.theEFC.ca/BibleEngagementStudy](http://www.theEFC.ca/BibleEngagementStudy).

### Experts available

Are you looking for a guest speaker? Consider [www.theEFC.ca/speakers](http://www.theEFC.ca/speakers).



The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada

Find out about news stories like these and more at [www.theEFC.ca](http://www.theEFC.ca).

Learn how to take action on the issues you care about at [www.theEFC.ca/takeaction](http://www.theEFC.ca/takeaction).

Visit *Faith Today* and the EFC on Facebook and Twitter for breaking news, great links and lively discussion.



Today there are over 120 national evangelical alliances in the world, and the EFC is one of the largest. Yet few countries in the world enjoy the breadth and depth of the fellowship and connectedness we enjoy in Canada, thanks to the prayers, vision, commitment and work of those who birthed the EFC.

We gather together 40 denominations, over 100 key ministry organizations including seminaries, Bible colleges and universities, evangelistic organizations and compassion ministries. Hundreds of local congregations have also affiliated with the EFC. All understand the importance of standing together and strengthening the influence and impact of the Church in Canada.

Out of the desire to study together and collaborate in ministry have come various task forces, commissions and initiatives. Together we have turned our

attention to evangelism and global mission, to youth and young adult ministries, to homelessness and poverty, and many other crucial areas.

**Few countries enjoy the breadth and depth of the fellowship and connectedness we enjoy in Canada**

The goal of bringing an evangelical understanding of the Christian faith to the public square was developed in our Social Action, Education and Religious Liberty Commissions. These provided the insights and analysis that today continue to be nurtured in Ottawa at the EFC's Centre for Faith and Public Life, where staff and interns make contributions to Canadian courts and across Parliament Hill, giving voice to the application of biblical principles in the life of our nation and the promotion of religious liberty around the world.

A new focus on researching church and faith trends is providing data and analysis on our changing culture and helping us better understand the context of ministry

in Canada – so churches and ministries can be more effective in their mission.

*Faith Today* tells the stories of Evangelicals and evangelical ministries making a difference and sharing the Good News in word and deed, communicating important conversations and ideas across the evangelical community in Canada.

It's good to step back from time to time to reflect on what has been accomplished by God's grace over these past 50 years. It allows us to be thankful for the few who felt called by God to establish something new. (Learn more about the EFC and our 50th anniversary at [www.theEFC.ca/50](http://www.theEFC.ca/50).)

Let's not take for granted what has been accomplished and what God has blessed. Together we are stronger. Together we can make a difference. /FT

 Bruce J. Clemenger is president of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. Find more of these columns at [www.faithtoday.ca/TheGatheringPlace](http://www.faithtoday.ca/TheGatheringPlace). Please pray for our work. You can support it financially at [www.theEFC.ca/donate](http://www.theEFC.ca/donate) or toll-free 1-866-302-3362.

## Meet the EFC Board: Martin Kreplin

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 Martin Kreplin, lead pastor of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Moncton, N.B.

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

**MK:** As a minister in a Presbyterian church, the work of the EFC has always stood out as making an exceptional difference in the Canadian landscape on issues that matter to Evangelicals and others. I wanted to strengthen that work with my participation.

**FT:** What's the most important

thing the EFC is doing these days, in your opinion?

**MK:** This year the EFC is celebrating its 50th anniversary. Over that time, the EFC has offered a consistent reasoned approach on a multiplicity of issues with a tone that encourages collaboration with people of diverse backgrounds. Because of its approach, the EFC is able to influence important discussions impacting religious freedoms in an increasingly secular culture.

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

**MK:** Canada is facing increasingly divergent values in our public square. Without a predominantly biblical or Christian world

view in our postmodern era, the values that we once took for granted are no longer the common ground we can rely on. The results of the recent Canadian Bible Engagement Study indicate how pervasive this is even among Christians. [Editor's note: see [www.theEFC.ca/BibleEngagementStudy](http://www.theEFC.ca/BibleEngagementStudy)] If the supremacy of God and the rule of law, concepts embedded in the Preamble to the Canadian Constitution, are ignored, then issues are most often resolved through raw power rather than principles. This problem is evident in how we treat those who are the most vulnerable – in sanctity of life issues such as abortion and euthanasia – but also in



**Martin Kreplin says the EFC's approach makes for an influential voice in the public square.**

the way Canada treats mental illness, prostitution, adoption and immigration. The EFC's work in protecting religious freedoms ensures that followers of Jesus will continue to have an impact on Canada's future.

**FT:** Thank you, Martin. May God bless you and your ministry. /FT

# Reaching across social lines



*Angela Draskovic is president and CEO of Yonge Street Mission in Toronto, a Christian faith community providing emergency help and fostering long-term change in the lives of individuals, families and the community*

■ *What is the mission that drives Yonge Street Mission (YSM)?*

For 118 years it's always been the same – for the poor and vulnerable in Toronto to experience God's love, peace and justice.

■ *How do you view YSM's relationship with the Canadian Christian community?*

I see us as an extension of the Church. Many of our frontline volunteers are church members. We share the same mandate – to advocate for the poor and vulnerable. YSM is a place the city comes to for physical needs and support. People won't necessarily go to a church for that, but they will come

to YSM and we can be an avenue for giving them more, as Jesus did.

■ *What is the relationship between frontline ministry and advocacy?*

The seeds of advocacy are sown in the day to day of frontline ministry. Advocacy needs to happen in the social environment where the individual lives. When we find out, for example, a family's teenage child wants a part-time job, but can't [work] because it will result in a clawback from the parent's support payment, we can advocate for systemic changes. In all cases advocacy is rooted in knowing their lived experience.

■ *What are the most pressing inner-city issues for the Church to respond to in the next few years?*

The biggest challenge the city is facing is social cohesion. In Toronto, we have such a multicultural city. We have migration of people experiencing poverty on a daily basis. We have people with the most living beside people with the least, in the same neighbourhood. We won't have genuine cohesion without relationship. At church, people can reach across social lines. That can happen in neighbourhood associations also. YSM is going to be fostering that. The Church is uniquely equipped to address the biggest issues of the city – loving people who are not like us, which is fundamentally social cohesion.

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

I don't do a lot of disconnecting. It's mainly on the weekend when I'm kind of boring. It involves sleeping in, exercising, and spending time with my family and friends, maybe seeing a movie. It's all low stress given what the rest of the week looks like.

■ *Who are your heroes?*

My mom. Mother Teresa and Henri Nouwen. Quiet, godly people who do good things.

■ *What leadership book do you recommend most often?*

*The Advantage: Why Organizational Health Trumps Everything Else in Business* by Patrick Lencioni (Jossey-Bass, 2012). It's a good book. It's about organizational health and investing in your organization.

■ *What is your best leadership advice?*  
It is actually Mathew 6:33. Seek first His Kingdom. We all get distracted. Peter started to sink when he took his eyes off Jesus. So will I. /FT



**46,000**

AVERAGE NUMBER  
OF MEALS SERVED AT  
YSM'S EVERGREEN  
EACH YEAR

▶ Yonge Street Mission ([www.ysm.ca](http://www.ysm.ca)) is an affiliate of the EFC ([www.theEFC.ca/Affiliates](http://www.theEFC.ca/Affiliates)). Find more Q&As at [www.faithtoday.ca/QandA](http://www.faithtoday.ca/QandA)

# Euthanasia

What you need to know on this pressing social issue in a single page, drawing from the research and advocacy work of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. For more helpful resources visit [www.theEFC.ca/euthanasia](http://www.theEFC.ca/euthanasia).

Canada, along with many other countries, is nearing a crossroads on the issue of euthanasia. Laws differ around the world, from the very liberal application of euthanasia laws in Belgium (which allows child euthanasia) to countries that outlaw it completely, like France, the United States and Canada.

## Defining the terms

According to the Canadian Medical Association, euthanasia means “knowingly and intentionally performing an act that is explicitly intended to end another person’s life and that includes the following elements: the subject has an incurable illness; the agent knows about the person’s condition; commits the act with the primary intention of ending the life of that person; and the act is undertaken with empathy and compassion and without personal gain.”

Assistance in suicide means “knowingly and intentionally providing a person with the knowledge or means or both required to commit suicide, including counselling about lethal doses of drugs, prescribing such lethal doses or supplying the drugs” (Source: CMA Policy: Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide, Update 2007).

The CMA expressly prohibits the practice of euthanasia and assisted suicide.

## Challenging Canada’s euthanasia laws

Under Canada’s *Criminal Code* euthanasia has been considered murder, and so the EFC recently sent a letter to the federal government urging it to ensure euthanasia is not practised in Quebec ([www.theEFC.ca/bill52passed](http://www.theEFC.ca/bill52passed)).

The letter was sent after the Quebec National Assembly voted to legalize euthanasia in June 2014. Quebec is the first Canadian province to draft legislation that would authorize euthanasia in Canada. Called “medical aid in dying,” euthanasia will be treated in the province as a form of health care. Doctors will be allowed to lethally inject patients who are at the end of life and experiencing physical or psychological suffering.

The Supreme Court of Canada will hear a case this October ([www.theEFC.ca/Carter](http://www.theEFC.ca/Carter)) that challenges our euthanasia laws. Several Christian groups, including The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, previously intervened in this case before the B.C. Court of Appeal, which upheld the constitutionality of the current laws, and will intervene again. /FT

## No 1

IN APRIL 2002, THE NETHERLANDS WAS THE FIRST COUNTRY TO LEGALIZE EUTHANASIA



BELGIAN EUTHANASIA CASES ROSE TO 1,807 IN 2013, COMPARED WITH 1,432 IN 2012, 708 IN 2008 AND 235 IN 2003. JUST OVER HALF THE CASES LAST YEAR WERE AGED 70 OR OVER, AND 80 PER CENT OF THE APPLICATIONS WERE MADE BY DUTCH SPEAKERS (SOURCE: [WWW.THEGUARDIAN.COM](http://WWW.THEGUARDIAN.COM))

## 55

PERCENTAGE OF CANADIANS WHO SUPPORT THE LEGALIZATION OF EUTHANASIA, COMPARED TO 63 PER CENT OF CANADIANS WHO SUPPORT THE LEGALIZATION OF ASSISTED SUICIDE (SOURCE: ENVIRONICS RESEARCH GROUP POLL)

“Might the strongest argument against euthanasia, however, relate not to death but to life? That is, the argument that normalizing it would destroy a sense of the unfathomable mystery of life and seriously damage our human spirit, especially our capacity to find meaning in life.”

— MARGARET SOMERVILLE, founding director of the Centre for Medicine, Ethics and Law at McGill University, and author of *The Ethical Imagination: Journeys of the Human Spirit* (House of Anansi Press, 2006)

Please pray for the public policy work of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. You can also support it financially at [www.theEFC.ca/](http://www.theEFC.ca/) donate or toll-free 1-866-302-3362. Read more of these columns at [www.faithtoday.ca/AtIssue](http://www.faithtoday.ca/AtIssue).

## What can you do . . .

A simple guide to taking action on social issues in Canada, from prayer to contacting your MP, is available at [www.theEFC.ca/TakeAction](http://www.theEFC.ca/TakeAction).



# God and the classroom

*The troubled history of schooling and religion in Canada*

**S**hould children pray in class? Is it desirable, or even possible, for schools to teach from a religiously neutral perspective? Do parents have the right to determine which worldview shapes their children's education?

The answers matter for children, their families and society. In Canada, we've always had trouble answering those questions in a way that is fair for everyone. We've often tried an approach to religion and schooling that satisfies the majority but creates ongoing problems for others.

In the 19th century, when today's public school systems were being built, most Canadians belonged to mainline Protestant churches. Members of these churches dominated politics and education in the Maritimes, Ontario and the West. They decided what the emerging taxpayer-funded public schools would look like.

Not surprisingly, schools reflected the religious convictions of those groups, including prayers, Bible readings and generically Protestant religious instruction in the curriculum. The teaching of any one specific denomination was avoided. These so-called nonsectarian schools were supposed to appeal to everybody.

But of course, they did not. Catholic parents objected, quite rightly, to having their children taught in what were obviously Protestant schools run by Protestants teaching a Protestant curriculum. They wanted to have their own publicly funded separate Catholic schools. After all, didn't Catholics pay school taxes too?

While most Protestants wanted tax money to pay for their schools, they vehemently opposed the same right for Catholics, as Trinity West-

**Many Christian parents objected, quite rightly, to the idea that secular was the same thing as neutral. They pointed out that secularism is itself a viewpoint that assumes God is irrelevant to learning.**

ern University professor Janet Epp Buckingham explains in her new book *Fighting over God: A Legal and Political History of Religious Freedom in Canada* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014).

In some provinces, like Ontario, Catholic schools stayed publicly funded, largely because their rights were entrenched in the Canadian Constitution in 1867. But in other provinces, Protestants pulled out all the stops to make sure Catholic schools would be denied public funding. In New Brunswick in 1871, for example, a new law imposing a single nonsectarian public system was accompanied by rioting against Catholics. Several deaths and the seizure of property from some Catholic priests were the result.

The Manitoba Schools Crisis of 1890 likewise cut off public funding to Catholic schools amid a wave of anti-Catholic prejudice. The Catholics of Manitoba were so bitterly frustrated that Pope Leo XIII wrote to encourage them. He reminded them it was worth paying a price to ensure their children would not be educated in schools where "the Catholic religion is ignored, or actively combated; in schools where its doctrine is despised and its fundamental principles repudiated."

Things for Catholics were better in Quebec, where they were in the majority. Members of smaller minority groups, however, like Jews, Mennonites and Jehovah's Witnesses were in a precarious situation throughout the country. Worst of all was the plight of Canada's Native peoples, whose children were put in residential schools where abuse was common and the language, culture and religion of their

parents were denigrated.

The situation shifted after the 1960s for two reasons. More immigrants to Canada arrived from Asia, Africa and the Middle East. In urban centres, it made less and less sense to ask public school students to say the Lord's Prayer (for example) when so many of them were Muslims, Hindus or Sikhs.


Canada also began to secularize rapidly in the 1960s, with many Canadians turning their backs on the mainline Protestant and Catholic churches. As historians R.D. Gidney and W.P.J. Millar explain, this led many government officials and eventually the courts to banish Christianity from the public schools in favour of a purely secular system.

But of course, ideologically secular schools did not work for everybody, any more than had generically Protestant schools. Many Christian parents objected, quite rightly, to the idea that secular was the same thing as neutral. They pointed out that secularism is itself a viewpoint that assumes God is irrelevant to learning. These parents quickly found themselves in the same position as Manitoba's Catholics a century earlier, paying for education twice, once through their public school taxes and again through their independent Christian school tuition.

Today there are a few provinces, such as Alberta and Saskatchewan, which provide partial funding to religious schools. Quebec is in the process of trying to impose a secularist ethics and religion curriculum on even private Christian schools. Most provinces have aggressively secular public systems. It isn't clear where Canada is headed, but there is one thing history does make clear – a one-size-fits-all solution is no solution at all. /FT

# 51

PERCENTAGE OF CANADIANS WHO OPPOSE FUNDING CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS (ANGUS REID, 2009)

 Kevin Flatt is associate professor of history and director of research at Redeemer University College, Ancaster, Ont. Find more of these columns at [www.faithtoday.ca/HistoryLesson](http://www.faithtoday.ca/HistoryLesson).



MESSY FAITH

**SHEILA WRAY GREGOIRE**

# Why messy is good

*Out of the mainstream isn't always a bad thing*

**M**any years ago I served on a search committee for a youth pastor. In one of our preliminary meetings the chairman suggested we decide on the doctrinal “must haves” for any potential candidates. The committee identified five issues that were non-negotiable. I slunk deeper into my chair. I was 0 for 5.

I was quite well respected in that church, but until that moment I hadn't realized how out of the mainstream I was. It was not that I didn't have opinions on each of those five issues. I just wasn't willing to say that my opinions were necessarily right.

I believe wholeheartedly in everything in the Apostles' Creed. But I don't think many doctrinal issues, like once-saved-always-saved, or pretribulation rapture, or even a woman's role in the church, are as cut and dried. In fact, I can argue both sides of most debates from Scripture. And if Spirit-filled Christians have been debating these things for centuries, how can I be sure I've got it all figured out now?

Of course, when I was in university I knew and understood everything. But over the last 25 years I seem to have become increasingly dumber – or at least more confused.

It began with *The Hiding Place*, the movie of Corrie ten Boom's ordeal in Second World War Holland. In it, a German officer calls the great Dutch lady into his office and turns up the radio so they can't be overheard. Then he passes her the name of an informant. He's trying to help the Dutch, and he knows Corrie is in contact with



Corrie ten Boom in front of the hiding place where her family hid Jews during the Second World War.

*A neat and tidy solution isn't always just one Bible Study away*

# 390

THE YEAR THE TERM “APOSTLES' CREED” WAS FIRST MENTIONED

the Dutch underground. She can slip the name to them.

Corrie is horrified and refuses to take it. She doesn't want to be responsible for the man's certain death. To the German officer's consternation, she walks out of the room.

I love Corrie ten Boom, but I would have taken that paper in a heartbeat, without the least bit of guilt. But then I wasn't called to have her ministry of absolute forgiveness and grace. If she had taken that paper, it would have been wrong. But that doesn't mean those who were engaged in violence were necessarily wrong. The Allied soldiers fighting to defeat Hitler weren't wrong. Maybe Corrie and those who stormed Juno Beach were simply appointed to demonstrate different aspects of God's character. Maybe there isn't a one-size-fits-all answer to many moral and theological dilemmas.

Christians are awfully uncomfortable about ambiguity. But a neat

and tidy solution isn't always just one Bible study away.

Take the once-saved-always-saved debate. One side says you can't lose your salvation. Say the sinner's prayer and mean it, and God will save you in the end. (And, of course, if you do fall away, it's likely you weren't saved in the first place.) Then there's the other side that says no one else can snatch you out of God's hands, but He does let you jump.

I'm not comfortable with either extreme. I know a man who led his university Christian group and was a great evangelist. In his later years he turned his back and rejected God and his family. To say he wasn't saved in the first place is a cop-out. To say that he's still in the flock, when he has loudly stated he has no intention or desire to be so, feels wrong too.

I think of another man who served God his whole life, and then was the sole survivor of a car crash that killed his wife and two of his adult children. He became an alcoholic and died shortly thereafter. I have a hard time thinking that man isn't saved just because of the tragic last two years of his life.

I think the answer to most things is rarely on the extremes. God sees the heart. And the heart is messy. Why then do we expect our faith not to be? Doubt is okay. Struggle is okay. In fact, maybe that's more to the point than having all the answers. The struggling, the wrestling, the journey, all push us closer into God's arms.

And so I'm proud to be 0 for 5. I'm proud to say that in many cases I just don't know. Let's not be scared of confusion and ambiguity. If we knew it all, we wouldn't need God. And I'd rather have a hug from God than an encyclopedia of answers. /FT

Sheila Wray Gregoire of Belleville, Ont., is an author and speaker. Find more of these columns at [www.faithtoday.ca/MessyFaith](http://www.faithtoday.ca/MessyFaith).



# Benefitting society

*B Corporations' certification program fits with Christian values*

**O**ur culture assumes that society is best off if each business maximizes its own self-interest – basically, that greed is good. This encourages businesses to transfer costs of doing business onto anyone other than themselves – onto the environment perhaps, or various social support systems. We've seen the results of such behaviour in the collapse of various industries, like some of our East Coast fisheries.

Ironically, in the case of publicly traded companies, these cultural values also encourage the transfer of costs onto themselves, but in the future. Sacrificing performance in future years to make this quarter or this fiscal year look good is all too common.

Thankfully not everyone is going down that path. There are now more than a thousand certified B

Corporations in 34 countries around the world. B Corporations redefine success in business by changing their articles of incorporation to include environmental and social stakeholders, and commit to third-party audited reporting of their governance, worker, community and environmental performance.

The B Corporation movement is not affiliated with any religion.

***B Corporations acknowledge "we are each dependent upon another and thus responsible for each other and future generations"***

However, its metrics are very consistent with Christian values.

I founded a company in Ontario several years before B Corporation was fully organized. Enviro-Stewards is an engineering firm that helps clients increase their profits, sustain the environment and benefit society. Our work with Tim Hortons was recently honoured as one of the top five sustainability projects in Canada for 2014 ([www.corporateknights.com/article/clean-50](http://www.corporateknights.com/article/clean-50)).

Enviro-Stewards' foundation on Christian principles led to an audited score so high it received awards (in 2012 and 2014) for being one of the best companies in the world with respect to overall impact.

Enviro-Stewards helps clients save money by reducing waste generation and resource consumption. After implementing such improvements, many clients then choose to collaborate in our Safe Water Project, which teaches entrepreneurs in South Sudan to make and sell sustainable water purification systems.

Initially, Enviro-Stewards was reluctant to pursue certification as a B


Corporation. We thought the certification fee (\$500 for the size of our organization) could be put to better use providing a supply of safe water to an additional 50 people. But another certified B Corporation (author Bob Willard) offered to pay for the provision of water to 50 people and the first year of our certification fee.

We found the certification process to be a valuable review of the environmental and social benefits we generate – and the B Corporation community itself to be a beneficial force in society.

B Corporations sign a Declaration of *Interdependence*, proclaiming that "all business ought to be conducted as if people and place mattered" and "that we are each dependent upon another and thus responsible for each other and future generations." The initial signing took place in 2011 in front of Constitution Hall where the USA's Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776.

The type of servant leaders running most B Corporations became especially evident to me in 2013 at a retreat of B Corporation champions in Boulder, Colorado. Although the community was hit by floods the week before the retreat, they requested we still come. Then a request for volunteers led 60 leaders to leave the conference to help muck out a solar panel business that had been flooded. About 40 more left to help rebuild a road, and many more volunteers were turned away.

If you focus on the obstacles or the enormity of a problem, you will not try anything. If you start to make a positive change somewhere, you can help change the world. B Corporations are harnessing the power of business to make a positive contribution. /FT

 Bruce Taylor of Elmira, Ont., is founder of Enviro-Stewards ([www.enviro-stewards.com](http://www.enviro-stewards.com)). Find more of these columns at [www.faithtoday.ca/BusinessMatters](http://www.faithtoday.ca/BusinessMatters).

## MEASURING WHAT MATTERS

Would you like to see how your organization stacks up? Complete a free online assessment at [www.bimpactassessment.net](http://www.bimpactassessment.net).

If you score more than 80 and choose to pursue certification, you can then request an audit.

The assessment process raises very thought-provoking questions. Those who complete the questions can help refine them in the future by providing comments on the questions asked. Certification is required every second year, and each time the assessment questions are updated to continue challenging businesses to improve.



"B CORP IS TO BUSINESS WHAT FAIR TRADE CERTIFICATION IS TO COFFEE OR ORGANIC CERTIFICATION IS TO MILK."

—WWW.BCORPORATION.NET



# Responding to the Ebola virus

*Canadians can help address the crisis in West Africa*

Long live Liberia, happy land!  
A home of glorious liberty  
By God's command!

**W**ords from the national anthem of the Republic of Liberia ring in stark contrast to a faceless enemy that threatens western Africa: an outbreak of the Ebola virus, the deadliest of the 25 outbreaks on record. So far the 2014 outbreak has killed more than 1,000 people.

Ebola is transmitted through direct contact with bodily fluids, so it can be prevented with proper cooking, hygiene and protective clothing. But when contracted (even from a dead body), it is highly contagious and kills 50-90 per cent of those who contract it.

This is particularly bad news for Liberia, which has yet to recover from back-to-back civil wars (1989-96 and 1999-2003) which destroyed almost 95 per cent of its healthcare facilities and left fewer than 3 doctors and 18 nurses per 100,000 people (World Health Organization, 2006).

The virus has also been reported in the adjacent countries of Guinea, Sierra Leone and Nigeria. Disease prevention education can be tricky in these countries where physical contact through hugs and funeral traditions are the norm.



**Ebola prevention:** Young Liberian girls examine a poster explaining how the Ebola virus is transmitted.

Like many Canadians, I and the other members of my church in rural British Columbia have been on a journey of increasing awareness and understanding as a result of a personal connection – through reports from a church member's daughter who was involved with BioSand water filter projects in Liberia (with the aid agency Samaritan's Purse).

Our church involvement began several years ago with prayer, then finances and eventually has led to short-term mission teams. After building such connections, it can be a shock to read a report like the one we received a few months ago from our friend overseas:

***Samaritan's Purse warns that without immediate international intervention, the disease will reach a tipping point and spread beyond the continent of Africa***

June 26, 2014 – The main thing consuming our time and our prayers is the resurgence of the Ebola virus. Our staff in Foya, which borders Sierra Leone and Guinea, are working hard to inform people of the disease and what precautions to take. I can't explain how bad this is and how much worse it could get – so please pray – it is our sharpest strongest weapon against the enemy. Pray that God will protect our staff and that the people of Liberia will open their eyes to Jesus!

As Liberians would say in their own slang: "Help is not needed now – it's needed now-now." As our globe becomes smaller and more interconnected, God seems to be presenting us with increasing calls to do justice and love mercy. How will we respond? /FT

## CANADIAN CONNECTIONS

Canadian ministries either working in Liberia or responding to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa include: Canadian Baptist Ministries, Christian Blind Mission, Engineering Ministries International Canada, ERDO (an arm of The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada), Partners International Canada, The Salvation Army, Samaritan's Purse Canada, SIM Canada, The Wesleyan Church, World Relief Canada, World Renew (an arm of the Christian Reformed Church) and World Vision Canada.

SOURCES: WWW.CCRDA.ORG, WWW.PARTNERSINTERNATIONAL.CA, WWW.SALVATIONIST.CA, WWW.SIM.CA, WWW.CBMIN.ORG

 Craig Pulsifer is a photographer and freelance writer who recently moved to Toronto. Find more of these columns at [www.faithtoday.ca/GlobalVillage](http://www.faithtoday.ca/GlobalVillage).



GUEST COLUMN

**LEN GODDARD**

# Twenty years of starting afresh

*Association for pastors formed to help former clergy transition*

**T**he Community Christian Fellowship Church of Canada celebrated our 20th anniversary in May. Permit me to introduce our fellowship and share how God is blessing us.

Back in autumn 1994, a group of former Salvation Army officers met with a few former Baptist pastors, United Church ministers and Anglican priests at a retreat centre in Ontario.

They met to discuss ways to assist former clergy to re-establish themselves, both personally and vocationally, following the end of their denominational relationships and ministry.

Ministers leave ministry for many reasons – burnout, denominational issues, a sense of failure, even moral and professional transgression. Often, there is a lingering bruising to the heart, an inhibiting brokenness.

It was our hope that we could enable those called to ministry to actually finish well.

Forming a new organization that could hold ordination credentials was the initial idea, but it was far from sufficient. The discussions focused on the blessing of the Holy Spirit through the Church and the need for strong links to 2,000 years of Church history. This group of founders affirmed with Martin Luther the biblical concept of the priesthood of all believers as well as the ongoing usefulness of ordination.

These discussions led to a recommendation to pursue a charter of incorporation. Obtaining a federal charter would bring the capacity to ordain ministers. This

*Perhaps we could be an umbrella under which former clergy could re-establish themselves, both personally and vocationally*

was completed and the charter affirmed in March 1995.

The new association quickly recognized present ordinations (most initial members had been ordained for over 15 years). We also met and prayed earnestly for a vision of how this could now work for the strengthening of the Church and the healing of other hearts. Perhaps we could be an umbrella under which those experiencing what we had experienced could rest while they sorted out their vocational issues.

In addition, we recognized ministers who had established ministries, and those who had accepted ministries too small or too unique to generate the interest and support of established denominations. It was our desire to empower them and their callings in street ministries, chaplaincies in secular environments such as bars and prisons, ministries in nursing homes, seniors' complexes, college campuses and residences, and social services.

Our next hurdle was to apply for licences so our clergy could perform weddings. The Office of the Registrar General in Ontario said its policy was that new ministry associations had to wait 25 years.

But further research suggested this could be circumvented if we could obtain a significant demonstration of support from established churches and their members. We did this, received recognition from the Ontario government, and were given the right to nominate ministers to receive licences from the Registrar General. Other provinces have, upon request, followed Ontario's lead – a total gift of God.

The final piece to establish the organization was the largest. If we saw ourselves as a church of the 21st century, would we consider ordaining those already doing traditional and non-traditional ministries who weren't ordained? We recognized there are ministers who did not wish denominational entanglement along with their ministry, yet still desired some form of official recognition and oversight.

Our ministry organization has a very strong code of ethics for ministry and empowers its board to supervise ministries and ministers. We could walk alongside and/or discipline members when there was occasion. But were we ready to take on this kind of challenge?

After serious soul searching, we agreed we would extend our umbrella to shelter and embrace those who had not previously been ordained. This privilege has been working well for us, and we seek God's continued guidance in it.

We now number 50 ordained clergy. The majority of our growth is in Ontario. However, some are on both the East and West coasts and the Prairies. At our annual conference this year, our clergy also agreed to establish a policy to support missions outside Canada.

We are grateful to the Lord for His insight and grace to us as we go forward in the development of God-called men and women to ministry, for His honour and glory. /FT



THE MISSION OF THE COMMUNITY CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP CHURCH OF CANADA IS TO PROCLAIM THE CHRISTIAN FAITH THROUGH INDEPENDENT CONGREGATIONS AND FELLOWSHIPS, PASTORAL WORK, MISSIONS AND MINISTRIES

 Rev. Len Goddard is president of the Community Christian Fellowship Church of Canada ([www.ccfcc.info](http://www.ccfcc.info)), with offices in Orleans, Ont. For a list of affiliates of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, including the CCFCC, visit [www.theEFC.ca/affiliates](http://www.theEFC.ca/affiliates).





# Miracles? Why not?

*Why it can make more sense to believe miracles than to be sceptical*

**F**ew people in history can match David Hume (1711–1776) for creating doubt about the possibility of miracles. Hume, raised in a strict Scottish Presbyterian home, lost his Christian faith courtesy of the scepticism that swept Western philosophy after the Reformation.

The conflicts of that era, especially those between Catholics and Protestants over doctrinal truth, led not only to loss of life (most famously in the Thirty Years War, 1618–1648) but loss of certainty about church authority, proper scriptural interpretation, the way of salvation, the nature of God, and the reality of miracles.

Hume touched a major nerve in the tiny 20-page chapter on miracles he wrote in his 1748 book *Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding*—articles and books written in response numbered in the hundreds. Why? Well, not because of his clarity of thought or coherence, as critics continue to point out.

Hume's stunning influence stemmed from the power of his basic argument. He argued it's foolish to believe in miracles since it's always more reasonable to adopt skeptical explanations. Since alleged miracles break laws of nature, then the wise person should prefer non-supernatural theories that build on obvious human duplicity, gullibility and selfishness.

While Hume's position is sometimes the correct verdict about miracle claims, there's no reason to think he's always right. Let me give you four reasons why I'm a skeptic about Hume's doubts.

First, I believe in miracles because I believe in the integrity of Jesus and His disciples. C.S. Lewis argued this



David Hume's basic argument was that it's foolish to believe in miracles since it's always more reasonable to adopt skeptical explanations or non-supernatural theories.

perspective in *Mere Christianity* (Macmillan, 1952) as did Frank Morison/A. H. Ross in *Who Moved the Stone?* (Faber and Faber, 1930). With millions of Christians through the centuries, I find nothing to convince me that Jesus and His disciples were fools, liars or dupes.

Second, how can anyone doubt the possibility of miracles given the staggering complexity of our planet and bodies we inhabit? Consider the eye, the blood stream, the nervous system, the nature of consciousness, the neurons (all 100 billion) in our brains, and the forces that came together to give us a planet that supports life. That's not to mention the complexity of the universe. My wife Gloria and I just had an anniversary trip to Hawaii, where we saw the stars and planets through high powered telescopes on Mount Maunakea. "The heavens declare the glory of God." Yes, miraculous heavens.


**With millions of Christians through the centuries, I find nothing to convince me that Jesus and His disciples were fools, liars or dupes**



NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER HEAVEN IS FOR REAL, BY TODD BURPO WITH LYNN VINCENT (THOMAS NELSON, 2010) HAD ITS FILM RELEASE ON APRIL 16, 2014

Third, it's sometimes easier to believe a miracle report than to believe that all of the relevant people are wrong. I thought of this recently when I studied Colton Burpo, the central figure in the book and (less accurate) movie *Heaven Is For Real*. The son of a Wesleyan pastor in Nebraska, the boy went through emergency surgery in 2003 for a ruptured appendix. He later told his parents about things he saw when taken to heaven during surgery, including details about a sister he had never heard of who had died *in utero*. So far I find it easier to believe the miracle than not.

Finally, I'm also against Hume because of personal experience. Here's an example from early May, when I was on a flight from Orlando to Austin. I struck up a deep conversation with the woman beside me, and she expressed her doubts about God. I was really tired, so eventually I tried to get some sleep. During those restive moments I asked God to tell me something about her that I didn't know (not my usual kind of prayer request). In my mind the thought came. *Her mother's name is Ruth and her father's name is David*. I figured this was just my tired brain churning away, but I typed a note about her mother's name on my cell phone. Near the end of the flight, I said, "Liz, your last name is unusual. Where is that name from?" She said, "Oh, my parents are Italian." I said, "Well, their names must be Tony and Maria." She said words I will never forget. "No, my dad's name is David and my mom's name is Ruth." I showed her what I had already put into my phone. I have her contact info and I hope to build on what she admitted was an "interesting" reality. Dare I say miraculous? **/FT**

 James A. Beverley is professor of Christian thought and ethics at Tyndale Seminary in Toronto. His new book *Getting Jesus Right* (with Craig Evans) will be published this fall by Castle Quay Books. Find more of these columns at [www.faithtoday.ca/ReligionWatch](http://www.faithtoday.ca/ReligionWatch).



*This year, Canadian **GEOFF TUNNICLIFFE** steps down as chief executive officer of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), the international body representing 600 million Evangelicals around the globe. And around the globe he has been. During his tenure as the WEA's 13th and longest-serving leader so far, Tunncliffe has visited at least 70 countries and enjoyed a unique bird's eye view of a growing, diverse body of believers. Tunncliffe visited spots as far flung as the White House, the Vatican, Hollywood and Haiti. He shares what he saw – and what he'd like to see next.*

**Faith Today:** *As you prepare to step down at the end of December, have you accomplished what you hoped with this immense, diverse global body?*

**Geoff Tunncliffe:** Ten years ago when I started, in some ways I knew what needed to happen in terms of the WEA. We needed to step into the space that really only the WEA could step into. There are three Christian world bodies – the Vatican representing Catholics, the World Council of Churches representing mainline Christians, and the WEA representing Evangelicals/Pentecostals. We needed to fill out that space more. Ten years ago, if you told me where we have come to today, it's far more than I could have imagined. It is by God's grace, and I don't say that with a false sense of humility. The opportunities have come before us. There's no way you could manipulate those doors to open. There was an obedience on our part to say we want to lean into this space and serve the global Christian family, our tribe in the evangelical world, in a way that is

meaningful and significant, and in some ways going back to the roots of the WEA. **FT:** *What are those roots?*

**GT:** Christian unity, religious freedom, theological orthodoxy. And a commitment to the holistic nature of the gospel. WEA came out of the era of the William Wilberforces. It was that kind of evangelicalism that was holistic in nature. Those are the kinds of elements, and then bringing clarity to our voice where there was a sense of strong unity.

Because of the globalization of the Church, the move of the spirit in the Majority World, the Global South, however you describe that, we had to answer the question, "How do we as a world body serve the depth and extent of the global Church?"

The WEA has a presence and place and a voice in a global context, whether it's the United Nations or the World Bank or governments, or other religious bodies. We are the responsible voice in the evangelical world.





**FT:** *From our point of view at Faith Today, it would be hard to deny that the WEA is far better known today.*

**GT:** For Canadian readers this is really important to understand. When I came into the role, I was working for the EFC full-time. I thought I had the best job in the world. I was no longer CEO of anything. I was living in Vancouver, consulting with big churches across Canada on behalf of the EFC and their global strategy. What more could you want?

Yet, because of that role with the EFC, I was involved with WEA's mission commission. When WEA went through somewhat of a crisis and I was asked to become interim secretary general, I turned it down three times. But with the strong support of the EFC – and for me, having the EFC as a strong model of what an evangelical fellowship could look like – that helped frame what we could do.

**FT:** *Did you quickly realize the potential you were sitting with?*

**GT:** Things started picking up. People started being attracted to what we were doing and engaging with it, offering resources. We asked, "How can we serve our family?" My basic skill set is entrepreneurial. You step out in faith and say, "How do you want to do this?" I'm not a sit-behind-the-desk administrator.

One of the key things missing in the WEA was communications. We worked very hard at building those capacities. If you're going to be a voice, you need to communicate.

**FT:** *We all hear about the wonderful globalization of the Church, the rising numbers of Christians in the Global South. What does a Canadian Christian need to know about the Church in the Global South?*

**GT:** I went out as a short-term missionary, which resulted in my first career as a missions executive who mobilized people to go out on missions. That was influenced by a view of the world with Canadian churches sending out missionaries to found churches, to work in orphanages and that sort of thing. That was almost 40 years ago.

The world has changed so dramatically in terms of Church and how we engage with the Church around the world, and who we

should be sending, why we should be sending them. I really believe there is a need for Canadian long-term and short-term missionaries to go, but what they do and how they serve, and what those experiences should be is about mutuality and mutual serving. It's about learning experiences.

**FT:** *Do you see difficulties for Canadians in embracing that?*

**GT:** There are some remarkable moves of God around the world and somehow there's also a stereotyping that sometimes we Canadians do. It's the glamorization of missions on one hand, and then us thinking we don't need to send missionaries, only money. Both extremes are not helpful. We have to continue to find what it means to truly partner and learn from each other.

I'm learning more and more of the ongoing need for reformation. It's the connecting of Sunday with the rest of the week, the opportunity for engaging in business, in international diplomacy, those in themselves are Kingdom work.

The business that I have, how is it helping? How are we working together for the common good in society where I happen to be? Or the areas of interdiplomacy. I served as an advisor to the U.S. State Department on U.S. foreign policy, to President Clinton. When asked to serve on this small body, I said, "You know I'm Canadian, and you know I serve with a global organization?" They said yes. Religion actually plays such a critical part in understanding worldview and we need to understand that. As churches we need to be commissioning people into those kinds of roles. A business leader told me he was waiting for the day when a church says they are commissioning Tim and Sue, who are going to work in business.

**FT:** *How do you see that kind of change coming?*

**GT:** We've made a certain segment of people vocational missionaries, but we're not allowing other people to be released in other ways. One of the waves coming is that there are some incredible business marketplace people who are dreaming big visions for Kingdom impact. It's going to be done through their businesses.

There's a rising tide of people like that across the world. Then you think about



Tunnicliffe on the set of *The Voice* (top) and with Pope Francis (bottom) earlier this year.

the whole area of peace building. There are opportunities that move us out of the classic missionary moment. We need to be on the leading edge of peace building around the world. There are some incredible evangelical leaders I have met who are living and working that out in some of the toughest places in the world.

**FT:** *That old perceived divide between the social gospel and evangelism is not so pronounced anymore.*

**GT:** We are about to launch a major new initiative around nuclear weapons, an area where Evangelicals haven't been known to engage. But when the U.N. comes to you and says, "We need you to lead the moral voice in this," you do it.

Some in our community think we are on the slippery slope of social gospel. Nothing could be further from the truth. It's a deep reflection of our faith. I have had the opportunity to share my personal faith with leaders in so many different contexts. You speak with sensitivity. I've had more opportunities in places that sometimes the Church puts 666 over like the U.N., in a relational context, to share what it means to be an evangelical Christian. Because there's a lot of stereotyping.

I was at a dinner with Alex Baldwin. He asked me who I was with. I told him we were working on rehabilitating the word "Evangelical." He said, "Good luck with that!" We are helping people interpret it differently. So often it's aligned with a political body, particularly coming out of the U.S. I think we've helped reshape that.

**FT:** *How have you seen the relationships between different types of Christians change?*

**GT:** Globally there is far more co-operation in some places between the Christian families than you would expect. Many of the historic mainline churches that might have very liberal tendencies, you go into other places and they are as evangelical as your Baptist church down the road.

Our relationship with the Vatican has dramatically changed. The depth of conversations now is far different than they were ten years ago. It's not watering down what we believe. It's about moments like having a cardinal from India ask me how we can evangelize India together. There are some deep theological differences. But there is something new that is happening. We have to figure out how to embrace what God seems to be up to.

**FT:** *You met with Pope Francis earlier this year. How did that come about?*

**GT:** The meeting with Pope Francis came at his request. There will be no official statement. We had a three hour conversation with no agenda. The intent of the meeting was really about getting to know each other and building a friendship.

**FT:** *How would you describe the state of the friendship then, at this point? And why is it so important to build this friendship?*

**GT:** I am deeply humbled that I have begun a friendship journey with Pope Francis. In the coming months and years our hope is connect regularly to deepen our relationship. We committed to regular pray for one another.

I have discovered building trusted friendships allows for deep, honest and transparent discussions that can be game changers when you face challenges or conflicts. It is my hope such a trust friendship will be a help in overcoming some of the difficulties between Catholics and Evangelicals and that it will help work



together more particular for the persecuted Church.

**FT:** You've met some very high-level people. But I assume you've also met some amazing ordinary folks you will never forget.

**GT:** I've met a lot of very influential people, like Mark Burnett and Roma Downey. But some of the most moving situations for me have been sitting with Christians who have been imprisoned for their faith or greatly restricted, but are living boldly for Christ. I've been in the slums of Manila and Bangladesh, and seen the joy they have in Christ, knowing they have so very little.

I live in a comfortable home in Vancouver. I travel the world. These people who are followers of Christ have so little and yet have this deep sense of God's presence in their lives. It is deeply humbling. Those are the heroes of the faith. The heroes of the faith are people who every day live it out. Women in the Democratic Republic

***I've seen the power of diverse people coming together. I've seen the negative impact when we split apart. My prayer will continue to be that we have greater unity."***

of the Congo who are at the forefront of peace building in their little village where the men have been hiding. Those are the people who stand out for me.

But some of the celebrities have a depth of humility that is really quite remarkable. They walk their talk. I've seen them work with their crew on their set. They care for people. They seek to live out Christ's love in that context. It's about guarding your heart.

**FT:** What is your hope for the Church, knowing what you know now from all you've seen?

**GT:** That if we really want to live out the prayer of John 17, we've got to get over a bunch of stuff, like making sure we all cross the same t's.

Yes, we have core things in common, but there is all that other stuff that divides us. We have to get beyond that.

God's desire for His Church is that we live out and reflect who He is, that we reflect the unity of the Trinity. I've seen the power of diverse people coming together. I've seen the negative impact when we split apart. My prayer will continue to be that we have greater unity. My hope for the future is that the WEA will continue to be a strong voice for Christian unity. Not just for our own tribe, but for the broader Christian community as well.

**FT:** Thank you, Geoff. /FT

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↳ MULTITASKING IS DEMANDED, DESPITE PROOF IT MEANS NOTHING GETS DONE WELL.

↳ MORE AND MORE PEOPLE EAT SEPARATELY, IN ISOLATION OR WHILE DRIVING.

By Arthur Boers

## TECHNOLOGY IMPACTS OUR SPIRITUAL LIVES IN WAYS WE CAN'T IMAGINE. AND IT'S OUR SPIRITUAL LIVES THAT CAN SAVE US.

**M**ischievous psychologists conducted an experiment at prestigious Princeton Theological Seminary. They instructed students to cross the campus to preach a short, spontaneous sermon about vocation or the Good Samaritan. Seems straightforward enough. People training for ministry ought to be able to talk about their call or about one of Jesus' most beloved parables.

But there were wrinkles.

The psychologists planted an actor along the route. He posed as a down-and-outer, ragged clothes, groaning and unkempt. All the seminarians had to pass him. Some even had to step over him.

Half the students were told there was lots of time to get to their destination and preach. The other half were told they were already late.

The results were telling. Whether people were preaching about vocation or about the Good Samaritan made no difference in whether or not they stopped to help. Nine out of ten students who thought they were late did not offer assistance. The majority of those who thought they had enough time gave

aid. Canadian author Malcolm Gladwell in *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference* (Little, Brown & Company, 2006) concludes:

...convictions of your heart and the actual contents of your thoughts are less important, in the end, in guiding your actions than the immediate context of your behavior. The words "Oh, you're late" had the effect of making someone who was ordinarily compassionate into someone who was indifferent to suffering.

Well-meaning seminarians acted contrary to their professed and deeply held values.

What happens to you and me, to our hearts, to our own compassion, when we live in a nonstop, 24/7 world of demands and more demands? When we are bombarded with messages that we need to multitask and get more done?

The rapid pace of our lives is one of the most pressing spiritual challenges to Christian life today.

We are busy and getting more so. In my high school sociology class, one homework assignment was to dream up hobbies for middle age. We were told that with all the advances in technology and labour-saving devices, most of us would not work more than half-time in a couple of decades. Without rewarding pastimes we might suffer from boredom. Now approaching the end of my middle age, it is clear how wrong such predictions were.

Busyness preoccupies us. The hardest part of a committee meeting is determining a date to gather next. A great challenge of youth ministry is that young people so involved with school, extracurricular activities and part-time jobs have little time left. Studies suggest that

North Americans may be working as much as a month more per year than they were 40 years ago.

And a crucial factor in busyness is technology use. Gadgets intensify our lives in several ways.

- *Forget "labour-saving" promises.* While devices speed tasks, we try to do more (often multitasking to boot). Improved washing machines means cleaning clothes more often and to higher standards. Better lighting shows more dust that needs removing and improved vacuum cleaners prompt desire for spotless carpets. Technology increases expectations of how much to accomplish and how impressive it needs to appear.
- *Gadgets – computers, smartphones, our cars – are expensive to purchase.* Upkeep, repairs, insurance and leasing plans mean further high costs too. We have to work hard and a lot just to buy and maintain all our stuff.
- *We spend increasing amounts of time focused on stuff.* Canadians spend an average of 32 working days per year – over a month! – driving in vehicles to or from work. (This excludes all other driving.) An Ipsos poll shows that large numbers of Canadians pass 86 per cent of their time paying attention to a screen. All that device time displaces other possibilities. A cable TV ad showed a woman asleep with her head on a table. "Hundreds of channels. Thousands of choices. So little time for anything else."

There are other reasons for being busy (including internal compulsion, peer pressure, economic factors, work demands), but unless we deal with technology's complicating factors, we will not have much

success in finding better, more faithful, ways to live.

The Good Samaritan parable, a story about eternal life (Luke 10:25), comes down to basic matter-of-fact questions. “Who is my neighbour?” or “Which of these was a neighbour?” Christian faithfulness, the spiritual life, is about practical, daily concerns. How we spend time and deal with stuff and neighbours is crucial.

The Princeton experiment illustrates three important spiritual challenges today. Like those driven seminarians we are losing our ability to pause, take a break and honour Sabbath rhythms. Second, focused on commendable projects, our connections with others are breaking down, and more and more of us feel lonely and isolated. And faithfulness – living a good and virtuous life, choosing healthy lifestyles – is more difficult and complicated.

None of these problems are inevitable or insurmountable. Things do not have to be this way. We have many good options, lots of them. A Christian life that honours Sabbaths, friendship and discernment can counterbalance today’s challenges.

### **Busy people seek spirituality. Spiritual people are too busy.**

I am convinced that a sense of overwhelming busyness is actually a key factor driving interest in spirituality in our culture. How ironic then if we Christians live at the same bustling pace as everyone else. We miss an opportunity to address a crying concern of our neighbours. And we have the faith resources to address these very problems.

In *Timelock: How Life Got So Hectic and What You Can Do About It* (Harper Collins, 1991), Ralph Keyes observes that we have lost pauses with technological transitions from: buttons to zippers to Velcro; stove to pressure cooker to microwave; tell-

ers to ATM to drive-up banking; diner to drive-in to drive-through. Each advance reduces waiting. But in losing moments to catch our breath, we forego the chance to ponder actions, goals and priorities. As Jacques Ellul wrote, people “in the technological society [have] suppressed the natural respites in their rhythm. . . . The time for choosing, adapting and collecting oneself no longer exists.”

Of course, our most substantial pause of all, the Sabbath, has largely disappeared, eaten up by shopping opportunities, recreational options and work demands. The ability to slow down, rest and cease from exertion is a spiritual issue. While walking the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage in Spain, friends encountered a struggling older woman who never rested. A pilgrim told her, “You must stop to arrive.” Ironically, secular thinkers advocate technology Sabbaths – regular, set-aside periods of withdrawing from the demands of our devices. Some people of faith are starting to address this too. Recently, my wife and I attended a bat mitzvah and were impressed by this line in the synagogue’s bulletin. “This is a sacred space. Please do not use cell phones, cameras or electronic devices in our building on Shabbat.”

Christians can reclaim and reinvigorate Sabbath practice, that day when we remember the wonders of creation, celebrate God’s

## **The isolating impact of our devices**

- ▶ People avert their gaze from neighbours to gadgets.
- ▶ The amount of time spent with devices – paying attention to screens, for example – displaces opportunities to spend with people.
- ▶ Schoolteachers more and more report that device-obsessed elementary pupils are losing the capacities for conversation.
- ▶ Two-thirds of North Americans are in front of computers more than with their spouses. —John Freeman in *The Tyranny of Email: The Four-Thousand-Year Journey to Your Inbox* (Scribner, 2009).
- ▶ Norman Nie of Stanford University says, “The Internet could be the ultimate isolating technology that further reduces our participation in communities even more than did automobiles and television before it.”

liberation of us from slavery, and root ourselves in the power of Christ’s resurrection. We need Sabbath. We are constructed and created to live out the rhythms of work and rest, striving and worship. Sabbath reminds us to trust God’s provision – there is always time for what is most important. Sabbath observance leaves us healthier, and ironically, more productive. It is essential to helping us be the creative, inventive people God designed us to be. Sabbath is good news in a pressured, demanding culture. It also offers an opportunity to connect with others, no small thing in our isolating culture.

*Of course, our most substantial pause of all, the Sabbath, has largely disappeared, eaten up by shopping opportunities, recreational options and work demands. **The ability to slow down, rest and cease from exertion is a spiritual issue.***



### Breaking the isolation

Recently I visited Acadia Divinity College in the lovely town of Wolfville, N.S. A Baptist pastor who has lived there for years told me about a disturbing change he's noticed recently. Early on, whenever people walked through town or across the campus, they greeted one another, whether they knew each other or not. Now this practice has disappeared because so many pedestrians have their heads down, fixated on handheld screens. This is no small loss.

In daily transactions we are often discouraged from personal contacts. Banks may charge a "tellerationing" fee for a human encounter.

The church too needs to examine its choices. At a clergy meeting virtual baptisms came up. Why not? Some churches offer virtual communion – consuming Eucharist in the comfort of your own home while watching on-screen celebrants. At our meeting ministers viewed a baptismal ceremony. A pastor was Skyped across the continent to a candidate dunked by a friend in a bathtub at home. Can you think of anything lonelier?

Evidence shows we are growing more isolated. While people connect via technologies, such connections often tend to be tenuous, issue or hobby specific. Less and less are our relationships complex, ongoing, face to face, year after year. Statistics Canada recently reported that "The proportion of Canadians reporting they have at least two friends has dropped across almost all demographics in recent years."

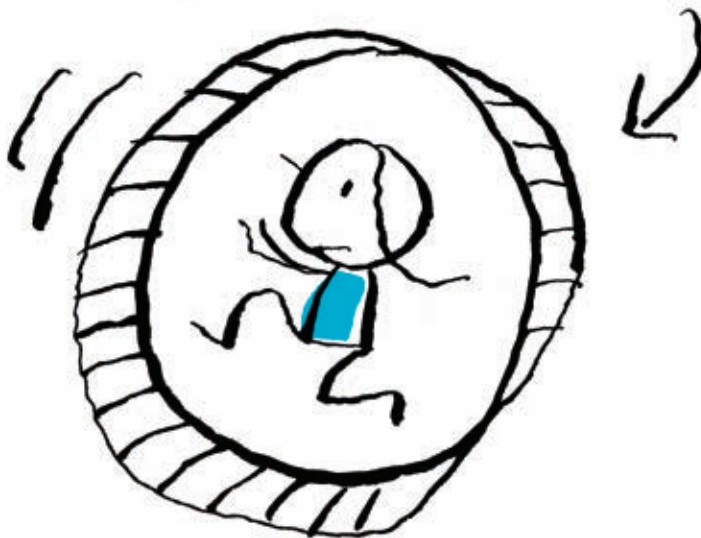
Yet we do not have to live disconnected. We can choose to emphasize connections, friendship and hospitality. Behavioural scientists in Chicago recruited people to engage strangers in conversation during public transit commutes. Commuting is an experience many people loathe. But those who took

initiatives – acted like good conversational Samaritans – discovered they suddenly enjoyed their commutes far more. The same study showed that conversations between strangers in waiting rooms made a markedly different experience for both the initiator and the recipient of the hospitality.

Christians who emphasize fellowship and friendship, who celebrate community and relationship, could be at the forefront of challenging and disrupting such trends. Why not emphasize people having meals together? Children raised in families that eat together do better socially and in school. A campaign worth waging is encouraging people to join one another for meals and to do so *without screens* or other devices.

There are other simple things we could do too. One of my seminary students Trevor Garrett would have thrived in the Princeton experiment. He happened to email me recently:

## THE HAMSTER WHEEL OF LABOUR-SAVING DEVICES



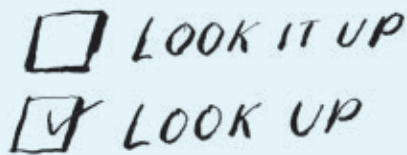
So I've been walking to this little church in my neighborhood on Sunday mornings. It's a 7 min walk. But this week it took me 30 minutes because of the sheer number of my pagan neighbours who are out on the street on a Sunday morning wanting to chat!

And they all ask, 'Where are you going?' It became like a kind of witness walk on my own block. At first I didn't want to be late, but then I figured God was giving me some kind of Good Samaritan test.

That pesky Samaritan shows up again!

### It's all about the Good Life

For centuries philosophers have pondered the "good life." This phrase does not mean comfort and affluence, having lots of material goods or being well off. Actually the good life refers to living life well,



## Putting technology in its place

- ▶ When joining with friends and family for dinner, declare it a device-free zone.
- ▶ Recognizing that youth communicate and connect with each other through devices, establish technology-free times in your home. Play a game or read a book together.
- ▶ Make a conscious choice not to glance at your device when you are walking. Instead, look around you and make natural eye-contact with others. Dare to converse with those with whom you are waiting at the doctor's office, the subway stop, the airport lounge.
- ▶ As the fall begins, consciously look at your schedule to ensure you have Good Samaritan margin.

being virtuous, being a good person and living in a worthwhile way. This is one thread of the Good Samaritan parable. Jesus showed that eternal life is not just about abstractly loving God and neighbour. It's about living in ways that make a positive difference to others around us. Thus the priest and the Levite, both dedicated and committed, miss the mark when they "passed by on the other side." That is easy to do today. If your car breaks down, most will assume you have a cell phone. They may place a call on your behalf, but are less and less likely to stop and physically help.

Christians need to be concerned about how the ways in which we

Yet we do not have to live disconnected. We can choose to emphasize connections, friendship and hospitality.

North Americans live are not good, let alone eternal. I meet many people who are unhappy, stressed, depressed, eating poorly and not exercising enough. Some weeks I feel that half the folks important to me – friends and family alike – are on various medications just to cope with daily realities. This in a culture that boasts of being the most affluent and knowledgeable in the history of the world. The simple fact, as philosopher Albert Borgmann reminds us, is "that people regularly make choices that are counterproductive to the happiness they want."

In his famous 1960s obedience studies, Stanley Milgram wanted to know why so many people in Nazi Germany did horrifyingly unethical things and justified them as following orders. His experiments found that many normal, decent people would give painful – even apparently terminal – electric shocks to others, just because they were ordered to do so.

There were many factors in why people did or did not comply. But one dynamic was the pressure of time. When people had to decide in a hurry, they were often matter-of-factly cruel. People who could take their time were less likely to do harm. Judith Shulevitz, in her very fine book *The Sabbath World: Glimpses of a Different Order of Time* (Random House, 2010), comments that "ethics becomes a luxury as the speed of our daily lives increases." We can live a good life, but probably not in a hurry.

Evidence is all around. We are preoccupied with the challenges of our devices. Every week I see articles on dealing with technology in various sections of the newspaper – news, opinion, sports, lifestyle or business. Human culture and civilization are not possible without technology. But today's technology is unprecedented.


- Technology is changing quicker than ever before and the innovations do not give time enough to discern and adapt faithfully. A long time ago Martin Luther King Jr. warned, "We have allowed our technology to outrun our theology."

- Technology was once used only in limited ways – making things, procuring food, defence. Now its intrusive presence is felt even in the most tender, intimate, sacred and vulnerable spheres of life.

- Once locally confined, now technology is everywhere, all the time, and permanently and easily accessible. That is one factor in why it is so destructive for those with proclivities to shopping, gambling or pornography.

It is possible to live differently and discerningly. When so many now fiddle with shiny gadgets in their hands, it is natural to feel unconscious pressure to possess, handle and be preoccupied by devices. But we do not have to. We may feel compelled to be busy, but we can choose to be Sabbath people. We may feel the divisive forces of isolation, but can join others at the table and converse with people around us. We may get distracted from choosing the good life, but need not settle for that.

It may be more complicated to choose the good life, to be a Good Samaritan, but it is not impossible. We may feel trapped or overwhelmed, but Jesus freed us for the good and abundant life. And in so doing we can be very good neighbours indeed. "Go and do likewise." /FT

 Arthur Boers, the RJ Bernardo family chair of leadership at Tyndale Seminary, is the author of *Living Into Focus: Choosing What Matters in an Age of Distractions* (Brazos Press, 2012) and *The Way Is Made by Walking: A Pilgrimage Along the Camino de Santiago* (IVP Books, 2007).

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**SETTING THE STANDARD OF PROTECTION FOR CHURCHES AND CHRISTIAN CHARITIES SINCE 1972**

AMONG THE THOUSANDS of students who arrive in Canada from other countries each year are those who wish to become better equipped in theology. With the exponential growth of the Church in the Global South, there are huge numbers of pastors desiring deeper theological education. They can't always find what they need in their home countries, but in Canada they discover plentiful resources, well-stocked libraries and solid teaching. Some scholars manage on their own. Others are selected and sent here by sponsoring organizations that help pay their way. Here are the stories of three scholars from Kenya, South Korea and Indonesia.

# When Global South scholars call Canada home

By Debra Fieguth



**DAVID TARUS**  
Preparing for the Africa he loves

**A**fter his first year studying at McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, Ont., David Tarus couldn't be happier. The professors are world-class yet pastoral, his local Baptist church has welcomed him with open arms, and his wife and two-year-old son are with him.

And yet there are some things the 34-year-old Kenyan misses about his homeland – the sense of familiarity, the noisy traffic, the neighbours he knows by name, the feeling of community.

“And sometimes I miss the smell of soil when it rains,” he confesses.

Tarus, his wife Jeane, and baby Berur Keitany will make Canada their home for the next few years while he completes his PhD program. But the content of his studies, and his focus for the future, are firmly rooted in the African soil he loves.

McMaster Divinity College: David Tarus with his wife Jeane and their daughter Berur Keitany.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF DAVID TARUS

Using the writings of John Calvin, Tarus has formed a thesis that “a Christian theology of the image of God and the African concept of communal personhood (*ubuntu*) resolves the problem of ethnocentrism in Africa.”

Ethnic conflict is a reality in much of Africa. In Kenya, Tarus notes, there is ethnic-related violence every time a national election is held, every five years or so. In 2008 that violence resulted in 1,200 deaths and the displacement of half a million people.

Called to ministry as a young teenager growing up in a village in western Kenya, Tarus desired pastoral training that his dad, who works as an evangelist with three congregations, never had the opportunity for. He enrolled in Scott Christian University in Machakos and majored in pastoral studies “because I wanted to go back to my rural village and serve with my dad.”

The college had other ideas, sending him after graduation to Eldoret, a large city near his home village, to co-ordinate

a new campus there. He served for four years before going to Wheaton College for a master’s degree in theology. After three years back in Eldoret, “I was challenged to gain more training in order to serve the Church better.”

The church in Kenya, as throughout much of Africa, is growing so rapidly that pastors, and especially pastoral training,

### **The church in Kenya, as throughout much of Africa, is growing so rapidly that pastors, and especially pastoral training, can’t keep up**

can’t keep up. “The church is growing every day and we don’t have enough pastors.” Christianity is attractive to Africans, Tarus speculates, because it’s translatable and its Scriptures have been published in thousands of languages. It’s not seen by Africans as a Western religion. “We see it as our own.” Christianity is also very close to the African worldview, he suggests. For example, the focus on community (as

shown in hospitality, charity, kindness) instead of individualism meshes closely with a biblical worldview.

Also, since Africans embrace a supernatural worldview, they can easily accept supernatural elements of biblical faith such as vision, healing and exorcism. “People take Christianity very, very seriously” in Africa, says Tarus.

And yet there’s that gap between serious faith and the depth needed for true growth to take place, in discipleship as well as numbers, which can only happen with deeper theological knowledge.

Canadian training is vital to equipping Tarus for the task of teaching pastors. “The Church in Canada has a lot of resources,” he observes. Libraries stacked with books. Scholars and theologians with vast knowledge and experience.

So in a few years, armed with a Canadian PhD informed by the experiences growing up in an African church, Tarus will return to the Kenyan soil he loves to plant the seeds of knowledge in a new generation of pastors.



## **HYEON WOO SHIN**

### **Life lived in the differences between South Korea and Canada**

**W**hen Hyeon Woo Shin first moved from the big city of Seoul, South Korea, to the suburban community of Langley, B.C., four years ago, his first response was, “Why didn’t I come here earlier?” He cites “more nature, less people, fewer cars and less pollution” as factors that make his Canadian home more pleasant than life in the crowded Asian city.

Shin, who majored in Chinese language and literature as well as Jewish studies in university, is in his final year of a master of divinity program at ACTS (Associated Canadian Theological Schools), connected with Trinity Western University. He chose ACTS when a South Korean acquaintance recommended the seminary he had graduated from.

With a focus on cross-cultural ministry, Shin

isn’t sure if he will go back to Korea or work in Canada or another country. “Canada has many different ethnic groups,” he points out. “In Korea, 90 per cent of the people are Korean.” In Canada he sees the need for people to be equipped to reach out to Middle Eastern, Chinese and many other groups. “I think Canada is a really wonderful place to minister in terms of cross-cultural ministry.”

From his experience so far, however, he hasn’t seen Canadian Christians and churches reach out as much as they could to their neighbours from other ethnic groups. A Presbyterian from a large church, who now studies at a Baptist seminary and attends a Pentecostal church, he notices that in his new home church, “Most of the people are Caucasians.”



**ACTS, Trinity Western University: Hyeon Woo Shin with his wife Un Hui Lee and their children.**

Shin, 34, has also observed societal differences that spill over into church life. He describes Korea as both hierarchical, because of the military influence, and community based. So when he was working for a small company after serving in the military, his co-workers would often stay after work or go out together for drinks or dinner. That had its downside. Workers sometimes felt obligated to join in activities just because they were asked, and didn’t want to let the others down.

In a Korean church context, if someone has organized an event, they will be very persistent in getting others to join. "People would come to me and say, 'Please come to this event.' I would say, 'I'm busy. I can't go.'" But that wouldn't deter the organizer, who would counter with, "Make yourself available."

By contrast, "In Canada I was really confused because nobody came to me. Instead there was a sign-up sheet." An accompanying announcement would let potential participants know about the event.

### In Canada churches are driven by programs, while in Korea they are driven by leaders, especially pastors

"If you want to join us, sign your name." For Shin, that's not enough of an invitation.

Another difference he has noticed is that in Canada churches are driven by programs, while in Korea they are driven by leaders, especially pastors. Because of its hierarchical society, "It means what the pastor says is

much more influential than in Canada."

Shin and wife Un Hui Lee, wife came to Canada with a young child, and had a second child a couple of years ago. This summer they prepared to welcome a third child, a second daughter. While Shin is in school full-time and works part-time, his wife feels isolated being home with small children and lacking the community support she was used to.

Still, the family enjoys its adopted surroundings. "For me, I love this place," says Shin. "It's fantastic."



### CHANDRA WIM Being equipped to teach theology

As a boy growing up in Jakarta, Indonesia, Chandra Wim was required to take religious instruction in one of several faiths. His parents were Buddhists, but they registered him in the Christian class.

By the time he graduated from a Methodist high school, he was a committed Christian. The school held revival meetings, and the 17-year-old "was called by the Spirit to acknowledge my sin and my need of Jesus Christ." (Eventually his

### He has learned that 'How are you?' is just a greeting and not an invitation to open up and share

mother also came to faith.) Wim went from high school into seminary, serving in a Methodist church before enrolling in a master's program in Singapore. "I felt I needed further studies because I wanted to be a teacher," he explains.

The desire for higher education didn't end there. "I felt that I really needed to get the highest degree in theology if I really wanted to teach theology well." His spiritual mentor recommended Wycliffe College in Toronto.



Wycliffe College: Chandra Wim with his wife Karmelita.

Two years ago, Wim and his wife Karmelita and their baby daughter Glorianne moved to Toronto so he could study for a doctorate in theology. It was the family's first time in North America.

While Karmelita ministers part-time as a youth pastor at Indonesian Reformed Evangelical Church in Mississauga, Wim focuses on course work to prepare for his comprehensive exams at Wycliffe College. His academic interest is in theological hermeneutics, and he will likely choose a dissertation topic related to comparing scriptural interpretations by theologians from various Christian traditions – Evangelical, Catholic and Protestant.

Wim, 32, downplays the adjustment to a new country and a new culture. He and Karmelita "both like to travel," he says. "We like to try new experiences." He allows, however, that the winters – "especially the last winter" – have been difficult.

He also notices differences between

Canadian and Indonesian Christians. "People here are nice," he says, but he has learned that "'How are you?' is just a greeting" and not an invitation to open up and share. Canadians, even Christians, tend to have tighter personal boundaries. "People usually want to protect [themselves] from [letting] others really [get to] know them."


"Generally I can sense the individualism in the Church," he adds. "In that sense we [Indonesians] are more community based."

In Indonesia, which has the largest population of Muslims in the world and Christians are a small minority, "We are more ready and more willing to experience suffering," says Wim, "because in some parts of Indonesia there are churches being persecuted." (Indeed, reports of church burnings, torture and killings of Christians there have been frequent.)

"The flip side [in Canada] is that I don't really see many Christians who see what it means to follow Christ, and bear the cross, and know what it's like to be persecuted and have a suffering-like faith."

He is not being critical, just acknowledging that in Canada, the challenges are different.


Wim is grateful he can study here at all. As a Langham scholar, he has received funding from Langham Partnership Canada, the organization founded by John Stott to equip the "next generation of Bible teachers." Without that help, says Wim, "I don't think I can really stay more than one year." /FT

 Debra Fieguth of Kingston, Ont., is a senior writer at *Faith Today*.

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I'VE BEEN MEANING TO TELL YOU THIS:  
**CONFESSIONS OF AN  
EX-PASTOR**



**BY MARK BUCHANAN**



In the movie *Into the Wild*, Chris McCandless leaves his screwy family to go find himself, and lose himself, on an epic journey. He craves something big and wild and dangerous, and embarks on an Odysseus-like adventure that takes him across the American hinterland and eventually, fatally, to Alaska. At one point, Chris gets it into his head to kayak down the Colorado River, which is as big and wild and dangerous as a thing gets – a torrent of angry water twisting over boulders, thrashing down spillways, hurtling through gorges. He asks the park warden what’s involved. The warden tells him not to bother. The Colorado is only for seasoned kayakers, and you need a permit. It takes several years to get a permit.

So Chris buys a kayak and throws himself in headlong. It’s a thrashing, heaving, bruising ride. He flails about, and learns to kayak by kayaking.

That was me and pastoring. In 1989 I was thrust into pastoral work with no prior training, minimal skill and little notion of what I’d got myself into. I learned to pastor by pastoring. Most days I barely hung on. My plan was to give it a year, try to stay alive, and then get out.

One year turned into 24 (18 of them in one church). I began pastoral ministry bewildered and terrified. I ended hardly knowing or wanting anything else. I loved being a pastor, except the days I didn’t. But several months after I left (to take a faculty position at Ambrose Seminary in Calgary), I was anxious and angry, and couldn’t say why. It was easy, and mo-

mentarily comforting, to blame the church, or at least certain members of it.

And then it became startlingly clear. *The church hadn’t failed me. I had failed the church.* I had not fully lived up to my calling. So these five confessions are exactly that – admissions of failure, cathartic for me, and perhaps helpful for you.

### 1. PRAY MORE, AND WITH A DIFFERENT FOCUS.

I’m thinking of something other than my failure to spend adequate time with God and to soak everything in prayer, grievous as that failure is. I’m thinking of how I stopped praying for people once things took a turn for the better.

“How’s your marriage? You asked me to pray for you.”

“Oh, it’s great. 1000 per cent better. Thanks for asking. Thanks for praying.”

And so I’d stop.

That wasn’t the Apostle Paul’s practice. He prayed most fervently when things were going right. “For this reason,” he says in Ephesians, after enumerating all the ways God had blessed them, “ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God’s people, I have *not stopped* giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers” (Ephesians 1:15–16, my emphasis). *Not stopped.* This is typical for Paul. He pressed deepest into prayer, not when all hell was breaking loose, but when all heaven was breaking in.

I didn’t do this, or not nearly enough. I prayed to get the devil off people’s backs, not to

invite more of God’s holy invasion into their lives. But just as some evil spirits only come out by prayer, the transforming work of the Holy Spirit only gets in by prayer.

I’d pray for that more.

### 2. PLEAD MORE WITH THE OLDER BROTHER.

That’s what the Father does with his embittered, indignant, self-righteous older son who refuses to celebrate when the prodigal comes home. The father pleads with him. He humbles himself, goes out to his son, and begs him to change his mind, join the party and have the father’s heart.

Not me. I just got frustrated with the older brother. I ignored him, sometimes rebuked him. Celebrating raucously one kind of redemption – the prodigal’s return – I missed almost entirely another one – the man or woman estranged from God, dutiful but angry, who awakens again to grace.

How many miracles did I miss for lack of the humility to plead?

I’d plead more.

## NOT ME. I JUST GOT FRUSTRATED WITH THE OLDER BROTHER. I IGNORED HIM, SOMETIMES REBUKED HIM.

### 3. PREACH GRACE MORE RADICALLY.

I preached grace a lot. But if I ever went back, I’d preach it – and live it – full tilt.

The Apostle Paul saw two things as the key to everything – the indwelling power of Christ through His Spirit, and the overflowing power of grace in all things and at all times.

Where these two things are lacking, nothing – not good theology, not good strategy, not good morals, not abundant resources – means anything. Where they were present, even our most glaring failures and weaknesses and deficiencies become redemptive.

I preached dozens of sermons over the years on stewardship. The sum? I tried to motivate people to give by casting a big vision.

“Look at what God is doing,” I’d say. “And generosity is one way you can join Him in it.”

But that’s only a small part of how the Bible motivates giving. Tasting grace, not catching a vision, is what makes the poor give like they’re rich, and

the rich give till they’re poor. Stinginess is always a crisis of grace. It’s a failure to know the grace of Christ, and to pay attention to how that grace is being worked out in the lives of others.

Generosity – crazy generosity – is just one of the ways grace shows up.

I’d abound more in that grace.

#### 4. POUR MORE INTENTIONALLY INTO YOUNG PEOPLE.

Recently at a conference where I was speaking, a lovely young woman in her late 20s approached me.

## TASTING GRACE, NOT CATCHING A VISION, IS WHAT MAKES THE POOR GIVE LIKE THEY’RE RICH, AND THE RICH GIVE TILL THEY’RE POOR

“Do you remember me?” she asked.

“Yes, I remember your face. But tell me your name. And tell me how we know each other.”

She told me her name, and then said, “I attended your church for a few months with my foster family when I was seven. You said something to me before the service one day that changed my life. You told me you saw the light of God in me. I can’t tell you how often that carried me through dark times.”

One encounter. One sentence. I couldn’t remember it. She’d never forgotten it.

I could multiply tenfold some version of that story, and those are just the ones that come to mind. God gives



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pastors outsized influence. Our words carry weight. When we speak, whether we want this or not, many people hear God. Young people especially. I'd pour into young people much more intentionality.

## 5. CHOOSE LEADERS ACCORDING TO NUMBERS 11.

Moses is ready to quit. He's led – courageously, selflessly – the Israelites out of slavery, but things aren't going well. The people, far from being grateful, are bitter. "You're not feeding us. We want meat." Hardly a pastor in the

world has not endured this complaint.

Moses asks God to kill him. Better that than try to "carry all these people by myself" (Numbers 11:14).

God's response? "Bring me seventy of Israel's elders who are known to you as leaders and officials among the people.... I will take some of the power of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them. They will share the burden of the people with you so that you will not have to carry it alone" (Numbers 11:16–17).

*I will take some of the power of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them.* This is strange. Why doesn't God just put the Spirit's power directly on these leaders? Why does He have to

first take it from Moses before He puts it on them?

Every pastor knows why – because a leader who doesn't share your Spirit will do you and the church harm in the end. I have seen this a thousand times. An elder or deacon is elected, not to share the burden of the people, but to "sort the pastor out." Not once have I seen this go well.

As a pastor I needed, and mostly had, leaders who were wise, prayerful, discerning, tough. I needed men and women with the integrity and backbone to say no when called for.


But whenever I neglected choosing leaders according to Numbers 11, the relationship became adversarial, the task

of carrying the burden of the people suffered, and everyone lost.

I'd never again choose a leader unless I knew God had taken some of the Spirit that was on me and put it on them.

I love what I'm doing now, teaching pastoral theology at the seminary level, which means I get to lovingly mess with the heads of the next generation of pastors in Canada and beyond.

I'm not sure whether I will ever pastor again. But if I do, I resolve to do it in such a way that, when all's done, there's nothing to confess. /FT

 Mark Buchanan is associate professor of pastoral theology at Ambrose University in Calgary, Alta.

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# HOW TO READ THE BIBLE WELL

**Most of us have a history of broken Bible-reading pledges. How do we engage with Scripture regularly and deeply?**

By Patricia Paddey

**T**he first Bible I called my own was a tiny New Testament. A gift from The Gideons – in an era when such gifts were still widely thought to be good – it had a burgundy leather cover with gold lettering. Distributed through my Grade 5 public school class, the little book was accompanied by a letter that told the story of a boy who made a promise to read his Bible every day.

That boy's vow must have struck me as a noble idea, because it inspired me to make a similar pledge. It was a promise I tried very hard to keep. But once broken, it was also a promise that induced significant guilt. Again and again, in the more than four decades since, I have renewed – if not the actual vow – then my determination to read Scripture regularly.

The Bible and I go a long way back. I've carried its words

in my wallet, stuck them to my fridge and laboured to commit them to memory. I've studied it alone and in groups large and small. I've read it academically in something author Richard Foster describes as “a detached, cerebral kind of reading.” I've been inspired, consoled and corrected by it.

But I've also slogged through it for the simple satisfaction of checking off one more item on my daily to do list. Flossed teeth? Check. Swept the floor? Check. Read my Bible? Check.

Through it all, my primary motivation for reading Scripture has been the firm conviction that it's good for me, like spinach and sit-ups for my soul.

## Scripture as spinach

As motivations go, that's not an entirely bad one, says Iain Provan, Marshall Sheppard professor of biblical studies at Regent College and author of the just-published book *Seriously Dangerous Religion: What the Old Testament Really Says and Why It Matters* (Baylor University Press, 2014). But it ought to be only a starting point.

“I think that's a good motivation: to know that we should and it will be good for us, and to receive that as a discipline,” he says. “There are many aspects of the Christian life that are of that nature. We don't necessarily desire things deeply, but we know we should. And so we set off on the path ... But also, we ought to aspire to something more. We ought to aspire to a growing appreciation, a deepening desire, a greater love.”

Sadly, fewer Canadians are finding any motivation to read the Bible at all, and that includes Christians. The recent Canadian

## Paying attention & personalizing...

In her novel *Sensible Shoes: A Story About the Spiritual Journey* (InterVarsity Press, 2013), Sharon Garlough Brown takes four female characters on a spiritual quest. From their spiritual director they learn that “The spiritual life is all about paying attention. The Spirit of God is always speaking to us, but we need to slow down, stop, and give more than lip service to what God is saying. We need to get off autopilot and take time to look and listen with the eyes and ears of the heart.”

The women encounter several strategies for doing just that, including:

- *Lectio divina*, the practice of reading the Bible slowly, prayerfully and meditatively, while listening for what the Spirit is saying.
- Reading aloud a passage of Scripture, such as Isaiah 43, but inserting your own name in place of the words “Israel” or “Jacob.”

Bible Engagement Study found that only 14 per cent of Canadian Christians read the Bible even once a week.

“If you don't think there is anything to hear through the Bible, you're probably not going to open it up,” reflects Rick Hiemstra, director, research and media relations for The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. “We should all be talking about why so many people think the Bible is a silent book.”

The sorry 14 per cent statistic calls to mind something I

once heard renowned author Eugene Peterson tell a television interviewer. “The biggest hurdle people have in reading the Bible,” he said, “is [it] sitting on a shelf and people thinking it’s a holy book, a reverent book, and it doesn’t have anything to do with their lives.”

But Christians have always believed Scripture has *everything* to do with life in general, and with their own lives in particular. “The Bible gives us God’s guidance about what is true and good and beautiful,” says Provan. “About what we should believe about fundamentally important matters, like who God is and what the world is, what we should believe and how we should live. Every human being needs guidance like that, and each of us is going to look for it somewhere.”

Even the scholars say there’s a special benefit to be had from reading the Bible devotionally – with your heart as much as with your head. That’s because devotional reading – approaching Scripture not with our own agenda, but with an openness to God’s – allows

the Holy Spirit space and freedom to work in our lives.

A generation ago, A.W. Tozer wrote in *The Pursuit of God: The Human Thirst for the Divine* (Christian Publications, 1948) about a lack of “spiritual receptivity” among Christians of his time, describing it as “a very serious breakdown in modern evangelicalism.” Such receptivity means being open to receiving from God, and Tozer said that kind of openness could be “increased by experience or destroyed by neglect.”

It’s a sober thought. One that sets off warning bells in my mind about my own frequent Bible-reading-as-part-of-a-daily-to-do-list approach. Tozer described the pitfalls of applying such methods to relations with God. “We read our chapter, have our short devotions and rush away.... The tragic results of this spirit are all about us. Shallow lives, hollow religious philosophies, the preponderance of the element of fun in Gospel meetings, the glorification of men, trust in religious externalities, quasireligious fellowships, salesmanship methods, the mistaking of dynamic person-

## What is devotional reading?

*The Canadian Oxford Dictionary* defines:

**Devotion:** n. enthusiastic attachment or loyalty (to a person or cause); great love. Comes from the Latin word *devotion* meaning a self-sacrifice or offering.

**Devotional:** adj & n. of, pertaining to, or characterized by (esp. religious) devotion.

## Setting the stage

Reading devotionally means connecting personally with the text, allowing it to penetrate your heart as well as your thoughts.

Woodrow Kroll, writing in *How to Find God in the Bible: A Personal Plan for the Encounter of Your Life* (Random House, 2004), recommends setting the stage for devotional reading by first seeking:

- solitude
- stillness
- silence

ality for the power of the Spirit: these and such as these are the symptoms of an evil disease, a deep and serious malady of the soul.”

## To know Him is to love Him

It seems there can be no substitute for – and no shortcut to – knowing God firsthand, which the gospel of John 17:3 defines as eternal life. “Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”

If we want to know God, and not just know *about* God, we must regularly set aside time for quieting our busy selves, praying and reading Scripture as an expression of our love for Him. After all, expressing love, according to my Canadian Oxford Dictionary, is what devotion – and therefore devotional Bible reading – is really all about.

Prayer accompanies devotional Bible reading because as we pray for the desire to know God more fully, the Holy Spirit will honour that. 2 Corinthians 3:6 makes clear that “the Spirit gives life” to the soul.

“Reading the Bible devotionally, to me, [implies] a somewhat mystical encounter with God,” says Gus Konkel, president emeritus of Providence University College and Theological Seminary and professor of Old Testament at McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, Ont. “In other words, something very personal. I want to be encouraged. I want to be comforted. I want strength for the day. That’s a

## READING ABOUT READING

Resources recommended by Iain Provan and Gus Konkel for reading the Bible devotionally:



**A Long Obedience in the Same Direction: Discipleship in an Instant Society**  
Eugene H. Peterson  
InterVarsity, 1980



**How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth**  
Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart  
Zondervan, 2003



**Seriously Dangerous Religion: What the Old Testament Really Says and Why It Matters**  
Iain Provan  
Baylor University Press, 2014



**With Skilful Hand: The Story of King David**  
David T. Barnard  
McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2004



**Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary (Old Testament)**  
John H. Walton [ed.]  
Zondervan, 2009



**Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary (New Testament)**  
Clinton E. Arnold [ed.]  
Zondervan, 2002



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## IN DEPTH

very legitimate way to read the Bible. That's a different kind of exercise than reading it theologically, but I think we need to do both."

Konkel advises picking a translation, such as the New Living Translation or Peterson's *The Message*, that has as its single objective to make the language of Scripture as contemporary as possible. Then read it.

Peterson concurs. "Read it like you're reading a letter," he has said. "Let the truth of what you're reading shape your life. But don't ask too many questions. You're not looking for information. You're looking for relationship."



McMaster's Gus Konkel advises writing your questions down as you read and then using them as cues for further study.

### What's perspicuity got to do with it?

"The focus of devotional reading is spiritual direction and edification," according to Richard N. Longenecker in his article "On Reading a New Testament Letter – Devotionally, Homiletically, Academically."

He cites two "great Reformation principles" at the heart of devotional reading:

- the perspicuity of Scripture (i.e., that Scripture is clear in its basic message and can be understood by everyone as to the essential content of that message; that Scripture is lucid and understandable, even to those of limited intellect and different cultures), and
- the effectiveness of the Spirit in illuminating the Scriptures and witnessing to Christ.

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If questions arise in the midst of devotional reading, Konkel says to write them down for future theological study.

But that doesn't mean turning off your brain before you pick up your Bible. Provan describes reading the Bible without thinking about it as "unwise."

"Reading any literature surely requires thinking about it," he says. "And the more important the text you're reading, the more you want to be sure that you're right rather than wrong [in your understanding]. But you're also recognizing that in the human words, God is speaking to us. We're looking for guidance about what we should believe and how we should live."

Provan also cautions against reading the Bible "individually." Taking our questions back to our Christian community, or even to commentaries and other helpful books and resources, provides a system of checks and balances. After all, the stakes are high.

"By reading it well, we will gain a greater appreciation of what is true and good," he says. "And we will actually be conformed more closely to what God has called us to be."

Konkel says we will also realize that God's first desire is to relate to us personally, as individuals, and to help us in our lives moment by moment. "That's really what devotions is," he explains. "It brings God to us in the moment, and we need that. I think we need that every day." /FT

Patricia Paddey is a senior writer for *Faith Today*, living in Mississauga, Ont.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF MCMASTER DIVINITY COLLEGE



# When Christians eat healthy – *really healthy*

**A MEAT- AND POTATO-LOVING WRITER VISITS A CHRISTIAN RAW FOOD TEST KITCHEN TO EXPLORE A POPULAR EATING TREND.** By Lisa Hall-Wilson

**A**s I sat with a group of 20 or so women in a Hallelujah Diet Canada test kitchen in Toronto staring at a sign that said RAW, I couldn't help wondering what I had got myself into. Raw veganism is a thing?

It's a big thing. Some would say a Christian thing.

Farming has been my family's profession since before the Irish potato famine. Meat and potatoes are food groups where I come from. My grandparents' table groaned with food right from the garden, field, cow or goat, or was preserved by hand. Most of my life I've consumed

prepared, precooked and canned alternatives. When I was diagnosed with an intolerance to sulphites, a common preservative, I was forced to research my cook-from-scratch heritage.

I get the desire to eat better.

The Hallelujah Diet workshop promotes a living-plant-based diet (no dairy, meat or animal/fish by-products, refined sugar or wheat – and 70 per cent of food consumed should be raw). Raw food veganism, they say, is a biblically-based diet. Memories of washing carrots with a garden hose and eating them straight from the garden flick through my mind – I could do raw.

I stare at a cucumber slice topped with pumpkin and sunflower seed cheese with chive flowers on top (because crackers are dead – and that's bad). Seed cheese is an acquired taste, I discover. I politely pass on the seconds.

The Hallelujah Diet is one of many Christian healthy eating plans out there. Christian diners can choose from a smorgasbord that includes the Eden Diet, Daniel's Diet (not to be confused with the Daniel Plan that includes Daniel Strong gear), the Weigh Down Diet, even Take Back Your Temple (with an online "Do you have the faith to change?" quiz to get you started).

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**SO RAW DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN THIN. AND IT CERTAINLY DOESN'T MEAN EASY.**



Some Canadian Christians embrace the Hallelujah Diet. From left: Flax tacos, pineapple seed cheese on crackers and a Canada Day dessert.

Rick Lamothe was a pastor in Ottawa for 13 years before relocating to work for Calgary-based Samaritan's Purse Canada. Lamothe turned to raw food veganism after being diagnosed with two stage one cancers in October of 2011. Doctors recommended a radical prostatectomy. Lamothe declined. "After three months on the [Hallelujah] diet, I was free of the cancers. After six months I'd lost 63 pounds, and my high blood pressure and cholesterol problems were gone," says Lamothe.

Judy Fleming is the director of Canadian operations for Hallelujah Diet Canada and a certified raw food chef. She has been eating raw for almost 16 years. "I was a very unhealthy person," says Fleming. "I had a number of health issues. I was borderline diabetic, had precancerous cells in my uterus and was told I needed a hysterectomy because of the bleeding, had migraine headaches, sciatica, fibromyalgia,

and was 38 pounds heavier."

Fleming embarked on ten days of training, which consisted of grass and carrot juice and nothing but raw food. "The headaches were gone, the sciatica was gone. Within three months the diabetes and fibromyalgia were gone," she says. "After six months I'd lost 38 pounds and the heavy bleeding, hot flashes, all of it was gone."

Grass juice?

Fleming says the diet doesn't cure anyone, but simply helps your immune system to self-heal. The Hallelujah Acres website ([www.myhdiet.com](http://www.myhdiet.com)) says, "the body of modern medical science supported the wisdom of the original diet given to mankind by God in Genesis 1:29. Those who did listen and who changed their diet, healed themselves."

Dr. Elaine Thurgood practises medicine – and a vegetarian diet – in London,

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF HALLELUJAH DIET CANADA



Ont. She is also on the faculty of the department of family medicine at Western University. “If making a diet change alone was the ticket to preventing/curing cancer, then we’d be shouting it from the rooftops,” cautions Thurgood. “Blanket statements about a particular product or lifestyle preventing/curing ‘cancer’ based on anecdotal experience have to be scrutinized. Association does not equal causality.”

She gives good doctorly advice. “Regarding vegan diets, of which I have firsthand experience, as long as one pays attention to B12, calcium, iron and vitamin D there are no special issues with vegan diets.... It’s a good diet for reducing cholesterol as long as one pays attention to one’s weight because a vegan diet does not mean weight reducing or calorie reduced.” Compare: 413 calories in a half cup of whole almonds. There’s 410 calories in a Tim Horton’s chocolate chip muffin.

So raw does not necessarily mean thin. And it certainly doesn’t mean easy.

“It’s tough. To get healthy takes time,” says Lamothe. “I had to change my schedule, meal preparation takes longer, it’s a bit more expensive.”

And radical? “I thought it was radical too,” says Lamothe. “I loved my meat lover’s pizza and Tim’s, but we’ve been living on the fly since World War II. What we’ve done to ourselves is pretty radical. This does work.”

I’m all for eating healthier. Who isn’t? Although eating raw 12 months a year in Canada would require a lot of effort. “Try eating raw food for a week,” says Fleming. “Eat nothing but raw and see how you feel.” And as we’re always told, we’re supposed to check with our own doctors before embarking on any kind of radical change in how and what we eat.

I’m not ready to dive full monty into raw food veganism. But eating more raw food and cutting out the processed, pre-packaged, precooked, canned, dye-laden and frozen treats are definitely in my family’s future – along with some meat and baked potatoes. /FT



Lisa Hall-Wilson is a freelance writer in London, Ont.

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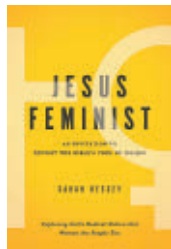
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REVIEWS



**Jesus Feminist: An Invitation to Revisit the Bible's View of Women**  
 By Sarah Bessey  
 Howard Books,  
 2013. 256 pages.  
 \$16.99 [e-book \$11.99]

SARAH BESSEY, a writer and blogger from British Columbia, is tired of the gender debates. Though she calls herself a feminist and would like to see the Church reclaim the word, her passion runs deeper than labels. Bessey believes “feminism simply consists of the radical notion that women are people too.” It was Jesus who made a feminist out of her, and the gospel is her focus.

Her book comes at a time when conversations about women in the church are surging, and Bessey is eager to motivate women to embrace the freedom Jesus offers. She is a talented writer who desires to connect personally with her readers. Heavy on metaphorical language, she calls us to “a bonfire on the shore,” to gather and discuss in a place where acceptance isn’t predicated on doctrine.

She travels to the beginning of her own story, introducing us to the experiences and people that shaped her and illustrating how she feels men and women are called to participate in the Kingdom of God, always moving “toward equality and freedom.”

Though she claims she is finished with debates, she devotes a chapter to the problematic passages of Paul. Here she shows a strong bias, draws on a limited number of scholars and paints the opposing view with too broad a brush. Bessey’s writing is most powerful when telling her story and vision, and her attempt at exegesis feels awkward and incongruent with the rest.

Not everyone will be on board with Bessey’s stance, but regardless of theological bent we all agree that women are people too. Her book serves as a catalyst for conversation and thought, and Christians would do well to further wrestle with this issue. —SARAH VAN BEVEREN



**What You Get at Home: Stories**  
 By Dora Dueck  
 Turnstone Press,  
 2012. 176 pages. \$19  
 [e-book \$9.99]

ALREADY IN her first story “Chopsticks,” Dora Dueck demonstrates the joy and melancholy that mark her first book of short stories. (She’s previously published two award-winning novels.)

“Chopsticks” is one of the few stories not set in Winnipeg, but it shares with the rest reflections on the memory imbued in things – a train, a crucifix, etc. – and the necessity and complexity of relationships.

Each story features women of various ages struggling through challenges. Yet the stories are not about “problems” and “solutions.” Instead, Dueck crafts nuanced characters who live through present and past experiences. Many of these experiences occur in Mennonite communities in Russia, Paraguay and Manitoba, all of which Dueck describes in compelling sensory detail.

While many of her stories are painful, they are never despairing.

Most remarkable are the seven stories about a Mennonite named Liese who emigrates from Paraguay to Winnipeg as a young woman. Reading them feels like dipping into every third chapter of a novel. Each story is self-contained, but it’s impossible to resist the urge to fill in the gaps in Liese’s life.

Dueck – through Liese – muses on the nature and purpose of memory and storytelling. Liese, asked to speak to the women in her church about being an immigrant, is reluctant. She has stories, “but she’s not used to thinking of them as fables, as lessons for others.” She resolves that “she won’t give them gush” and “she won’t give them grumble.”

Dueck has accomplished what her character hopes for. *What You Get at Home* has neither gush nor grumble. Rather, it vividly expresses the stories of women in moments of uncertainty and grace. —DEANNA SMID

**Bessey calls us to “a bonfire on the shore” where acceptance isn’t predicated on doctrine.**



**Heart**  
 The City Harmonic  
 Integrity Music,  
 2013. \$16. www.  
 thecityharmonic.com

ALTERNATIVE WORSHIP band The City Harmonic has quickly joined Downhere, Neworldson and Starfield as a top Christian band from Canada recognized internationally.

After winning a Juno with their first album *I Have a Dream* in 2011, they show continued excellence with this follow-up of 14 shimmering, heart-filled songs of worshipful reflection and discipleship.

Both the music and vocals

are boldly similar to the popular British rock band Coldplay. At first, the parallels seem almost too close for comfort, but as the album unfolds a pure, unique vulnerability becomes clear.

These four young worshipers draw from their life experiences to offer simple, unapologetic messages of hope, honesty and authentic humility. “Praise the Lord / with the world on your shoulders / praise the Lord / when it seems too hard / praise

the Lord / ‘cause in every moment / Jesus Christ is Lord.”

There is a fine ebb and flow across this disc. It soars like an epic movie soundtrack with a lush, emotional, atmospheric soundscape and then pulls back with intimate, tender moments. Lead singer and pianist Elias Dummer displays musical excellence throughout.

Yet one of the most powerful songs is sung by bass guitarist Eric Fusilier, who was diagnosed

with leukemia in 2012. He pours the frailty of his human experience into “Love, Heal Me.” “I’m crying out in my disease / I’m so worn down / so won’t You speak / and tell me how / You care for me? / ‘cause You are God / You heal all things / Your name is Love / so Love, heal me.”

This is genuine worship, flowing transparently from the humble hearts of über-cool rock stars – always a refreshing paradox. —ALI MATTHEWS



**Fighting Over God:  
A Legal and Political  
History of Religious  
Freedom in Canada**  
By Janet Epp  
Buckingham  
McGill-Queen's  
University Press,

2014. 344 pages. \$32.95 [e-book \$18]

IN NEWFOUNDLAND and Labrador in the late 1990s, the debate over constitutional protections for denominational schools was a big deal – I remember vividly the sense of righteous indignation.

Memories of this battle royal came back to me while reading *Fighting Over God* – a new book that reminds us religious freedom has long been a defining force in Canada's narrative.

Author Janet Epp Buckingham, a lawyer by training, is associate professor of political studies and history at Trinity Western University. She draws on at least 20 years of reflection and experience with the topic of this book.

Her intent here is to summarize, rather than analyze, and you can't help but be impressed by her encyclopedic scope – she surveys over 600 legal conflicts across nearly four centuries. The chapters are arranged under themes such as education, broadcasting, employment and family life.

What is the place of religion in a pluralistic society challenged by secularism, where religious people often feel marginalized? Buckingham suggests "space for diversity" is crucial. Dialogue and negotiation are preferable to imposition.

"Canadian society," she concludes, only impoverishes itself if it banishes "religion when it is perceived to be a source of conflict."

This book will appeal to historians, political scientists and lawyers, as well as religious leaders and adherents. **—BURTON K. JANES**

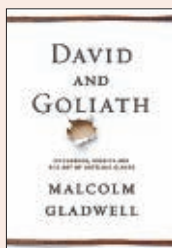
## Canadian creatives



Early Morning Ride (acrylic on canvas) by Albert Mueller. [www.albertmuellerart.com](http://www.albertmuellerart.com)

"I don't consider myself a Christian artist, but an artist who is Christian. I paint what interests me and discover God's work in my art. Ultimately the work is meaningless without Him. This painting was originally inspired by the Tour de France and still reminds me of experiences while bicycling, when I will sometimes pray as I ride."

## Reading THE BESTSELLERS



**David and Goliath:  
Underdogs, Misfits, and  
the Art of Battling Giants**  
By Malcolm Gladwell  
Little, Brown & Co., 2013.  
320 pages. \$32 [e-book  
\$14.99]

THE BIBLICAL account of David and Goliath is a familiar example of the expectations of two ancient armies getting turned upside-down. Beginning there, author Malcolm Gladwell uses wide-ranging research and enticing storytelling to help us rethink what giant slayers really are.

Goliath had a physical condition which gave him a strong advantage in hand-to-hand combat. David couldn't fight that way, so he chose a style that suited his own strength. Is the success of underdogs sometimes related to their lack of qualifications or resources?

Gladwell tells about a group of 12-year-old girls, most of whom had mediocre ball-handling skills, and an immigrant coach raised on cricket and soccer who wanted to play competitive basketball. By adopting a strategy of following rules but disregarding conventions,

they won many games over superior teams.

Such stories remind me of Jesus and the religious structure of His time. I think of Paul asserting that when he is weak, he is strong.

This book will also lead readers to consider the giants who inhabit our world today. It makes me wonder, for example, how I, as a follower of Jesus, can effectively oppose a culture in which people of faith are often dismissed as laughingstocks or made scapegoats.

It got me thinking about the "bigger is better" dynamic that controls everything from our national economy to our personal career expectations. I began to wonder again if church shouldn't be more of a place to focus on spiritual rather than numerical growth.

*David and Goliath* doesn't answer these questions, but affirms the asking of them. As with Gladwell's previous bestsellers, it invites readers to think in a new way.

Gladwell is a staff writer at *The New Yorker*, but grew up in a Mennonite family in rural Ontario. **—BONNIE BELDAN-THOMSON**



Visit [www.faithtoday.ca/BooksAndCulture](http://www.faithtoday.ca/BooksAndCulture) for more book and media reviews.

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- "The DMin gives 'boots on the ground' practitioners an opportunity to engage the academy as a transforming agent of the Church." (Rhonda Britton)
- "The students [at ADC] are interesting, motivated, diverse and keen to learn ways to translate classroom learning into changing their own lives and the lives of those with whom they minister. What a glorious opportunity to meet so many dedicated men and women who are so full of potential!" (Dr. Nancy Nason-Clark, adjunct faculty)

Whether you're preparing for what's next or renewing for where you already serve, prayerfully consider enrolling at Acadia Divinity College.

For more information on any of our doctoral, master's or bachelor courses, visit [www.aciadiativ.ca](http://www.aciadiativ.ca).

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programs consisting of biblical studies, theology, leadership and ministry. Through practicum, internship, research and award-winning travel study opportunities, our vibrant student community encourages academic, personal and spiritual growth.

Whether you aspire to become a teacher, scientist, business leader, musician, pastor or ministry leader, or to pursue another career path, build career skills at Ambrose as you connect one on one with professors who combine life experience with academic expertise and who mentor you in your growth.

Learning is more than a degree – it's who you become as a whole person, and Ambrose University provides experiences both in and out of the classroom that prepare you to lead in the workplace and the Church. At Ambrose you are encouraged to develop practical leadership skills and get involved in the vibrant community life through clubs, residence program and athletics.

Explore your area of study through the lens of your faith and experience community beyond the classroom – choose Ambrose University for faith inspired learning. [www.ambrose.edu](http://www.ambrose.edu)

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At Heritage we are passionate that our students know Christ and make Him known. We equip men and women to serve Christ with devotion and distinction, wherever God leads them.

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programs are designed with university transfer in mind. Ask an admissions counsellor for more information.

Students can also earn a bachelor's degree in worship ministry, pastoral ministry, children's ministry, youth ministry or world missions.

The seminary provides college and university graduates with theological education, equipping them to excel in pastoral ministry, global missions or parachurch ministries. Pastoral students can apply for a two-year internship that provides both academic credit and focused, on-the-job learning about ministry.

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Liberty also offers many scholarship opportunities to make tuition costs more affordable, including a 20 percent Canadian discount on tuition, room and board, and fees. We encourage you to come on down to visit and get a real taste of the college experience by joining us during our College for a Weekend event.

For more information, visit [www.liberty.edu/canadianadmissions](http://www.liberty.edu/canadianadmissions).

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Luther Seminary is a higher-education community centred in the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is a place where theological learning is engaged with heart, mind and

spirit. Luther Seminary listens to the needs of the people and responds by sending leaders, trained with a deep biblical understanding, to serve in God's world.

Luther Seminary, one of eight seminaries in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), prepares about one-third of the ELCA's pastors and lay leaders for ministry. The seminary has more than 700 full-time and part-time students.

Thousands of our graduates serve in every ELCA synod and in dozens of locations around the world. Given the changing needs of the Church and the world, Luther Seminary is building a new curriculum for the fall of 2014. This will enable the seminary to achieve its mission of educating leaders in ways that best prepare them to meet a wide variety of changing needs.

This is a great time to be part of Luther Seminary. We have stellar faculty, strong students, an amazing curriculum, a

highly respected internship program and innovative ideas that are equipping students to share the love of God in compelling ways.

Learn more about the exciting things happening at Luther Seminary at [www.luthersem.edu](http://www.luthersem.edu).

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On August 1, 2014, Prairie Bible Institute launched its first free for-credit online course. *Theology 100* is completely online, and participants will have two months to complete the course. Students can expect online lessons to include video lectures, discussion forums, quizzes and textbook readings.

"I think people will find the course relevant and engaging even if they've never taken post-secondary classes before," commented Janet Osborne, administrator for e-learning. "We've designed it to be accessible to anyone, ranging from high school students to retirees."

The school, based in Three Hills, AB, and beginning its 92<sup>nd</sup> year, maintains that biblically informed education is vitally important for today's Church. It is, in fact, the basis for the school's educational model.

Prairie has been offering distance education courses worldwide since the 1950s. What began as paper-based correspondence courses for overseas missionaries is now transforming into dynamic online learning accessible from anywhere in the world.

Last year the school tested four courses on Apple's iTunesU platform. The courses, *The Gospels*, *Introduction to Christian Theology*, *Christianity in the Modern World* and *Theology & Practice of Worship*, continue to average about 500 downloads per month.

Learn more at [www.prairie.edu/th100](http://www.prairie.edu/th100).

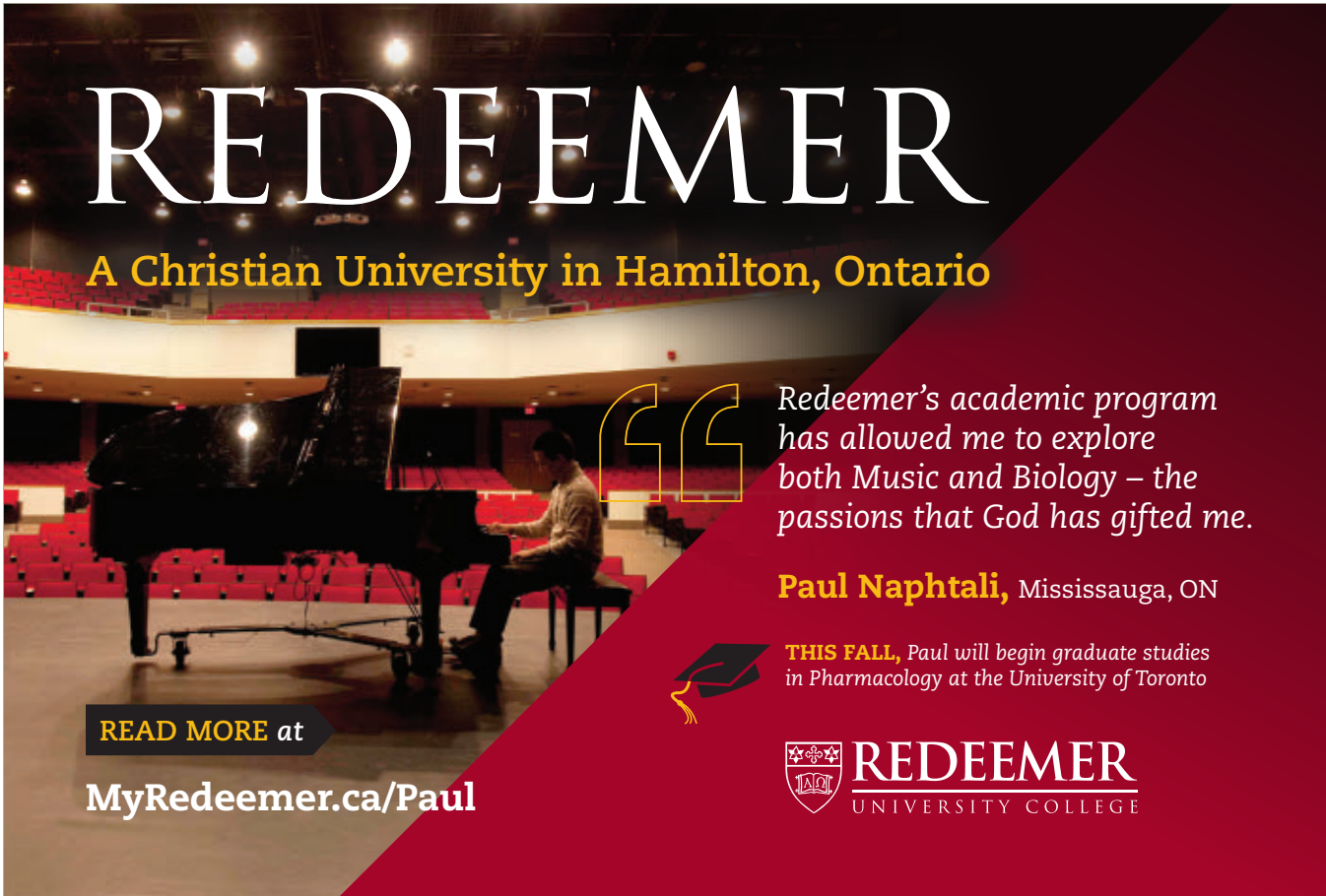
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Each person is unique, and each will experience Redeemer differently. To hear what students and faculty have to say about their own experience, go to [MyRedeemer.ca](http://MyRedeemer.ca). Or even better, while there fill out the online personalized visit form and we will arrange a time that works for you.

### ROCKY MOUNTAIN COLLEGE Distributed learning that fits your life

Jamie travels for his job, but that doesn't slow down his thirst for biblical knowledge. What he desires is to grow his faith, ministry gifts and biblical understanding.

Rocky Mountain College (RMC) has created Pathways to reach those who are unable to come to us. We did this to meet a growing need of many people with active lives who want to deepen their faith and receive biblical training.

Pathways offer courses and programs online, in clusters or at a RMC site location.

Courses and programs are easy to navigate on a computer, tablet or smartphone. In addition, advisors, mentors and coaches are empowered to actively be involved in students' lives, their spiritual care and personal development.

Receive credit for experience, transfer credit or request Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) assessment for credit as well.

Nora, a Pathways student, says, "This course was a pure enjoyment; the flexibility is definitely designed for anyone. There was sufficient time between each lesson even for those with busy lives."

People in formal and non-formal ministry roles desire biblical training, and we want to make it plain and simple for anyone, anywhere and at any time to access Pathways. [www.rmcpathways.ca](http://www.rmcpathways.ca).

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Training at Rosebud is not only practical, it is also a mission. Artistic Director Morris Ertman believes that our desire for creating art is "connected to our spiritual need, and our artistic gifts are connected with our spiritual calling." That's why theatre training at Rosebud addresses the whole person. Whether you choose the one-, two-, or four-year program, you will emerge from theatre training a fuller human being, body and soul.

Are you ready for a life in the theatre? Visit Rosebud to see the school, the theatre, and the town for yourself. Give us a call at 403-677-2350 or e-mail us at [recruitment@rosebudschoolofthearts.com](mailto:recruitment@rosebudschoolofthearts.com).

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If you would like more information about the DMin program at the Toronto School of Theology please e-mail the DMin office at [dmin.office@utoronto.ca](mailto:dmin.office@utoronto.ca) or call 416-978-6754.

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In addition, TWU announced a zero per cent tuition increase for the 2014–2015 school year. This move demonstrates the cooperation between TWU administration and the TWU Student Association (TWUSA), who put forward a resolution asking the university to give more notice of tuition increases. The administration agreed with TWUSA's resolution, taking it a step further by freezing tuition rates for this academic year.

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TWU is actively listening to prospective and current students' concerns about tuition costs and finding ways to ease students' financial investment while still providing a high-quality educational experience.

For more information about studying at TWU and financial aid, visit [twu.ca/undergraduate](http://twu.ca/undergraduate).

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Steven DeSouza (BEd 2010) likes the challenges of teaching at an international boarding school in China. He believes that the experience of adapting to a different culture will benefit him when he returns to teach in Canada. "There is a large number of immigrant students in Canadian classes. The major reason I went abroad is to be able to understand where people come from."

Understanding students and their parents goes beyond the classroom. His role is to be available for students. This holistic approach to teaching is what attracted Steven to Tyndale. After researching Tyndale's BEd program he knew it matched his beliefs. He says that he "liked the atmosphere where God is central in our lives and is central in the teaching, pedagogy and the way that people live."

He continues, "Whether you teach in a secular system or in a Christian system, you do not need to tell the kids you are a Christian. In my case, you can't teach openly about religion, but the children know! This belief in Jesus is spread through your teaching even if you don't say His name. But if you incorporate Christian values into your classroom, students learn to grow as individuals."


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#### Position Purpose

The Liberty University Canada recruiter is responsible for spreading the word about Liberty University to Canadian students. This recruiter schedules and attends conferences, events, festivals, college fairs, visits high schools, camps, and churches in Canada with the purpose of collecting inquiries and applications.

*For additional information contact:*

Amanda Craft, Assistant Director of Recruitment at Liberty University.  
434-592-4912 or alsmith@liberty.edu.

### LEAD PASTOR

Brookwood Baptist Church is seeking a Lead Pastor. Part of the Baptist General Conference of Canada, Brookwood Baptist Church is located in Langley, BC, within a 1 hour drive of downtown Vancouver. Information is available at [www.brookwoodbaptist.com](http://www.brookwoodbaptist.com). Resumés can be sent to [leadpastorsearch@brookwoodbaptist.com](mailto:leadpastorsearch@brookwoodbaptist.com).

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### ASSOCIATE PASTOR

McLaurin Baptist Church of Grande Prairie is actively seeking an Associate Pastor. We are a multi staff church of 200+ in Northern Alberta, associated with CBWC. For more information [www.homewardjourney.ca](http://www.homewardjourney.ca).

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# In defence of shame

*If we won't blush, we won't care*

**A**mong the high-profile movies offered to us this summer has been Seth MacFarlane's *A Million Ways to Die in the West*, ostensibly a black comedy about the privations and absurdities of life on the American Frontier.

It has a first-rank cast that includes Liam Neeson, Charlize Theron, Neil Patrick Harris, Amanda Seyfried and Sarah Silverman.

Ah. Sarah Silverman. And Seth MacFarlane. There's a clue. Two comedians who have traded heavily on their penchant for moral and aesthetic outrage, also known as "working blue" and "grossing people out." And the movie they star in, apparently, is unrelenting in that regard.

How disgusting is it? I haven't viewed it, so I don't know. But veteran film critic Anthony Lane of *The New Yorker*, not well known for his delicate sensibilities, warns us that the movie appeals most centrally to the "12-year-old boy who believes the bathroom to be the funniest place on earth." Indeed, Lane continues, "MacFarlane is daring us to be disgusted; and should we flinch, his movie will mock us for being prim – the worst of all crimes, in his scabrous world."

It has become a mark of adulthood among teenagers, including those in your church youth group, to steel themselves to watch anything on TV, or in a movie, or online and be fine with it.

I expect *Faith Today* readers haven't watched any of the slasher films in the *Saw* series (which together have grossed close to \$900 million) nor most of what is offered as humour on the Comedy Net-



***Sadly, it now takes considerable courage to protest the outrageous, or even object to it. And we Christians need to encourage each other to feel and do the right thing, no matter the social cost.***

## A.D. 168

"WE ARE FORBIDDEN EVEN TO WITNESS SHOWS OF GLADIATORS, SO THAT WE DO NOT BECOME PARTAKERS AND ABETTORS OF MURDERS. NOR MAY WE SEE THE OTHER SPECTACLES, LEST OUR EYES AND EARS BE DEFILED."

—THEOPHILUS, BISHOP OF ANTIOCH

work, let alone the porn that keeps nibbling at the edges even of Facebook ads. Good for you.

But that means you don't fully know just what it means for someone nowadays to say, "Nah, it doesn't bother me."

It should. Oh boy, should it.

To be unmoved by the violation of a human body is not a sign of maturity, but of psychopathy, a horrifying lack of empathy. Yes, humour is always walking the boundary land between convention and mischief, but when the balance tips too far – well, the point is that it can indeed tip too far into sheer injury. And those parts of the body we used to call "privates" were private for a reason

– intimacy is by definition not for public consumption.


Young women in a New Brunswick high school were recently sent home for wearing tiny halter tops over their bras, a fashion choice that, however widespread, had the utterly unsurprising effect of distracting boys from the school's declared mission of ... learning. Some feminists (and that's a label I proudly wear) embarrassed feminism by putting the onus on the boys to "not look" and "not be distracted," advice about as helpful as telling members of ethnic minorities to "not look" and "not be distracted" when someone wears a racist T-shirt.

Some things are shameful, and it is the mark of moral and aesthetic cultivation to know what is what and how you ought to respond. Sadly, it now takes considerable courage to protest the outrageous, or even object to it. And we Christians need to encourage each other – literally, "strengthen each other's hearts" – to feel and do the right thing, no matter the social cost. Augustine recounts how early Christians became despised as "antisocial" because they refused to attend the wildly popular gladiator events.

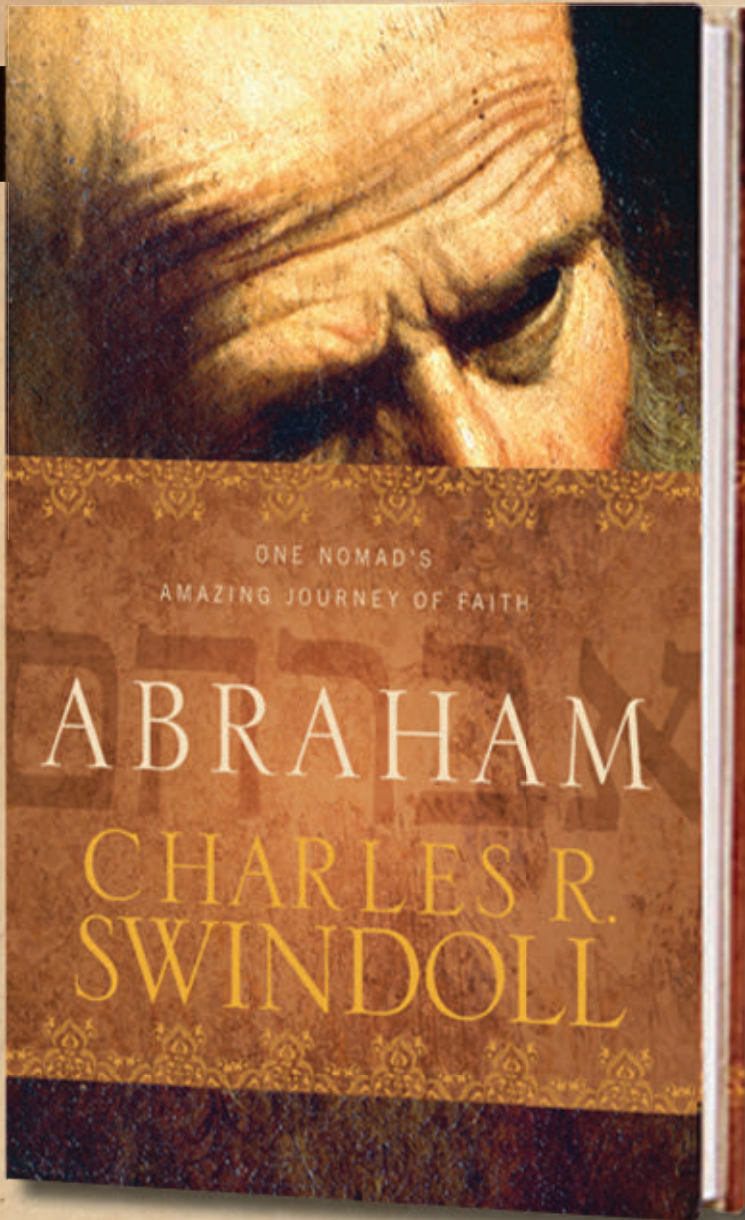
To be "cool" about everything is not to have become a superior person, but to become subhuman – robotic, dysfunctional.

And what doesn't move us doesn't move us. If we don't care, we won't act.

There are indeed a million ways to die, and one of them is by letting your sensibilities wither and your psychic calluses grow so that eventually you just stand by while someone else suffers. Too cool to care, unmoved to love. /FT

 John Stackhouse teaches at Regent College in Vancouver. His most recent book is *Need to Know: Vocation as the Heart of Christian Epistemology* (Oxford University Press, 2014). Find more of these columns at [www.faithtoday.ca/ChristAndCulture](http://www.faithtoday.ca/ChristAndCulture).

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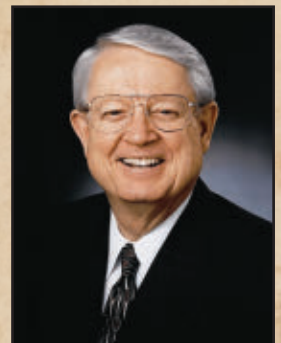
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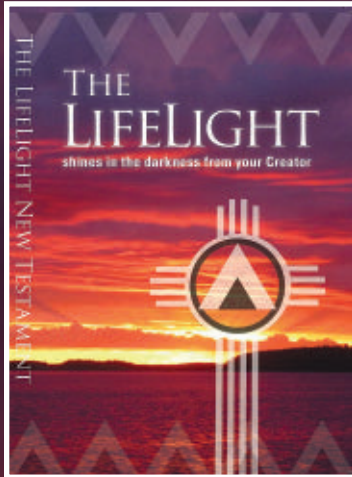


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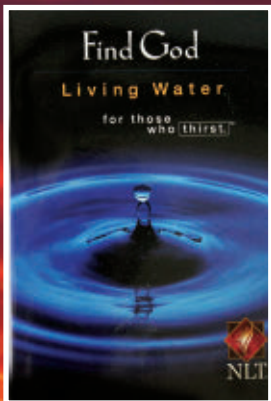
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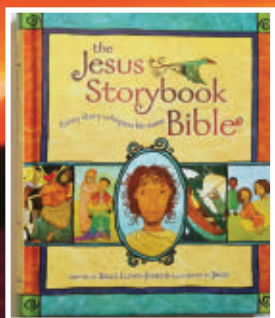
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