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HOPE FOR FIRST
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CANADA'S CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE

MAY / JUNE 2015

FAITH TODAY

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One of a kind

You won't find articles like these in your daily news

If you tend toward the “conservative” side of life – as labelled by others, probably – you likely know how rare it is to open a newspaper and see your viewpoint on issues such as religious freedom and euthanasia reasoned out by a high-profile columnist.

Margaret Somerville does just that. She is not without controversy. The Australian-born professor with positions in both the faculties of law and medicine at McGill University in Montreal cannot be easily categorized, to the chagrin of many.

Her views often align with a Christian ethical way of looking at the world, yet she does not place herself easily in that camp. She writes widely on issues Christians tend to care about, almost inevitably providing a counterargument to the spirit of the day.

In our cover story we interviewed Somerville about her views on a current hot topic, euthanasia, but also how she sees herself fitting into Canada's cantankerous public square. We think you'll be as fascinated as we were.

When May comes around, so does the National March for Life in Ottawa, with smaller pro-life marches across the country. We remain a nation with no law when it comes to abortion – an issue that just won't go away.

Every year we try to think of some fresh way to talk about the pro-life

movement. This year, we think we found a winner. Turn to page 30 to have your hopes for the future of our society renewed by an eager, dedicated and very intelligent group of campus pro-life activists.

They are living out their beliefs in one of the most hostile environments you could choose: a Canadian university campus. And many seem to be doing just fine. Our online version expands to include moving testimonials from pro-life witnesses across the country who are of all ages and in all stages of life. We encourage you to check those out as well.

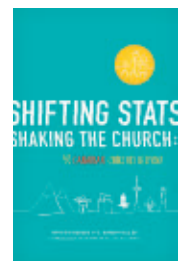
With each issue of *Faith Today* we aim to serve you with the kind of articles you won't get elsewhere.

There aren't many other periodicals or websites where you can read about Canadians remembering and celebrating a pioneering missionary to China (“The Thousand Lives of Hudson Taylor”).


Where else would you hear the voices of Canadian aboriginal leaders such as Chief Reggie Neeposh and Grand Chief Harvey Yesno (“Hope and Healing for First Nations and the Canadian Church”)?

And there's lots more for you to explore in this issue.

Thank you for reading. Thank you for helping to make *Faith Today* truly Canada's Christian magazine. /FT



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 Karen Stiller of Port Perry, Ont., and Bill Fledderus of Hamilton, Ont., are senior editors of *Faith Today*.


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Stop and cheer

Re: *The House That Redemption Built* (Mar/Apr 2015)

I AM glad to read about the young man who purchased the house where five people were murdered. When I first heard this story on CTV Calgary, it made me stop in my tracks and cheer. Purchasing the house and doing good works where it stands is better than demolishing it and building a memorial – this way shows evil can be redeemed by good.

Jesus said He came to heal the sick and restore the broken. We need to stop questioning people's motives when they believe they are called by God to do His work in this world. I too follow Kadin Osborne's belief that we should not be "content sitting in the pew just hoping life goes well. We don't have much time on this earth."

I too am called by Christ to do what I can for Him in this



world. If all of us took this train of thought every day, we would see more miracles and would grow more as Christians.

Dorothy King, Calgary, Alta.

Love indiscriminately

Re: *War and Peace and the Christian Way* (Jan/Feb 2015)

THE CONTEXT of Romans 13 is not about agreeing with a just war or being pacifist, it's about occupying the land by living and being the Kingdom of God now.

When Jesus saw injustice, He saw greed and indifference, and the need for reconciliation. He did not seek the government or run off into a cave. He stood in the midst of all of that and dared to challenge the status quo. His presence changed everything.

We live as Christians only to allow His presence to be lived through us, as outlined in 1 John 4. It is my contention that we as Christians are wrongly using our doctrines and our thinking as excuses to not love our enemies.

This is the message that God has given to the world, that in Christ His Son we are to be light and salt because He is within us to touch the world through us with His presence. We simply love indiscriminately and leave the results with Jesus. When people slap us around, we don't retaliate because the Kingdom of God is greater than the flesh.

Whether we're successful or failures on the human level has nothing to do with it. We are simply to follow Him. The results are left up to Him. The infinite Christ within us is able to do exceedingly above all that we are, in and of ourselves.

We must give up our anxieties, our fears and our worrying. We must be willing to step out of our comfort zone and dare to be different from the world.
Fr. André Leroux, Toronto, Ont.

Hungry for fellowship

Re: *Messy Faith* (Jan/Feb 2015)

I APPRECIATED "Why Sunday Mornings Have to Change." I find more and more people in the over-50 age bracket bored with the music and lack of fellowship. I find the contemporary music very boring (probably because I play jazz guitar). The last church service I was in, the music went on for 45 minutes where the name of

MILESTONES

APPOINTED

Michael Messenger as president and CEO of World Vision Canada, effective June 1. He will succeed Dave Toycen, who is retiring after 18 years. Messenger has been the humanitarian aid agency's executive vice-president and chief operating officer since 2010, and for three years before that was vice-president of public affairs. He holds an undergraduate degree in economics from Gordon College in Wenham, Mass., and a law degree from the University of Toronto. He practised law for nine years in Halifax, N.S.



Stephen Lennox as president of Kingswood University in Sussex, N.B. He succeeds Mark Gorveatte. Dr. Lennox is the honors professor of Bible and humanities at Indiana

Wesleyan University, where he has held many roles over 22 years including associate dean. Lennox has taught in Zambian, Jamaican and Russian Bible colleges, has studied biblical lands by travelling to Israel, Egypt, Turkey and Greece, and is a minister of The Wesleyan Church.

Ken Kim as director of disaster response and rehabilitation at World Renew, the relief and development agency for the Christian Reformed Church of North America. World Renew continues to be directed by Ida Kaastra Mutoigo. Kim served the past eight years as director of the development and relief agency of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, known as Presbyterian World Service & Development.

Ben Hoogendoorn of Abbotsford, B.C., in the newly created position of executive director of International China Concern Canada, a Christian



development organization that helps abandoned and disabled children in China. Previously Hoogendoorn served as president and CEO of FH Canada (Food for the Hungry). The founder of ICC, David Gotts, transitioned to CEO for ICC worldwide in 2013.

John Latta as lead pastor for the Burlington, Ont., site of The Meeting House, a multisite Brethren in Christ church. Latta co-founded the Canadian Youth Network, which supports youth workers, and has helped lead it with Dale Winder since 1998. Winder continues as executive director.

AWARDED

Jean Vanier, founder of L'Arche, with the 2015 Templeton Prize, a \$1.5 million award for

Jesus was not mentioned once in the songs.

My wife and I find it more and more difficult to get excited about going to church, and we sure did not used to be that way. I hope you don't take too much flack over your article. In far too many churches I am afraid the hungry sheep are looking up to be fed and it is not happening.

Gordon Edmunds, Langley, B.C.

Hour focused on God

PERHAPS WE should not just focus on the one hour a week of "worship" that we have and trying to figure out how to change it into "fellowship." Instead, we can think of how we can keep our worship services relevant and fresh, but still focus on God in terms of worship and learning to know Him better.

Donald Coleman, Melville, Sask.

Frenzied lifestyle

SHEILA WRAY Gregoire's complaint displays a common problem – she has packed her life too full, so she wants the church to accommodate her frenzied lifestyle, instead of questioning instead whether a frenzied lifestyle is compatible with Christian community.

an exceptional contribution to affirming life's spiritual dimension. L'Arche is an international network of communities where people with and without intellectual disabilities live and work together as peers. There are 29 L'Arche communities in Canada and 145 around the world. Vanier, the son of former governor general of Canada Georges Vanier, was born in Switzerland and lives in France. Past Templeton Prize winners include Mother Teresa, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor, Desmond Tutu and the Dalai Lama.

LAUNCHED

Daystar Television Canada, formerly Grace TV, a Canadian affiliate channel of the Texas-based Daystar network, is now available on Bell Fibe TV channel 632 and on Bell Satellite TV channel 650.

When my kids tell me they're bored of anything, my response is that God gave them a mind and there is never an excuse to be bored. If Sheila isn't getting anything

from the sermon, perhaps she needs to use that Bible app to do additional study on the topic the pastor is preaching on!

Jai Reid, Pickering, Ont.



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KINGDOM MATTERS

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

Teen Challenge in Quebec changes lives — and diets

One million pounds of vegetables makes a difference to everyone

THERE MAY BE a thousand Teen Challenge units across the world, but Teen Challenge Quebec (Défi Jeunesse Québec, DJQ) may be the only one to produce a million pounds of vegetables a year.

Teen Challenge, a worldwide network of faith-based programs for young adults struggling with substance abuse, opened its Quebec chapter in 1986 in the rural municipality of Lotbinière. In 2011, Défi Jeunesse Québec altered its mandate to become a training and spiritual resource centre for young men in need, emphasizing growth, healing and personal development.

"The students of the DJQ residential program come from a diversity of backgrounds, dealing with anything from personal loss, addiction, mourning or bankruptcy," says Ronald Lussier, the centre's director general. "We are here for those seeking to grow." It is a refuge from the storm, he says, but never an escape. "We create the environment, but the kids are the artisans of their own healing, through the help of the Holy Spirit."



PHOTO: DÉFI JEUNESSE QUÉBEC



Each year, DJQ's Dedicated Harvesters supply one million pounds of vegetables yearly to Québec food banks.

Environment is the key word. Through a DJQ initiative called the Dedicated Harvesters, the young men farm up to 12 acres of land over 14 months, harvesting enough produce to supply 12 food banks across the province of Quebec. "We take Christ's words very seriously when He said to provide for the orphan and the widow," says Lussier. "A million pounds of vegetables, grown right here on our land, goes to feed the province's most needy."

The recipients of home-grown vegetables aren't the only winners of the Dedicated Harvesters. The students who work the land are given an opportunity to learn useful skills and see the fruits of their labour, quite literally, which goes a long way to building up their self-worth, says Lussier.

The organization benefits from a support network that includes 1,500 volunteers across the province who help with the harvest every fall. A local truck driving school provides drivers in training to deliver the produce to the food banks, and L'Oeuvre Léger, a Roman Catholic foundation, is among the organization's biggest funders. "In the mornings the guys attend high school classes, attend Bible studies or see a counsellor. In the afternoons they hit the fields."

When asked about the vision for the future, Lussier has no lack of imagination. "We may be in existence since 1986, but really, we've just been born. In 20 years, Teen Challenges across the world will be influenced by what the Dedicated Harvesters are doing in Quebec." **—JENNA SMITH**

30%

PERCENTAGE OF CANADIANS WHO SAY THEY ARE INCLINED TO EMBRACE RELIGION (ANGUS REID POLL, 2015)

79%

PERCENTAGE OF CANADIANS WHO EMBRACE RELIGION WHO SAY THEY FEEL STRENGTHENED BY THEIR FAITH (ANGUS REID POLL, 2015)

Inspiring ideas from Canadian churches



Helping immigrants stay in Canada

Dalmeny Bible Church in Dalmeny, Sask., is helping a local immigrant family stay in Canada and work toward citizenship. The church has given the husband and wife the opportunity to use their ministry training on staff at the church. The decision meant a substantial budget increase. With the church's support, the couple are now able to remain in Canada for several more years as they work toward citizenship. www.dalmenybiblechurch.ca



Free Mandarin lessons

On top of three Sunday worship services, Winnipeg Chinese Alliance Church offers free Mandarin lessons to the community. The church, which holds services in Mandarin, Cantonese and English, felt their diverse language skills provided an ideal tool to reach unchurched people in their area, particularly business leaders. After successfully piloting the idea in 2014, the church is now running three weekly classes, which start immediately after their English service. www.christianweek.org



A different picture of worship

Ottawa's Ecclesix Church gives their worship services an artistic touch. Worship not only involves singing, but members sit to sketch in the church's journals, dance, write poetry, and are provided easels for painting. The vision is both to reach people who don't fit the typical church mould and help people engage God more honestly through raw creativity. www.ecclesix.com



Seminar inspires church green audit

St. John's Anglican Church in Crapaud, P.E.I., hosted an information session on how to "green your church," inviting participation from churches across Prince Edward Island. The seminar focused on "simple ways churches can save energy and money," explains reverend Margaret Collins. After hosting the event, the congregation did a green audit of their church and have made a number of upgrades, from installing low-flush toilets to switching to paper coffee cups and fair trade coffee. www.anglicanchurchcrapaud.com

—CRAIG MACARTNEY



Working together to face challenges

Rather than closing their doors when facing low attendance and an unfinished building project, Northside Church in Mission, B.C., decided to ask the much larger nearby Northview Community Church to take over. After an extended time of prayer and discussion, Northview agreed and planted a satellite church on the former Northside campus in late February. They are currently building momentum and exploring ways to reach out to a new housing development in the area. www.northview.org



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Research project focuses on clergy wellness

Calling clergy for a project on being well

CONVERSATIONS OVER SEVERAL years with clergy and the pastoral teams who support them led Wanda Malcolm to devise the Wycliffe Wellness Project (www.wycliffewellnessproject.com). Launched in July 2014, the project aims to understand what gives clergy the most stress – and the most satisfaction.

"In interviews with clergy about what they found most stressful about ministry life, they could easily describe ministry's greatest stressors," says Malcolm, a clinical psychologist and professor of pastoral psychology at Toronto's Wycliffe College. Clergy often report that "the more satisfying something can be, the more stressful it is if it doesn't go well," she says.

Malcolm likens the survey to a kind of "vocational wellness checkup" that's completely confidential. It's also not the most common research method, since the project will unfold over a period of ten or more years. "People's experience changes over time. Even at the best of times you only get a snapshot, so participating several times will give a series of snapshots."

Survey participation is voluntary, and clergy can opt out at any time, but Malcolm hopes the information clergy receive about their vocation along with the confidential postsurvey conversation will encourage them

to continue participating.

Malcolm is still looking for participants who should be either active in a church or working as chaplains in schools, prisons, hospitals or the military. They must complete a set of questionnaires. Afterward, participants are invited to have a conversation with one of the research team to discuss what the results mean.



Wanda Malcolm heads the Wycliffe Wellness Project.

It's not possible to nail down one thing that causes stress, Malcolm says. "Personality is part of it, but doesn't capture it completely. You could be even-keeled and get a really tough parish and the experience could be desperately stressful."

Malcolm hopes the research will help in a number of ways – insight and encouragement for clergy themselves, plus invaluable research to pass on to students preparing for ministry life. Once sufficient data are collected to produce a statistical analysis, the results will help point the way to best support clergy wellness.

But Malcolm says the real value is sharing feedback with individual clergy and seeing the light come on. In the conversations she's had so far, "Participants find it easy to see which area to zoom in on ... to focus on making a difference ... and to think how they might engage in the satisfying things more often, those things that nurture their well-being as a person."

—ALEX NEWMAN

Broken Walls lives up to its band name

Unique First Nations band has beautiful mission

THE PRIMARY MINISTRY of the three-member Christian band Broken Walls (www.brokenwalls.com) is to break down the walls between the First Nations people of Canada and non-Aboriginal people. The band, based in Tyendinaga Territory in Ontario, has toured the world, combining the distinct sounds of Native American rattles, a pow wow drum and Mohawk wind flute with contemporary instruments.

While they love to play their music for an audience, connecting with community members and building relationships is a top priority. With nine albums under their belts, Broken Walls is gaining a reputation of great respect among Aboriginal people across North America and around the world.

"I go in and figure out the [local] customs, and in general speak to the church population and make them aware of the issues," says Jonathan Maracle, the band's founder and lead vocalist. "Broken Walls is a tool to help build relationships."

The band has done several two-week trips to isolated communities in Alaska. "We sleep on the floors of gymnasiums and present our suicide prevention workshops," says Maracle, who believes building relationships and visiting the same communities over and over is crucial to this kind of ministry. "There's no microwave solution. We have to be in it for the long term, for the next generation and the generation to follow."

—LISA HALL-WILSON



63%

PERCENTAGE OF CANADIANS WHO REJECT RELIGION WHO SAY THEY ARE UNCOMFORTABLE AROUND PEOPLE WHO ARE RELIGIOUSLY DEVOUT (ANGUS REID POLL, 2015)



Christian Horizons, Humber College cook up a unique culinary program

Program shows how faith-based organizations can work with colleges

THE FIRST STUDENTS will graduate in June from a unique culinary program created through a partnership between Christian Horizons (www.christian-horizons.org), an organization that empowers individuals with exceptional needs, and Humber College, a polytechnic college in Toronto.

Irene Moore, Christian Horizons area manager, came up with the idea for the Culinary Skills Development and Employment program after noticing some clients had “a strong desire to be chefs, but had no access point.”

The faith-based charitable organization supports nearly 2,000 people with developmental disabilities and their families. The culinary program is the first college-level program Horizons has engaged in that provides specific skill-based career training.

Moore, with support from the dean of Humber’s School of Social & Community Services, approached Humber’s School of Hospitality, Recreation & Tourism in October 2012. A trial of one-week courses took place in February and July 2013. Their success led to a nine-month course that started in September 2014. Students graduated in early June, receiving a culinary certificate.

“We were scared going in,” says Moore. “People were going to be using sharp knives, but by the end of the week, nobody had been injured. They were taught the correct skills, learned to make soups from scratch and full breakfasts.”

The program runs Tuesday to Saturday. On Tuesdays Christian Horizons staff work with the students teaching “soft skills” like work ethics, interview skills and safety certification. Work placements take place Wednesday to Friday in restaurants like Moxie’s, Montana’s and the Pickle Barrel. On Saturdays students attend kitchen labs at Humber to learn technical skills.

“The restaurants have been amazing, treating this like any other student placement and holding the students accountable to the same standards,” says Moore. “Students are given a little more patience and time. Managers make sure the student understands what’s expected.”

Student Scott MacHattie, via email, says the program gives him a “real sense of purpose and accomplishment,” and he “looks forward to employment in the culinary field.” His father Ross notes the “program is a game changer for these adults.” —**ROBERT WHITE**

2,770

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF HOMELESS PEOPLE LIVING IN VANCOUVER (2014 METRO VANCOUVER HOMELESS COUNT)



SHOEme staff volunteers at the Union Gospel Mission.

Vancouver’s homeless receive shoes

THIS PAST Valentine’s Day in Vancouver may have been drab and rainy, but inside Union Gospel Mission’s (UGM) Downtown Eastside location, the excitement and good feelings beat the weather. For the second year, the Vancouver-based online start-up shoe store SHOEme donated 200 pairs of brand new shoes and socks to those struggling with poverty, homelessness and addiction.

“Wherever we have our company we want to impact that community. Because we employ people in Toronto and Vancouver we’re looking to do this annually. The impact on the community is just outstanding, which is why it was such a success,” says SHOEme’s co-founder and chief revenue officer Sean Clark.

Making the donations on Valentine’s Day was symbolism at its best. “For us, Valentine’s Day is a day where you show appreciation to your loved ones. We wanted to show that love and support to a community that we know we don’t reach, but would be the most impacted by the generosity,” Clark explains.

With many of SHOEme’s staff, including Clark, having volunteered at UGM in the past, the partnership was a natural choice. Matt Hislop, a chaplain on UGM’s outreach team, says the day was significant for a group of people whose main transportation is walking. The day also doubled as a shoe exchange, allowing those whose shoes could be reused to donate them to UGM’s clothing room, continuing the cycle of giving.

Approximately 180 men and 20 women from Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside came in from the rain to receive new shoes. “There’s recognition within the medical community right now for the need for foot soaking and foot care because a lot of diseases and illnesses can develop by coming up through the feet. I’ve had to pull the socks off some of our guests and the sock actually gets attached to the skin,” says Hislop.

UGM outreach worker Mike Jobin says the impact of the donation has been huge. “It’s been over two weeks now and they’re still coming in and saying, ‘Thank you so much.’” —**JULIE FITZ-GERALD**

NOTE WORTHY

IMMIGRATION BOOSTING CANADIAN CHURCH

In a recent *Maclean's* article, sociologist Reg Bibby says, "The thing that pumps new life into religion in Canada has been this mammoth entrance not only of Muslims, but also Catholics." According to a new poll by the Angus Reid Institute, 30 per cent of Canadians embrace religion. www.macleans.ca

RYERSON PRO-LIFE CLUB BANNED

Ryerson University's Student Union unanimously voted to ban the Ryerson for Life club, saying they oppose groups that "promote misogynist views ... and justifies [sic] sexual assault." The pro-life group hoped to engage in dialogue and advocacy regarding euthanasia and abortion, as well as help connect Ryerson students with crisis pregnancy centres and other support resources. www.sflryerson.ncln.ca

THE SHACK: THE MOVIE

Canadian author W. Paul Young's bestselling novel *The Shack* is now being made into a movie directed by Forrest Whittaker. Young first self-published his book about pain and redemption in 2007. The book has since sold 18 million copies. The controversial story features an African American woman in the role of God the Father, an Asian woman as the Holy Spirit and a young carpenter as Jesus. www.csmonitor.com

UKRAINE OPENING TO GOSPEL

A poll of 1,501 Ukrainians identified the Church as the most trusted institution among respondents. Sixty-two per cent of those surveyed indicated they trust the Church, while almost one in four respondents indicated distrust. Christian aid organizations have stated repeatedly that the Ukrainian population has become increasingly receptive to the gospel as the conflict there has worsened. www.crossmap.com



IS JUSTIN BIEBER BECOMING MORE SERIOUS ABOUT FAITH?

Numerous reports have surfaced indicating Justin Bieber's public apologies are part of a return to his Christian faith. Bieber has been seen attending services at Hillsong's L.A. and New York campuses, and was reportedly baptized by Hillsong pastor Carl Lentz over the summer. www.christianitytoday.com

CHINA'S ONE-CHILD ENFORCERS TRY SOFTER APPROACH

China's notorious National Health and Family Planning Commission is piloting the idea of using "family-planning officials" to help teach parenting skills. Although the program is small, with only 69 workers assigned to the pilot, officials say it could overhaul the commission's role. The project was sparked in part by recent international outcries over the commission's infamous use of forced abortions to enforce China's one-child policy. www.economist.com

CHRISTIAN MEDIA HAS DIVERSE CONSUMER BASE

According to a recent study released at the 2015 National Religious Broadcasters Convention, almost one-third of people who consume Christian media are unchurched. Among its findings, the study of 3,261 Americans noted that 40 per cent of respondents had seen a Christian movie in the past year, including 11 per cent of respondents with no religious affiliation. www.christianitytoday.com

—CRAIG MACARTNEY

Bible college changes lives in Canora

THE KEY FIRST Nation Reserve near Canora, Sask., is much different today than it was 15 years ago when First Nations pastors Allan and Carole O'Soup returned to the area and established Almond Tree Ministries (www.almondtreeministries.com).

"God placed a vision in our hearts to start a training centre to make disciples, and so we came back to my reservation and leased land alongside it. This is where we started our church, Bible college and Christian school," explains Allan.



Allan and Carole O'Soup

Almond Tree Christian Academy is Carole's passion and operates on an Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) program, a curriculum that allows students to work at their own

pace. With 20 students enrolled from kindergarten to Grade 12, the school has become a source of refuge and stability for many of the children. "I saw how Christian education changed our two boys and made them successful," Carole says. "Many children around here had a lot of problems, and it was one way of reaching the young people and teaching them godly principles."

Eight years ago Allan and Carole took their vision further, launching Almond Tree Ministries Bible Institute (ATMBI). It offers courses in three-week blocks on the Pentateuch, Acts, Hebrews, Romans, the Holy Spirit, counselling and healing. The courses are accepted for credit by Faith Alive Bible College in Saskatoon, an accredited Bible school. Allan says many students complete ATMBI's two-year diploma program before going on to earn their degrees.

Roxanne Brass and Jamie Desjarlais, both ATMBI graduates and ordained ministers, had very different lives prior to the planting of Almond Tree Ministries. With addictions leading them down paths of self-destruction, they became Christians and now help dozens of others in similar situations.

Sid Keshane — an ATMBI graduate, outreach pastor and addiction counsellor with Almond Tree Ministries — was an abusive husband addicted to drugs and alcohol. He spent six months in Regina Provincial Correctional Centre, one of the many jails where Allan does prison ministry, before becoming a Christian and transforming his life. These are just a few examples of the positive change occurring, say the O'Soups. —JULIE FITZ-GERALD

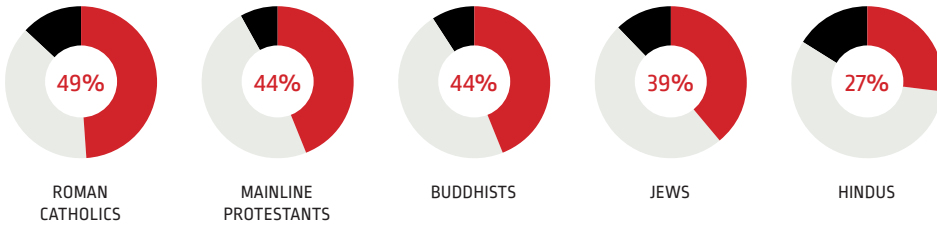


Visit www.faithtoday.ca/KingdomMatters for more. Have a story to share? editor@faithtoday.ca

How Canadians view religion

A new Angus Reid Institute study asked Canadians how they feel – positive, neutral or negative – about 10 different religious groups

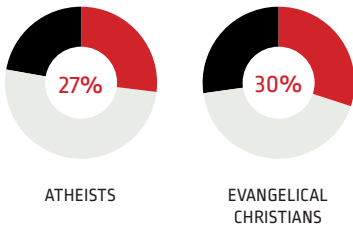
TOP FIVE RELIGIONS VIEWED MOST POSITIVELY BY CANADIANS



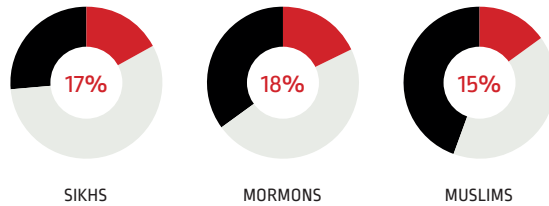
29%

OF CANADIANS HAVE A HIGH LEVEL OF CONFIDENCE IN RELIGIOUS LEADERS

THE POLARIZING MIDDLE



NET NEGATIVE PUBLIC IMAGE

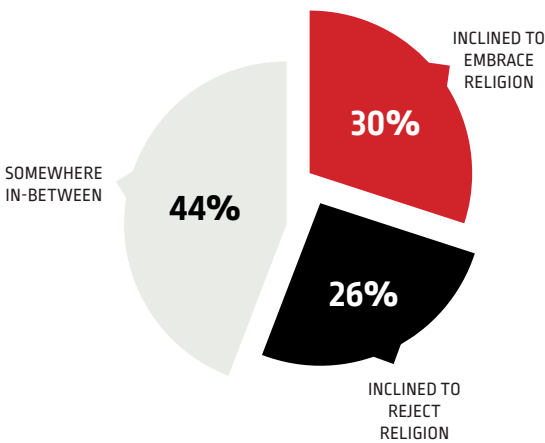


75%

OF CANADIANS THINK POPE FRANCIS IS HAVING A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE WORLD



RELIGION WHERE WOULD YOU LOCATE YOURSELF?



35%

OF PEOPLE BORN OUTSIDE CANADA ARE LIKELY TO ATTEND RELIGIOUS SERVICES

v. 21%

OF PEOPLE BORN INSIDE CANADA

1/3

OF RELIGIOUSLY AMBIVALENT CANADIANS WANT TO HAVE A RELIGIOUS FUNERAL WHEN THEY DIE

12%

PERCENTAGE OF CANADIANS WHO THINK CHRISTIANITY IS MORE LIKELY THAN OTHER RELIGIONS TO ENCOURAGE VIOLENCE

51%

PERCENTAGE OF CANADIANS WHO THINK ISLAM IS MORE LIKELY THAN OTHER RELIGIONS TO ENCOURAGE VIOLENCE



73%

PERCENTAGE OF CANADIANS WHO AGREE THE TEN COMMANDMENTS STILL APPLY TODAY

51%

PERCENTAGE OF CANADIANS WHO THINK WHAT IS RIGHT OR WRONG IS A MATTER OF PERSONAL OPINION



SOURCE: ONLINE SURVEY OF 3,041 CANADIAN ADULTS CONDUCTED IN MARCH 2015 BY THE ANGUS REID INSTITUTE



THE GATHERING PLACE

BRUCE J. CLEMENGER

Advancing religious freedom

Several recent court cases are clarifying the scope of our religious freedom

It's been a busy year so far for religious freedom issues at Canadian courts, including two decisions by the Supreme Court of Canada. Each of these court decisions gives more definition to how the courts understand religious freedom and the intersection of religion and public life. Two focused specifically on the freedoms of religious communities and the important role communities play in the expression of religion.

The Supreme Court of Nova Scotia strongly affirmed the freedom of religious organizations to maintain their religious identity and serve the public good in its

judgment on the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society policy to refuse any law students with degrees from Trinity Western University's (TWU) proposed law school.

The Barristers' Society objects to TWU's Community Covenant, which sets out what it means to work and study in this Christian educational community. TWU students are asked to adhere to a code of behaviour in keeping with the religious vision of life that animates the university. The covenant prohibits sexual intimacy outside of marriage between a man and a woman. Harassment, bullying and disrespectful behaviour for any

reason, including sexual orientation, also violate the covenant.

The judge in the case noted there was no evidence TWU graduates would not be properly qualified to practise law, nor that they would be more likely to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation than graduates of other law schools. The TWU Covenant breaks no laws or human rights legislation in B.C., and the judge concluded that learning in a Christian environment is an expression of religious freedom. "Requiring a person to give up that right in order to get his or her professional education recognized is an infringement of religious freedom."

The judge concluded that learning in a Christian environment is an expression of religious freedom.

News FROM THE EFC

Saguenay case decided

A Supreme Court decision in April in the *Saguenay* case considered the place for religious observance in state-sponsored events and gatherings. Details, including an introduction to the

case in everyday language by EFC President Bruce J. Clemenger, at www.theEFC.ca/Saguenay.

Religious freedom affirmed in Loyola case

A Supreme Court decision in March in the *Loyola High School* case is good news for faith-based schools and also churches and other religious ministries. The case, including a legal intervention by the EFC, considered whether private religious schools can be compelled to teach a provincial religion and ethics curriculum from a nonreligious perspective. The result is a "strong affirmation of religious freedom," says EFC President Bruce J. Clemenger. Read his thoughts on what it all means for Canadian Christians at www.theEFC.ca/LoyolaCommentary.

Doctors' freedom of conscience to go to court

Please pray for the Christian Medical and Dental Society, an EFC affiliate ministry organization, which announced in March it is going to court to defend the conscience rights of medical professionals. Details at www.cmdscanada.org.

Freedom of conscience is being challenged by medical bodies in Saskatchewan and Ontario, which have developed policies that require doctors to provide referrals, and in some situations undertake procedures, that might violate their conscience and/or religious beliefs.

The EFC argues that doctors who don't offer certain procedures are not discriminating as long as all patients are treated the same.

Responding to changes in sex education

Ontario released its new Health and Physical Education curriculum in February, which outlines a new sexual education component for the province's public and Catholic schools, to be implemented in September. The EFC offers a webpage of advice, sample letters and other resources on this issue at www.theEFC.ca/OntarioPE2015.

EFC denominational leaders meet

Leaders of EFC affiliate denominations (www.theEFC.ca/denominations) met in April. These peer-led meetings, which include EFC President Bruce J. Clemenger, are held twice a year to discuss common concerns and make time to pray together.



The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada

Find out about news stories like these and more at www.theEFC.ca/socialissues.

Learn how to take action on the issues you care about at www.theEFC.ca/takeaction.

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

The judge also said government or quasi-government bodies such as law societies cannot coerce private institutions to conform to the beliefs of others about sexuality and marriage. He said the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* cannot be used as a “tool in the hands of the state to enforce moral conformity with approved values.” It is not the role of the government, he said, “to create a moral melting pot.”

This court decision affirms that at the heart of a secular society is the freedom of religious communities to exist and flourish, to self-define their own character and ethos. Doing so is a form of religious expression.

This principle of respect for religious communities is echoed in the Supreme Court of Canada’s recent *Loyola* decision that found it was wrong for Quebec to require

a Catholic high school to teach parts of Quebec’s curriculum on religion and ethics from a secular perspective.

The Court said a secular state “does not – and cannot – interfere with the beliefs or practices of a religious group unless they conflict with or harm overriding public interests.” The majority also said: “A secular state respects religious differences . . . does not seek to extinguish them” and “affirms and recognizes the religious freedom of individuals and their communities.”


A secular society, the way the courts are interpreting it, respects and accommodates religious differences. In this understanding, being secular means being nonsectarian. It is a way of managing religious diversity while being guided by public principles that all can affirm

In the cases of TWU and Loyola, the court found government bodies were imposing secularism on Christian institutions.

from their respective set of beliefs.

Government bodies violate their mandate when they require religious communities to be themselves secular and adopt secular values. In the cases of TWU and Loyola, the court found government bodies were imposing secularism on Christian institutions.

The EFC intervened in both these cases, and going forward it will be important for groups to continue to be active in the courts and promote religious freedom, especially as our society becomes increasingly secular. In the meantime, the recognition of the important role religious communities play in the lives of people of faith is good news. /FT

 Bruce J. Clemenger is president of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. Please pray for our work. You can follow us on Twitter @theEFC and support us financially at www.theEFC.ca/donate or toll-free 1-866-302-3362.

Webinar series launches

EFC webinars are short midday meetings that anyone can connect to via computer, telephone or mobile device. Learn about crucial issues in a short interview with an expert, then contribute to a live question-and-answer session. The EFC’s April webinar featured EFC President Bruce J. Clemenger discussing the topic of euthanasia. See www.theEFC.ca/webinars.

Spring calendar

National Forum for Leaders in

Christian Higher Education,

May 25–27, Winnipeg

Ontario Prayer Breakfast,

June 3, Toronto

Christian Medical and Dental

Society National Conference,

June 11–14, Calgary

Write Canada, June 11–13, Toronto

www.theEFC.ca/calendar

Meet the EFC Board: Larry Wilson

Over the past few issues, *Faith Today* has been introducing members of the board of directors of our publisher, The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (listed at www.theEFC.ca/board). We continue with Larry Wilson, director of First Nations Alliance Churches in Canada, a network of Aboriginal churches associated with the Christian & Missionary Alliance.

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

LW: I was invited to do so and felt that it would be a great opportunity to serve God and the evangelical community at large by participating in a leadership role. Also, as an Aboriginal, I feel First Nations people need

to engage at the leadership level so our voice can be heard. Non-Aboriginal people need to hear our perspective on things, and need to be encouraged and challenged by our values.

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

LW: The EFC’s very existence has a powerful impact on our nation and the world. The EFC gives Christian communities and individuals opportunity to make their concerns and voices known in places where they cannot go.

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

LW: The decline of Judeo-Christian values caused by greed, selfishness, and a growing



Larry Wilson says the EFC gives Christian communities and individuals opportunity to make their concerns and voices known.

ignorance and rejection of biblical truth. Multiculturalism not only brings people together, but creates a broader spectrum of beliefs that are not biblical.

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

Leading from a place of humility

David Hearn is president of the Christian & Missionary Alliance in Canada, a movement of churches seeking to be “transformed by Christ, transforming Canada and the world.”

■ **What is the mission that drives the Alliance?**

We’d sum it up in three phrases – a Christ-centred, spirit-empowered and mission-focused movement. That catch line echoes the heart of the founder of the Christian & Missionary Alliance.

■ **How do you view the Alliance within the fabric of the Canadian Christian community?**

I think that we are a denomination able to bring partners together. We work well with a number of denominations on some common things we believe make a difference in the world, like our missionary work taking the Good News to least-reached people groups. The Alliance is also very concerned about justice and compassion. In Canada we would be catalytic for Defend Dignity, which has really been working with others in the area of human trafficking. We also work on immigration issues. We bring people together and move some of those significant causes forward.

■ **When you think of Canadian Christianity as a whole, what is your prognosis?**

I think God graciously drives denominations and their leaders to desperation. We meet now more than ever as denominational leaders in Canada because we’re all looking at the same reality of



ALLIANCE CHURCHES
IN CANADA



churches declining in Canada. It’s helping us break down denominational barriers.

In the Maritimes we co-hired a church planter with the Mennonite Brethren. We don’t care what flag they carry. We are concerned with the Church growing and developing. God-given desperation drives us to more profound unity. What I hear and see in our churches is that when you accept a model of business as usual, you get usual business. People are not satisfied with usual business. The exodus of our 20-somethings is pushing this. They aren’t disillusioned with Christ – they are disillusioned with what they see as the stagnant nature of our Church.

■ **How do you take care of yourself in the midst of such a busy job?**

I take that really seriously. I remember in a quiet moment with God, looking into a mirror, and saying, “What have I done?” I re-

mind myself every day that the denomination doesn’t need me, it needs God. He is the vine, and my role is to be a faithful branch. I make sure I’m taking time to be still. I go away on retreats. Silent retreats are painful for me, but they breathe life into my soul.

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

Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership: Seeking God in the Crucible of Ministry by Ruth Haley Barton (IVP Books, 2008).

■ **What is your best leadership advice?**

Leading from a place of humility, a place of a surrendered life, is really the best kind of leadership you can offer. Take the things of God extremely seriously and live in a posture of not becoming overly enamoured of your own stuff. /FT

➤ The Christian & Missionary Alliance (www.cmacan.org) is a denominational affiliate of the EFC (www.theEFC.ca/Affiliates). Find more Q&As at www.faithtoday.ca/QandA

Pro-life campus groups

There are approximately 35 pro-life groups on university campuses across Canada. Many of them struggle to survive in a hostile environment. What is the problem?

In early March of this year, Go Life, the pro-life group at Edmonton's University of Alberta, planned a pro-life event. It did not go well. An angry group of 50 or so students confronted the pro-life students and "forcibly shut down a pro-life display through obstruction and destruction," explains John Carpay of the Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms (JCCF).

In 2010, The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada published *Pro-Life Clubs and the Law*, a guide for groups facing discriminatory action. "Across Canada's university campuses, pro-life clubs are being censored and discriminated against by universities and student unions. Often, the clubs will be denied official club status and thus stripped of funding and access to facilities, or in extreme cases, club members will face disciplinary hearings," says the report.

"It continues to be an issue," says Rebecca Richmond, executive director of National Campus Life Network (NCLN), a loose umbrella organization of campus pro-life groups across Canada. "It's really become a situation of bullying on campus. It does make things challenging."

Sometimes, says Richmond, these challenges provide a greater opportunity to raise awareness.

"We've seen more people come across to the pro-life message when they don't see a group give up."

Carpay believes what pro-life groups on campus are actually fighting is a fundamental shift in understanding what free speech means.

"What I hear frequently today is, 'You can't say that. You should not be able to say that because it's hurtful and offensive,'" says Carpay. "They really are of the view that they are entitled to shut down speech that they disagree with."

But, "There are so many campuses that don't have problems," reminds Richmond. And NCLN believes that there is nowhere more important than on a university campus for the pro-life message to be heard.

"We want to reach women who are vulnerable to abortion. That is the university demographic. These are also the future leaders of our country. Most of them haven't engaged on the abortion issue before. It's an uncomfortable issue especially when many of them have personal connections to it," says Richmond.

"We've had people say they've never heard the pro-life message before seeing our information. They really have never fully considered the abortion issue." /FT

35+

NUMBER OF CAMPUS PRO-LIFE GROUPS ACROSS CANADA (NCLN)

94

NUMBER OF ABORTION FACILITIES IN CANADA (WWW.GLOBALNEWS.CA)

MID-20s

MEDIAN AGE OF CANADIAN WOMEN WHO HAVE ABORTIONS (WWW.CART-GRAC.UBC.CA)

"We are not a religious organization. We defend Charter freedoms. The people whose Charter freedoms are being violated the most frequently are more often than not pro-lifers or Christians."

—JOHN CARPAY, Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms

"We've had people say they've never heard the pro-life message before seeing our information."

—REBECCA RICHMOND, National Campus Life Network

What can you do . . .

Visit www.ncln.ca to find out more about the pro-life movement in Canadian universities and high schools. The site includes links to groups, news and resources. If you live in a city with a university, find out if they have a pro-life group. See if you can support them in practical ways. For more about the abortion situation in Canada, visit www.theEFC.ca/SocialIssues.

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



Tragedy and heroism in Halifax

The Christian community rallied when disaster struck

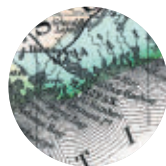
Just before 9:05 a.m. on the morning of December 6, 1917, the largest man-made explosion up to that point in history tore through Halifax. The *Mont-Blanc*, a French munitions ship packed with explosives, caught fire after a collision in the harbour and ran aground at Pier 6. Within minutes, 2.5 km² of the city had been flattened by the blast and the ensuing tsunami. Part of the *Mont-Blanc*'s anchor, weighing 450 kg, was thrown through the air and landed over 3 km away.

The tragedy was the result of a series of mistakes and miscommunications between the *Mont-Blanc*, entering the harbour, and a departing Norwegian ship, the *Imo*. Halifax was a busy wartime port. The safe passage of ships into and out of the harbour was governed by careful protocols, but somehow the *Imo* collided with the *Mont-Blanc* causing the fire that triggered the catastrophic explosion. Final responsibility for the collision was hotly disputed for years in the courts, though it seems both ships made serious errors in navigational judgment.

The consequences were severe. More than 1,600 people were killed in the initial explosion, with the total death toll eventually reaching closer to 2,000. Another 9,000 or so were injured, many seriously. The explosion rendered 6,000 Halifaxians homeless and left another 25,000 – about half the city's population – without proper shelter.

An enormous relief effort ensued. Firefighters, together with nearby survivors including railway workers, were among the first to help. Troops stationed in the city were initially

Train dispatcher Vince Coleman consciously forfeited his chance to escape danger by staying behind to warn approaching trains to stay out of the city.



50,000

HALIFAX'S
POPULATION IN 1917
(WWW.CBC.CA)

sent to defensive positions due to confusion about the source of the explosion – many feared a German attack – but as the true cause of the disaster became clear, they soon contributed to the work. British and American naval vessels, some of which had heard the blast from sea, arrived within hours.

Over the following days, the need for shelter, medical personnel and supplies became pressing. These needs were largely met by help from surrounding communities, which sent trains loaded with supplies and personnel to set up emergency shelters and makeshift hospitals. The people of Boston and the state of Massachusetts distinguished themselves by sending a relief train under the leadership of A.C. “Cap” Ratschky of the Massachusetts Public Safety Committee. This train braved a snowstorm and other obstacles before arriving with invaluable support for the exhausted doctors, nurses and other workers labouring in the rubble.


The churches in the affected area were hard hit. Kaye Street Methodist lost 167 people; Grove Presbyterian, 170; St. Mark's Anglican, 200; and worst of all, St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church and the attached school lost 494 parishioners and students. In the following days and hours the surviving clergy of the city were stretched to the limit comforting the dying and performing funerals. Churches such as Grafton Methodist were involved in sheltering the wounded and homeless from the winter snows and serving them hot bowls of soup.

Many of the dead could not be identified or went unclaimed, ne-

cessitating a large multid denominational funeral service for them on December 17. More accurately, there were two services – a Protestant one led by ministers from the Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian and Salvation Army churches, immediately followed by a Catholic service. Whatever their denomination, the 3,000 mourners in attendance were united in their grief and prayers as they sang, “O God, Our Help in Ages Past” and “Abide With Me.”

Many of the responses to the disaster serve as examples of the self-sacrificial love to which we aspire as Christians. Writer Laura MacDonald, for example, recounts a story of nuns, who despite being covered in blood and no doubt in a state of shock themselves, were directing terrified schoolchildren to safety. In a more well-known example (commemorated in a short “Heritage Minute” film), train dispatcher Vince Coleman consciously forfeited his chance to escape danger by staying behind to warn approaching trains to stay out of the city. His last message, typed out in Morse code, concluded, “Guess this will be my last message. Good-bye boys.”

Where was God in the Halifax disaster? In the heroism of people like Coleman, and in the less dramatic but nevertheless important contributions made by those nuns, “Cap” Ratschky and others, we catch a glimpse of the kind of response He looks for from us. /FT

 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.



MESSY FAITH

SHEILA WRAY GREGOIRE

The Christian case for vaccination

To vaccinate or not has become a surprising debate

Not a Mother's Day goes by that I don't think of September 4, 1996 – the day my son passed away from a congenital heart defect. Yet during that horrendous time, I remember feeling grateful that at least he was being cared for at the world-class Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto. What if we had lived in a country where quality health care wasn't readily available? I would have been so desperate.

In May and June we celebrate motherhood and fatherhood, and this year I'd ask all of us to think about those parents worldwide who are desperate over the health of their children. Tragically that desperation often revolves around preventable diseases. While we in Canada have the luxury of debating whether or not to vaccinate our kids, approximately 145,700 people, mostly young children, are dying annually worldwide from measles alone.

Vaccination isn't primarily a scientific debate. No one argues that vaccines don't prevent disease. People argue there is a small chance vaccines could have negative effects, including autism. The study linking autism to vaccines has been debunked, but it is true that some people can have a severe reaction to childhood vaccines – at the rate of one in a million.

Let's consider this as another kind of question – Is it morally right for Christians to leave their children unvaccinated? I don't think so. I believe it is elevating their children's welfare ahead of others. I can't see anything Christian about that.



When we refuse to accept a tiny risk on behalf of our children to prevent a much greater risk to others, I'm afraid we violate the gospel.

In pockets of the United States where many parents forego needles, a measles outbreak earlier this year eventually infected 146 people in seven states. And what about the immunocompromised? Unvaccinated children put at risk babies who haven't received the vaccine, and also those in their classrooms and playgrounds who are already fighting serious diseases like cancer.

What about the health of those in the developing world where access to vaccines isn't guaranteed? Or where war or economic chaos could easily disrupt a once successful vaccination program?

We will never be able to eradicate these diseases unless *everyone* is vaccinated. These diseases can't

survive without a host – but as long as hosts are available, the diseases will still spread. If there were another outbreak, who would suffer the most? It wouldn't be those of us in North America with great hospitals and superlative medical care. It would be those in the developing world where the diseases would inevitably reach.

Those who choose not to vaccinate are deciding that the minimal risk to their children matters more than the much greater risk their unvaccinated children pose to others.

When we refuse to accept a tiny risk on behalf of our children to prevent a much greater risk to others, I'm afraid we violate the gospel. I understand being fearful for your children. But perhaps it is because I have walked where moms fear to go that I am determined to do what I can to prevent other moms from losing their kids – and that includes imploring parents to vaccinate.

I know nonvaccinating parents love their kids – and many love Jesus too. In fact, religious freedom has been argued by some Christian parents in the States as including the right not to vaccinate. As heartfelt as their reasoning goes (and it includes the arguments that parents are the primary caregivers and therefore decision makers, that vaccines are unclean and should not be put in our children's bodies, and that it is a matter of protecting our children from potential harm), I believe it is our Christian duty to vaccinate our children.

We have to accept a tiny amount of risk to the health of our own kids. It's the only way to stop these diseases from killing other people's children, once and for all. And those children matter just as much to Jesus as ours do. **/FT**

1 in 10

PARENTS WHO DELAY OR DON'T VACCINATE THEIR CHILDREN AT ALL (WWW.TIME.COM)

Sheila Wray Gregoire of Belleville, Ont., is an author and speaker. Find more of her columns at www.faithtoday.ca/MessyFaith.

PHOTO: JPC-PROD / SHUTTERSTOCK



The false gods of business

When the marketplace seems omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent

People of faith working in the business world often celebrate the incredible generative power of capitalism, and we enjoy its fruits on many levels. Yet we also need to be careful – even vigilant – because the world of business is fraught with what the Bible refers to as false gods.

These are forces that can claim our allegiance, and some are particularly strong in the marketplace.

The veneration of the market itself is certainly one. Yes, the market is a useful way to exchange goods. However, in many contexts the market has been defended as the only viable mechanism for achieving all good things.

That way of thinking ends up accepting the market as an end in itself instead of seeing it as a tool to serve others. Even Christians can find themselves thinking and talking about the market as though it had godlike attributes.

For example, how many of us think of the economy as all knowing – something that “knows what we need, what we want, how much we should pay for it, and how much we should get paid for selling to others”? (Jim Wallis, *Rediscovering Values: On Wall Street, Main Street, and Your Street*, Howard Books, 2010).

We also sometimes think and act as though the market is all powerful, able to transform any aspect of creation into commodities and achieve things we once only dreamed of.

It can seem as though the market is becoming present in all places as it is applied to more and more areas of our lives that were once well outside its realm, especially in education, family, health care and museums.

While we work in the market, we also need to resist idolizing it. Isn't it critical that we bring the market into submission to the Lord instead of finding ourselves serving the market as though it truly were omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent?

Another faith challenge specific to the business world is seeing vices treated like virtues and virtues as though they were vices.

Many of us recognize vices treated as virtues when we find

society as a whole? We act as though these are our main obligations, and we tell ourselves that's okay because our own spending benefits the economy and thus others.

This is the metaphor of the “invisible hand,” taken from the writings of economist Adam Smith, a sort of non-religious version of the idea of divine providence. It is often used to justify pursuing self-interest because of the unintended good social and economic side effects that can result.

But instead of accepting that our selfish pursuits will lead to the common good, we need to cultivate the biblical understanding of providence.

Providence is not simply a matter of God mysteriously taking care of things, but rather God inviting us and moving in us to participate in His care for all of His creation.

Theologian Scott Bader-Saye notes that as we redefine the idea of providence as the invisible hand, it becomes all too easy “not to engage in practices of generosity, not to follow the self-giving path of the cross, not to put the needs of others before one's own.” It actually diminishes “a courageous and patient life of Christian discipleship” (Scott Bader-Saye, *Following Jesus in a Culture of Fear*, Brazos Press, 2007).

This is certainly not the end to the list of gods in business, but it gives us a sense of what to be vigilant about. Business can be done in such a way as to serve and bring glory to the living God. But it means being heedful about who truly is Lord. **/FT**

Instead of accepting that our selfish pursuits will lead to the common good, we need to cultivate the biblical understanding of providence.

people assuming “greed is good.” Greed, so the thinking goes, fuels the economy, and since the economy is of ultimate importance and our success is measured by greater wealth and material goods, greed is in fact good.

But the Scriptures remind us that greed is actually idolatry – it puts something else in the place of God. Colossians 3:5–6 reminds us that we are to put to death the sinful nature, which includes greed, and that it is because of such things that the wrath of God is coming.


So greed is *not* good – and neither is the economy of ultimate importance. Nor should success be defined by the accumulation of wealth (see the Beatitudes in Matthew 5:3–12).

Virtues being treated as vices is often more subtle. How many Canadians assume the pursuit of our own interests, desires, wants, needs and greed will lead to the benefit of



THE WORLD SAYS: “YOU HAVE NEEDS – SATISFY THEM. DON'T HESITATE; INDEED, EXPAND YOUR NEEDS AND DEMAND MORE.” THIS IS THE WORLDLY DOCTRINE OF TODAY, AND THEY BELIEVE THAT THIS IS FREEDOM. THE RESULT FOR THE RICH IS ISOLATION AND SUICIDE, FOR THE POOR, ENVY AND MURDER.

– FYODOR DOSTOYEVSKY, *THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV* (1880)

 Elden Wiebe of Edmonton is dean and associate professor of management at the Leder School of Business at The King's University. Find more of these columns at www.faihttoday.ca/BusinessMatters.



IRAN CONTINUES HARSH TREATMENT OF CONVERTS

DESPITE HOPES THAT Iranian president Hassan Rouhani would soften the regime's attitude toward Christians, their treatment continues to be as harsh as it was before his election two years ago.

A British all-party parliamentary report, *The Persecution of Christians in Iran*, documents arrests, torture, imprisonment, discrimination in employment and education, appropriation of property, extortionate bail demands, and many other forms of persecution of Christians and other religious minorities in the last two years.

During his election campaign Rouhani reportedly said that "all ethnicities, all religions, even religious minorities, must feel justice." But the March 2015 report says Iran's human rights record, if anything, has gotten worse. The worst forms of persecution are reserved for those who have converted to Christianity from Islam.

The government has not granted a licence for establishing a new church organization or allowed the construction of any church building since the 1979 revolution. Church attendance is illegal for those from a Muslim background, and services may only be conducted in the minority languages of Assyrian or Armenian, not the majority Persian.

Witnesses reported raids of house churches, threats of execution and other psychological torture. Many Christians are fleeing Iran as a result. But despite the persecution, Iranians are still converting to Christianity, some in reaction to the harsh regime.

The report recommends the U.K. puts pressure on Iran, and that international Persian language media networks broadcast stories about discrimination. It also supports the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations special rapporteur on Human Rights in Iran, Ahmed Shaheed.

—WWW.CHRISTIANSINPARLIAMENT.ORG.UK



Karl deSouza of Jews for Jesus Canada shares the gospel in Paris. He's on assignment there for three years (www.jewsforjesus.ca).

KENYANS GRIEVE ATTACK

KENYANS OBSERVED a grievous Easter this year after the Maundy Thursday slaughter of 147 people at Garissa University College, 370 km northeast of Nairobi.

During a 15-hour siege, four masked Al-Shabaab terrorists separated Christians from Muslims, gunning down Christians in the chapel, study halls and dormitories. Terrified students hid in closets and dorm rooms.

One student, Gitonga Ng'ang'a, reports he hid under his bed and prayed as the gunmen entered his room. He believes God, not luck, let him escape "from the claws of the enemy."

Aiah Foday-Khabenje, general secretary of the Association of Evangelicals in Africa, condemned the attacks and pointed to how, in Easter, "We experience the mystery of evil and the miracle of triumph over evil."

Godfrey Yogarajah, executive director of the World Evangelical Alliance's Religious Liberty Commission, expressed "a loss of words. This deep sorrow should impel us to defeat terrorism in Africa, the Middle East and elsewhere."

Kenya shares a porous border with Somalia, home of Al-Shabaab. The group killed 400 Kenyans and injured more than 1,000 between 2011 and 2014, including an attack at Nairobi's Westgate Mall in 2013 which left at least 67 dead and 175 wounded.

—EURONEWS, BBC, AEA, WEA

BONHOEFFER'S LEGACY

SEVENTY YEARS AFTER his execution by the Nazis for participating in a plot to assassinate Hitler, Lutheran pastor and writer Dietrich Bonhoeffer still inspires. A new book, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Ecumenical Quest* by British historian Keith Clements (World Council of Churches, 2015), was launched in Geneva, Switzerland, this spring. Clements says Bonhoeffer's message to embrace the world's "struggles and perplexities" instead of isolating yourself still stands.

Bonhoeffer was just 39 when he was hanged. His books, especially *The Cost of Discipleship* (1937), remain popular.

—WWW.OIKOUMENE.ORG

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

Let us unite in prayer for the persecuted church, in the spirit of oneness that Christ commanded us. For, if one suffers, we all suffer.

—*Godfrey Yogarajah, executive director of the Religious Liberty Commission, World Evangelical Alliance*
WWW.WORLDEA.ORG



Do you believe it?

Truth and partial truth have consequences

Guess what these five statements have in common: (1) On December 14, 2012, there was a massacre at the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut. (2) Neil Armstrong walked on the moon on July 20, 1969. (3) The Boston Marathon was bombed on April 15, 2013. (4) Six million Jews died in the Nazi Holocaust during the Second World War. (5) Muslims terrorists flew planes into the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001.

All five are viewed as false by various conspiracy theorists. They argue these events never happened or have been radically misinterpreted. Some say 9/11 was a U.S. government plot and the Boston Marathon bombing was a hoax, carried out by forces in the U.S. government with the help of the media elite.

All of these conspiracy theories are tied into complex webs that include religious belief. Swami Prabhupada, founder of the Hare Krishna movement, denied the moon landing because the Hindu scriptures teach that the moon is too far away from earth for Armstrong to land there. Holocaust denial is a standard part of anti-Semitic ideology, either from the extreme Christian right or from extreme Muslims. Some Republican Christians teach that events at Sandy Hook and the Boston Marathon are hoaxes designed by God-hating and gun-hating Democrats. Likewise, extremists in the Muslim world often argue that 9/11 was engineered by Jews and/or Christians to make Muslims look bad.

If this is not enough for a headache, here are five more conspiracy

theories, again based in religious theories: (1) The new pope worships Satan and will soon control the Pentecostal and charismatic movements. (2) Mormons worship Satan in their secret temples. (3) Masons worship Satan in their 33rd degree rituals. (4) Witches worship Satan in their secret coven ceremonies. (5) The Illuminati worship Satan and control the leadership of the Masons, witches, Mormons and Catholics.

I hope readers recognize the falsity of all ten theories. What complicates the matter, however, are the following realities. Some Christians do accept at least some of these wild views. Former Moncton schoolteacher Malcolm Ross advanced Holocaust denial in the name of Jesus. Ed Decker, a Christian author, promotes the view that Mormons worship Satan. I first heard the view that the Sandy Hook killings were a hoax from a group of Christian leaders. Various right-wing Christians use the Bible and prophecy to attack Pope Francis, Pentecostals and charismatics, all in a triple play doomsday scenario.

There are further complications. First, conspiracy theories cannot be refuted simply by claiming, "That's crazy, or "I saw Neil Armstrong land on the moon with my own eyes," or "Everyone knows Mormons don't worship Satan," or "History shows the Holocaust is real." On the latter, I spent hours talking with Malcolm Ross about the undeniable evidence from the Holocaust. He just got mad at me and refused to talk.

If you tell Prabhupada's followers that Armstrong landed on the moon, they will tell you that you should trust Hindu scripture over Holly-

wood fiction. If you tell extreme Muslims that 9/11 was an attack by Muslim terrorists, they will tell you Bush planned it all to get at the oil in Iraq. A Muslim cab driver in Morocco told me a couple of years ago that the U.S. government did not even use American soldiers in the Gulf War. They were Mexicans.

The whole topic of conspiracy is also messy because we all know that in our fallen world there are real cover-ups (think Edward Snowden) and real conspiracies (the CIA mind control experiments at McGill). Satan is the deceiver and he uses lies, half-truths and even full truths to blind us and seduce us.

As well, we can let partial truths lead us to dangerous conclusions. The fact that most terrorists are Muslims does not mean all Muslims are dangerous, the fact that most Mormons are wonderful people does not mean that Mormonism is true, the fact that Prabhupada was wrong about the moon landing does not mean he was wrong on everything, just like the fact that witches do not believe in Satan does not make witchcraft a great path.

Likewise, affirming that the Sandy Hook massacre was real or that the Boston Marathon bombing was real does not mean that media never distorts.

Last November I was accused of being a spy for Scientology. The totally crazy theory cost me some grief (a few ex-Scientology friends adopted the idea for a day or two) and a lot of time answering blog posts because of deep-seated paranoia in the ex-member world. What this and other conspiracy theories prove more than anything is that ideas have consequences. Given human sin and folly, we need to take care about truth. /FT


We can let partial truths lead us to dangerous conclusions.



6-28%

PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE WHO THINK THE APOLLO MOON LANDINGS WERE FAKED

ACCORDING TO POLLS OF AMERICANS (GALLUP, TIME/CNN), RUSSIANS (PUBLIC OPINION FOUNDATION) AND BRITONS (ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY MAGAZINE)

 James A. Beverley is professor of Christian thought and ethics at Tyndale Seminary in Toronto. Find more of these columns at www.faithtoday.ca/ReligionWatch.



THE EFC ENSURES YOUR VOICE IS HEARD IN OTTAWA



Bruce Clemenger, President of the EFC, with lawyer Geoffrey Trotter, at the Supreme Court of Canada for the *Carter* case on euthanasia and assisted suicide.



EFC lawyer Albertos Polizogopoulos with Bruce Clemenger at the Supreme Court for the *Saguenay* case on whether there is a place for religious observance in state-sponsored events.

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MARGARET SOMERVILLE is a professor in both the faculties of law and medicine at McGill University in Montreal and founding director of the McGill Centre for Medicine, Ethics and Law. She is a prolific – and outspoken – speaker and writer on issues of ethics in today’s Canada, including unpopular stands on same-sex marriage, abortion and most recently euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide. Her critics condemn her because she “sounds religious.” In a conversation with Faith Today, Somerville answers that charge, shares what religious people do wrong in the public square, and the must-haves in legislation around euthanasia in Canada.

Faith Today: At times you seem to be a lone voice in the wilderness, presenting a “conservative” ethical voice on issues like euthanasia. And you’ve been dismissed and ridiculed by some as having a hidden religious agenda. Is this a lonely place to be?

Margaret Somerville: I’ve got this new book coming out, *Bird on an Ethics Wire: Battles About Values in the Culture Wars* (McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2015), and the first sentence is, “There is a cartoon and it is a wire and all these birds are on this wire, and they are all facing you except one who has its back to you. I know how that bird feels.”

Although I’m much more on the same values track generally as people who are religious, I don’t feel I necessarily am one of them. I don’t know if I’m religious. I guess I am. I go to mass on Sunday, but for



30 years I didn’t. I have a friend who is an Anglican woman priest, and she said, “Oh, just go to mass, just sit there and let it wash over you.” I started to do that a few years ago.

I was brought up Roman Catholic. It was a routine thing more than a personal commitment. I

have a theory that we’re learning about, a whole new field called epigenetics – that we have genes for things, for certain behaviours, but you have to have an environmental trigger to activate the gene. I wouldn’t be surprised if we had a gene for spirituality and we need some kind of immersion into spirituality as a child to have that full capacity.

I’m not a genetic reductionist. I don’t believe that all we are is a gene machine. I see them more as instruments that can





help you do the things that can make life as fulfilling as possible. Some people then say, “I didn’t have anything [spiritually] as a child.” I don’t think that excludes you. But when we find a phenomenon that is universally experienced, over a long period of time and age groups and generations, you have to think that is something.

FT: *Christians might hear that as the “God-sized hole” inside us that we refer to sometimes.*

MS: Yeah, I very much think that. The other thing along the same lines, only slightly more poetic, is on Ash Wednesday we say, “Remember man, thou art dust.” I translated that differently – “Remember man, thou art stardust, and to stardust you will return.” How much more magical. I see the new science as opening up our sense of amazement, wonder and awe and not shutting it down. The more we know, the more we know we don’t know.

FT: *Whether you consider yourself religious or not, you have been accused of being the mouthpiece of religious people. How do you respond?*

MS: It’s a strategy of the people who absolutely hate religion. They can’t tolerate it. This “label as religion and dismiss” is a last-ditch strategy. When they can’t deal with you in any other way, that’s the way they deal with you.

Recently I’ve been writing a lot about the strategies the pro-euthanasia people have used. One of them is to say the people who are against it are religious and religion has no place in public policy. I don’t use religious arguments, at all, ever. That is not the basis of what I look at.

I use run-of-the-mill general philosophical arguments, and sometimes not in a very sophisticated way, and I get attacked for that too. I’m not trying to talk to erudite philosophers. I’m trying to talk to the average person. So many people, and this is a recurring phenomenon, come to me and say, “Thank you. I knew that was what I believed, but I didn’t know why or how to say it.” That is my job, trying to give the public the words they need to stand up for what they believe in.

FT: *There is this pervasive view that religion does not belong in the public square. You have argued that it does.*

MS: It's not religion in the public square, it's whether people who are religious have a voice in the public square. In a secular society religion is not the base for our public policy. But to exclude people with values that may or may not connect with their religious beliefs is wrong. I argue that it is antidemocratic.

FT: *You've gone on record to say that you think religious people make mistakes in their public square strategy. What mistakes?*

MS: I think the mistake they make is when they say in the public square, "I won't have you do this because it's against my religion." Very often there are some people who just use an unending series of Bible quotes. That is wonderful information, but it's in a language that someone who is not religious immediately turns off. I ask people who are religious, "Who are you trying to convince? Yourself? The people who agree with you?" Both of which you don't need to do. If you want to convince those who disagree, what is the language to which they can relate? It's certainly not the language that alienates them from the start.

FT: *What does work? You argue from a nonreligious standpoint and still are accused of hiding a religious agenda.*

MS: That's because the people don't want me to win. And I usually don't win. Someone asked me recently, "Don't you get tired of always losing?" I don't believe we have an obligation to win. What I believe is that our obligation is to try to put forward what we believe is right. Then we've done what we need to do.

The language is very important. It is not religious. It is not incompatible with religion. I think, coming back to the God-shaped hole you mentioned earlier, for example, I wouldn't call it that. I would say that everybody, unless there is something terribly wrong, has a deep longing to do the right thing, even when it may be in conflict with what they think they want at that time.

It is very hard to find the words that will convey what I would call the deep sense of mystery about who we are, why we are here and where we are going, other than through religion.



Echoing her often "lone voice," the cover of Somerville's new book features this sculpture made especially for her by renowned sculptor Marcel Braitstein.

From a human point of view, for euthanasia, I would say if we legalize this now, how do you think your great-great-grandchildren are going to die? Why have we held on to trust this value that we must not intentionally kill each other for thousands of years, and then at the beginning of the 21st century, we throw that out and say, "What were we talking about?" I was debating an Australian politician who said that when we pass our best-before date, we should be checked out as efficiently as possible. We are not products to be kicked out of the supermarket of life.

We've got to get people to think beyond ourselves. We have this extraordinary dominance of intense individualism, but at the same time, one of the biggest longings of people is what is called a longing for transcendence, the experience of belonging to something larger than yourself. That is what people have lost.

FT: *With euthanasia specifically, it seems we can't assume a person of faith will necessarily be against it.*

MS: We have in ethics what we call the ethical yuck factor – when we first hear about something, we have an unconscious

way of reacting to whether or not something is ethical. When you walk up to somebody and say, "Do you think doctors should be able to kill their patients?" It's a moral intuition, an emotional reaction that warns us there is something wrong.

But if you do surveys and you don't use the word euthanasia or killing, and you make it a nice thing someone in a white coat will do, and you call it kindness and mercy, and you call the alternative cruelty, then it sounds okay. You've coated all those original moral intuitions and emotions that tell you this is wrong. There is a lot of wariness of ever using the Nazis as an example, but it is a relevant question of how those Nazi doctors could do what they did. You can sugar-coat evil. You can get used to it. As familiarity increases, the ethical warning signs decrease.

FT: *You hear the argument for euthanasia that we are kinder to our dogs when they are suffering. That seems to sum up some kind of the acceptance out there toward euthanasia to humans who are suffering.*

MS: Whether you believe in human exceptionalism matters – that humans are different in kind from other animals – or are we just different in degree?

I believe that not seeing humans as special in some ways is currently the world's most dangerous idea. If you'd do it to your dog, you'd do it to your mother. I think this is the single, biggest, values-ethical-moral-philosophical decision of the 21st century, if we legalize euthanasia. I can't believe the Supreme Court has done this. I was asked to help draft legislation, only by people who are concerned about it, not by the government. I wrote a letter to [Justice Minister] Peter MacKay and said you can't go with this. I thought he should use the notwithstanding clause.

It is a momentous decision. It's a seismic shift in our most important foundational values, the respect for life.

FT: *What would you want to see happen with the legislation around euthanasia that is being developed?*

MS: Will we bring in legislation that is very restrictive? I wish we weren't having this



discussion at all. Even recognizing it's okay to kill your patient is terrible. But if we're going to have it, and this is the reality now, I think that we have to be very clear where it could apply. It should only apply in the most rare and narrow of circumstances. It has to have all kinds of procedural safeguards, like you can never give an injection without the express individual permission of a court.

If you go back to the Rodriguez case [*Rodriguez v. British Columbia*, 1993], chief justice Beverley McLachlin was in the minority. She said we safeguard this by requiring judicial regulation. We can quote her as saying this is what we need.

If you were to lock someone up in a psychiatric institution for a few hours, you'd have to get court authorization. All of those things say when it is a very, very serious decision, you can't just make it for yourself. That would be one of the things I would require.

You can sugar-coat evil. You can get used to it. As familiarity increases, the ethical warning signs decrease.

You have to be able to offer people totally adequate palliative care that includes full pain management. It's a disgrace in all our Western democracy that we don't do that. I've been heavily involved in advocating that it is a breach of fundamental human rights for a health care professional to leave someone in serious pain.

FT: *Do you believe if we had better palliative care, the demand for euthanasia would not be as strong?*

MS: It would decrease in practice when people get good palliative care. A very large percentage decide they don't want euthanasia – research tells us this. Not all,

but most. The other thing is that legally you can't get informed consent to assisted suicide or euthanasia unless you have offered a person alternatives. You have to have good palliative care in order to obtain informed consent. The end-of-life so-called care act in Quebec [Bill 52] says you do not have to have palliative care, and the Canadian Medical Association in the brief they put into the Supreme Court expressly said it was not a condition that you have palliative care to have access to physician-assisted death. That is shocking.

I try not to be cynical. I call cynicism secular society's major moral shortcoming.

FT: *Thank you, Margaret. /FT*



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FT003

PRO-LIFE AND ON CAMPUS

It is not easy to be a pro-life voice on Canadian university campuses. Pro-life conversations are routinely shut down and censored across the country. Yet a strong core of university students continues to speak out against abortion and the harm it does. Faith Today asked why these fearless students keep doing what they do.

I think the most challenging thing about being pro-life on campus is the fact that people often associate pro-lifers with something they are not. *It is hard because many people don't know that the pro-life message is a message of love and compassion, not of judgment or control.* It is also extremely hard trying to get access to resources for a pro-life group, or even status as a club because of the ignorance people have about the pro-life message. People seem to forget that we have a right to free speech, and that any message that is contrary to the status quo should also have a fair chance to be expressed.

—Teresa Mervar, 20, Students for Life, Ryerson University, Toronto

I'm involved in this issue not only because we are killing the youngest in our society, but also because we are hurting thousands of women and families. You won't hear that from anyone else on campus, though.

—Katrina Dixon, 21, Students for Life, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon

What I hope is that those of us in the pro-life movement, with God's grace, are able to change the hearts and minds of all Canadians so that they also would never consider abortion a solution to a problem, and that they would see all human lives as precious and sacred. When this happens, we will have a law that backs up this belief.

—Eva McGuire, 21, Western Lifeline, University of Western Ontario, London

I hope that hearts and minds will be changed (not just the law) so that people have a true respect and appreciation for life. —Rachel Harlaar, 20, Laurier LifeLink, Wilfred Laurier University, Waterloo



I hope that through pro-life activism, Canada's culture will change to become one that seeks to defend the weak and bring true help to mothers in crisis pregnancies. If we can change the way people perceive the weak and disadvantaged, our laws will change to reflect this.

—Ashley Lawlor, 21, Youth Protecting Youth at York, York University, Toronto

I hope our country realizes that we can do better than abortion. That there are so many organizations to help women step past their fears and find the necessary support to raise their child.

—Meagan Nijenhuis, 20, Life Choice, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ont.



Abortion needs to become unthinkable before it becomes illegal, and for that reason we have to change the culture first.

—Sarah Blake, 19, Students for Life, University of Toronto



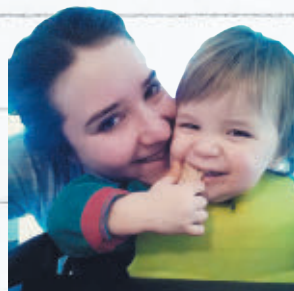
I am involved in this issue because, with a quarter of our generation missing due to abortion, it is the biggest social justice issue in Canada and the world. If someone learned that 300 people were being killed every day in their country, shouldn't they try to do something about it?

—Jesse LeBlanc, 26, Students for Life, Trinity Western University, Langley, B.C.

My hope is to change the hearts and minds of Canadians. I am less concerned with changing the laws in Canada on abortion: If we can change Canadians' opinions on abortion and make it unthinkable, the laws in time will change.

I believe that pro-lifers can create a domino effect in society. If I tell two people, they will tell two people, etc.

—Nicole Bryck, 22, Students for Life, Ryerson University




I'm motivated to do pro-life work on campus because I believe that all human beings should have equal human rights, and because I know that my peers need better than abortion – they need our support and our compassion to help them through the hardship they may be facing as a result of an unplanned pregnancy. Sometimes doing this isn't easy because there are so many people on campus who oppose our message and don't want to face the brutal reality of abortion. Quite often, the people who are the most upset with us are the people who are the most hurt.

—Emily Ryznar, 21, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver

People are scared of being ostracized by their professors and classmates because the pro-choice perspective is considered the norm on campus. Speaking from personal experience, it can be really difficult to voice your pro-life opinions in a place like this.

—Amberlee Nicol, 20, Go Life, University of Alberta, Edmonton

I want to see more people with pro-life convictions speak up about this issue and make the culture feel uncomfortable with the status quo of abortion being permitted up until birth for any reason or no reason at all. There is great unawareness of how serious the issue is, even among people that identify as pro-life. —Clarissa Canaria, 26, Central Campus Co-ordinator of National Campus Life Network

 For more quotes from pro-life activists across the country, please read our digital edition at www.faithtoday.ca/Pro-lifeQuotes

IN DEPTH

FRIENDLY FIRE

HOW CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES CAN TREAT THEIR EMPLOYEES BETTER

BY RICHELLE WISEMAN

FOR ALL THEIR
WONDERFUL
WORK, CHRISTIAN
ORGANIZATIONS
CAN BE TOUGH ON
THEIR EMPLOYEES.
HERE'S HOW WE
CAN ALL DO BETTER



Dan (not his real name) had been one of the senior pastoral staff at his church for over 20 years. He had served well and was greatly loved. But he was experiencing burnout and depression, and asked for a short health leave. The rumour mill kicked into overdrive. Unfounded stories circulated that Dan had a drinking problem, rumours which were untrue and which the church board did nothing to quell. Dan was fired without warning. Adding to the pain was a complete lack of acknowledgement of his years of service. There was no farewell dinner. Five years later Dan remains in a severe depression. He is unable to work.

Sadly, this story is not unique in Christian circles. Stories of Christians fired unceremoniously from Christian organizations are not hard to find. At the hands of often well-meaning church or ministry boards, some Christian leaders face high stress, low pay and sometimes undue process in how they are terminated from their place of ministry.

According to John Pellowe, CEO of the Canadian Council of Christian Charities (CCCC), good human resources practices are good everywhere – they are not different in the secular or Christian work world. Ironically, secular businesses may hold to a higher standard of respectful, ethical treatment of employees (and take more seriously best practices and labour laws) than many Christian churches and ministries.

“What I feel acutely is that someday, as leader of a Christian organization, I will be called into account not just for how I led the organization, but also how I stewarded the people,” says Pellowe.

Last fall he and his team crisscrossed Canada, leading seminars in eight cities for CCCC members (CCCC serves 3,200 Christian

organizations) on human resources practices.

“While you usually only hear the bad stories, through the workshops we found that we heard about a lot of ministries that are doing a good job in human resources,” says Pellowe. “I have also seen how employees in ministries can become the victims of either benign neglect or malicious actions from power brokers who assume, ‘We can overwork you and underpay you,’ ” he says. “This is a form of spiritual abuse and misuse of the sense of call that ministry employees have to their work.”

So, how do we all get better?

For church ministries interested in becoming healthier and more Christlike in their employee practices, here are six key issues to address.

1 | HIRE WELL

Interview questions in the hiring process are crucial. Asking the right questions in the right way can help employers determine if the person they are hiring is really a good fit. The questions also need to be legal. Christian places of work need to consider how provincial labour laws impact how they interview candidates for positions.

Good interview questions arise out of a clearly defined job description and explore core competencies, skills, as well as intangibles like fit with the current ministry team. Skilled managers understand that if you hire the right people in the first place, you have fewer personnel issues down the road.

2 | EVALUATE WELL

An informal survey of several major churches in large evangelical denominations conducted by enCompassing Visions (see sidebar) revealed that many Christian ministries conduct job reviews in a haphazard or highly generalized way. Robust and thorough evaluations are crucial for the employee,

ADDING FUEL TO THE FIRE —CONGREGATIONAL STRUCTURE CAN MAKE THINGS EVEN TOUGHER

Most evangelical churches follow congregational polity, which means denominational offices may have very little say over how their churches deal with their employees. There may be a lack of resources provided to churches on how to hire, compensate, nurture and fire staff.

“Our involvement as a district is almost exclusively in assisting church boards in the search process for a new senior pastor, with some input on the hiring practice of that pastor,” says Phil Doroshuk, director of finance and administration for The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada – Alberta and NWT District. His office provides resources on building healthy staff teams, and there is a national salary survey for PAOC churches to provide guidelines for compensation.

Because congregations have their own local church constitutions with by-laws, their internal human resources policies practices in dealing with pastoral and administrative staff are independent of other churches. These policies and practices may be developed without the assistance and advice of human resources professionals.

the manager and the organization.

Job evaluations done well are an in-depth review, not only of the employee’s performance in achieving goals, but in their alignment with the ministry’s goals, in their engagement with their job. It is a place to identify where things are going sideways and address them early.

According to Chris Hall, manager of human resources at CCCC, a manager who truly cares will have the managerial courage to address issues with employees long before termination is considered. Termination is an easy way out for a manager who doesn’t want to deal with interpersonal and performance issues, says Hall.

3 | COMPENSATE WELL

Christian ministries, like all nonprofits, usually can’t compete with the private sector on wages. However, even in the nonprofit sector, there are compensation guidelines for employers to access to ensure they are paying fair compensation.

3,200

NUMBER OF CHRISTIAN ORGANIZATIONS SERVED BY THE CANADIAN COUNCIL OF CHRISTIAN CHARITIES (CCCC)

DOES YOUR CHURCH WANT TO GET BETTER AT HUMAN RESOURCES?

Here are just a few of the resources available to churches and ministry organizations wanting to improve their human resources practices.

TRUTHALIGN

TruthAlign is a human resources software developed for Christian ministries. The software contains a growing database of job descriptions common in ministry contexts, as well as predefined technical skills and competencies. It links job descriptions to simple and effective job evaluations designed to encourage open dialogue and build trust between employers and employees. www.truthalign.com

CANADIAN COUNCIL OF CHRISTIAN CHARITIES (CCCC)

The CCCC has developed a number of resources for churches and ministries interested in improving their human resources practices. One is their Fall 2014 seminar booklet, the basis for their workshops across Canada: *More Than a Human Resource* provides information about job descriptions, interview questions, compensation, benefits and terminations. A new DVD, *The Board's Most Important Relationship*, explores the relationship between boards and ministry leaders. *Serving As a Board Member* is another CCCC resource helpful for Christian organizations. www.cccc.org

CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP ALLIANCE (CLA)

Based in California, CLA provides print and online resources for its extensive membership of over 6,000 Christian ministries and agencies on a variety of topics including people management and care, executive leadership, resource development and financial management. www.christianleadershipalliance.org

The CCCC provides a compensation survey to help ministries see how their salaries compare, and most city-based nonprofit sector organizations have them too. Often church denominations encourage their church boards to use these to help with salary negotiations.

Hall says Christian organizations need to take seriously the way they compensate their staff, and ask themselves, “If our salaries became public knowledge, would we be embarrassed?” He points to 1 Corinthians 9:13–14, verses that underscore the

biblical mandate to ensure that “those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.”

Hall says there are low cost ways to encourage employees too, including rewarding employees who are doing well.

4 | CARE WELL

Almost all Christian ministries operate on minimal budgets and are very, and appropriately, conscious of being good stewards of God’s resources. Stewardship of money and facilities are recognized as having a theological base. All belongs to God, after all.

Heather Card, former chief operating officer of CCCC, has given some serious thought to the importance of having a theological foundation for human resources.

“For me, it is much more than best practices,” says Card. “It goes back to what God says about us, that we are made in the image of God. We are created out of an act of fellowship. We are created as ‘image bearers’ of God.”

If boards and senior leaders regarded their employees as individual, unique image bearers of God, better human resources practices and policies, as well as professional development opportunities, would more likely evolve, says Card.

“When you think about the Garden of Eden, it was a place meant for flourishing and transparency,” she adds. She is unafraid to bring the Trinity into the equation as well. “It is every leader’s job to model the mutual love and sharing that we see in God’s relationship with Christ and the Holy Spirit in the Trinity,” says Card. “It should characterize every relationship, not just employment relationships.”

5 | FIRE WELL

No one likes to fire or be fired. The process is fraught with problems for ministry organizations and for the

employees being dismissed. Some churches have discovered a healthy and ethical model to part ways with an employee, a process that follows the high standard of Matthew 18 where there are several important conversations and letters that occur before an employee is let go.

Christian organizations that handle firings well, says Hall, place a high value on preserving the relationship, honouring the person’s contribution, acknowledging them positively in front of the community, and ensuring that severance is fair and reflects at minimum the requirements of provincial labour codes.

One church in Western Canada has adopted the position that, barring some grievous, criminal activity, its pastoral staff are provided with several months’ notice, assistance with transitioning to a new role, and a celebratory dinner to honour their ministry. This is in sharp contrast to another pastor’s experience of hand over your church keys and credit card, and come back on Saturday to clean out your desk. And another horror story of a pastor fired while in hospital dealing with a major health issue. The church board surrounded his hospital bed to give him the bad news.

John Pellowe emphasizes the importance of erring on the side of generosity, leaving the relationship intact and honouring the person leaving.

“It is reasonable to assume that there will be times when things don’t work out,” says Hall. Leadership teams should decide in advance how to face those situations and consider the logistics, the legal process including appropriate notice and severance.

“It doesn’t end when the person has left,” adds Hall. “What happens to the people left in the ministry? There should be a strategy for how we are going to move forward.

Let's not pretend that nothing happened. Be transparent."

6 | TRAIN THE BOARD

Crucial to healthy treatment of Christian leaders in churches and ministries is developing healthy relationships between board members and the leaders they oversee.

Most of the board members who lead churches and ministries work in secular companies where human resources policies are well defined to adhere to provincial labour laws around hiring, firing, compensation, health and safety. Yet these standards are not always known, understood or implemented in Christian ministry workplaces. According to Hall, this results in a gap between a best practices ideal for human resources in secular workplaces versus some Christian ministries playing catch-up.

Local churches, perhaps with the help of denominational leadership, could address this issue by training board members about the moral, ethical and legal issues of staff management. Without access to some human resources expertise, the organization is destined to face personnel challenges, loss of reputation for mishandling personnel or even potential lawsuits.

Finally, take the time

In the secular workplace, companies usually hire a human resources specialist when they reach a hundred employees. Given that most churches and ministries are a long way from that number, it is not surprising that there are very few human resources professionals on the staff of Christian organizations. Without professional expertise Christian ministries often end up doing the bare minimum when it comes to job descriptions, employee evaluations, training and professional development, and having best practices human resources policies in place around hiring and firing.

Hall notes that many ministry leaders say they don't have time to put human resources policies and procedures in place.

"You don't have time not to do this,"

says Hall. "Human resources needs to be part of the strategic planning process for a church ministry." Beyond just focusing on program goals and fundraising goals, a church needs to look at the people implications of those goals and provide the right resources for the people to be

trained, engaged, encouraged, evaluated and productive in their roles.

"Spend up front to hire well and manage well, and this will actually save the ministry money down the road," says Hall. /FT



Richelle Wiseman is a communications consultant and freelance writer in Calgary.

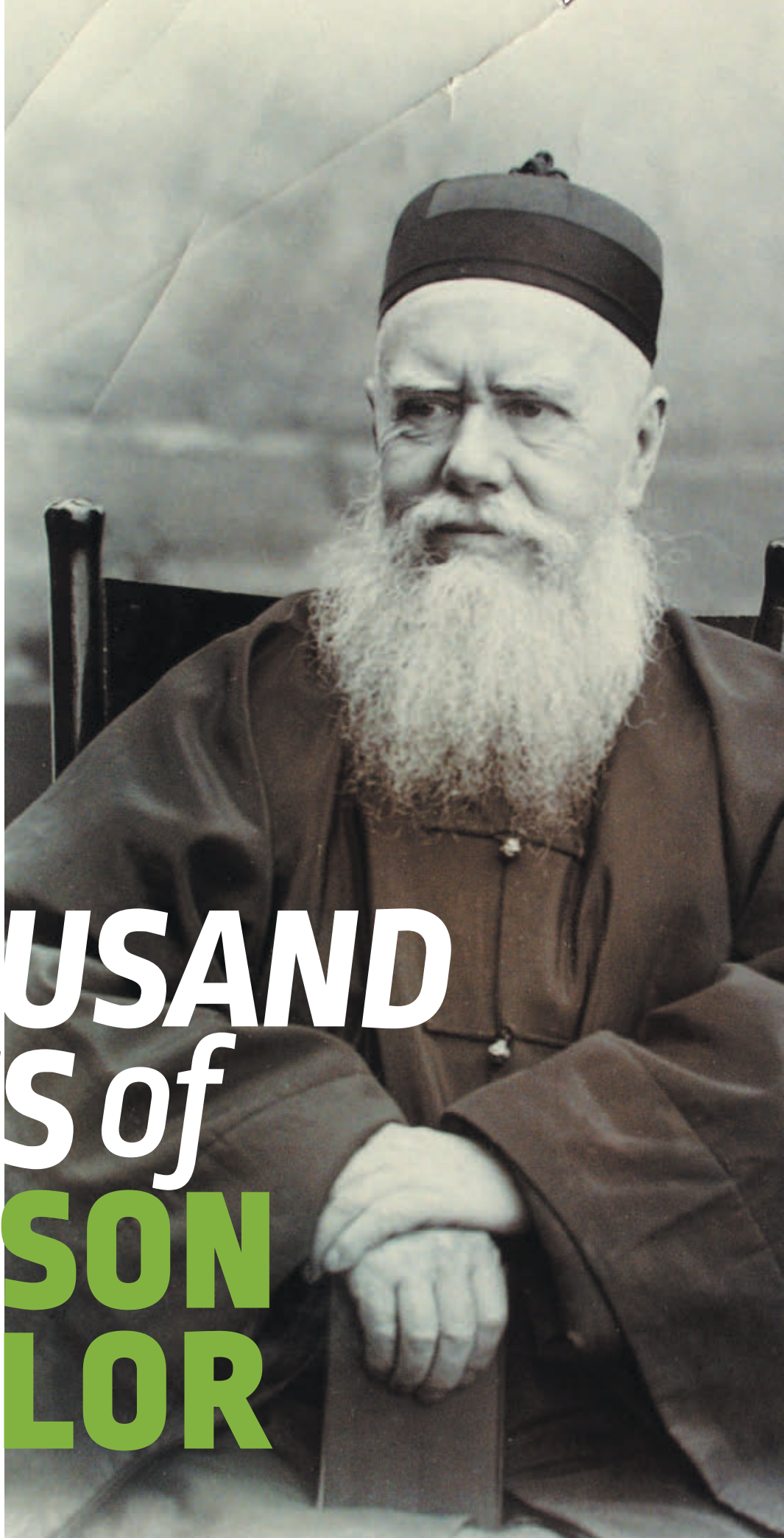
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PROFILE

**THE
THOUSAND
LIVES of
HUDSON
TAYLOR**



CANADIAN ANNIVERSARY EVENTS ORGANIZED BY OMF CELEBRATE THE MISSIONARY THE WORLD DOES NOT FORGET **BY JEFF DEWSBURY**

Not many missionaries have been accused of almost starting a war. But that's exactly how the British press characterized missionary Hudson Taylor when he and his team were the target of rioting and looting in Yangzhou, China in 1868, ultimately causing the Royal Navy to sail for China's shores. Though that episode failed to escalate further, it's a good illustration of the controversy that Taylor's fearless preaching of the gospel elicited both home and abroad.

Hudson Taylor's story of working in China in the mid-1800s has captivated generations of Christians, particularly those involved in overseas missions. His determination in the face of danger, faith amid bleak financial realities and his groundbreaking cross-cultural sensitivity continue to inspire.

Add to that the interdenominational nature of the organization he founded (China Inland Mission, which would later become Overseas Missionary Fellowship or OMF), his support of single women in the mission field (believing, against popular opinion, that women could live in remote areas without a husband), and the way he worked both practically as a doctor in the field and as an evangelist, you can see a man who wears the tag "revolutionary" with little hint of exaggeration.

Portrait of Hudson Taylor in 1890.

THE THREADS OF TAYLOR'S CONVICTIONS ARE INTERWOVEN IN THE FABRIC OF PRESENT-DAY OMF CANADA, SAY THE ORGANIZATION'S DIRECTORS. AND THIS YEAR'S 150TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS, INCLUDING HUDSON TAYLOR LEGACY EVENTS, BACK UP THAT SENTIMENT WITH SESSIONS FOCUSING ON MEDICAL MISSIONS AND WOMEN IN EAST ASIAN MISSIONS.

Going inland as a foreigner in 1800s Asia, as Taylor did, wasn't for the faint of heart. Any movement away from the coast meant parting with easy access to ships, effectively cutting the tether that kept Taylor connected to the safety of home.

"In those days the interior was dangerous. If anything should happen, you were stuck there," notes OMF's Ontario region director C. Y. Yan. "That's why so many of our missionaries were martyred during the Boxer Rebellion. They had nowhere to run."

The Boxer Rebellion, a two-year uprising against imperialism and Christian missionary activity in China, saw 58 missionaries and 21 children from China Inland Mission killed. Acting on the principles established by Taylor, another missionary, D. E. Hoste, famously refused to accept payment on behalf of the organization for loss of property or life, which



(from top) Hudson and Maria Taylor in 1865 at the founding of CIM; the 1875 call for 100 consecrated men to join the mission; the Boxer Rebellion in Northern China (1899–1901) led to the death of over 32,000 Christians, including 58 CIM missionaries and 21 of their children.

earned him a unique form of respect from many in his adopted country.

Despite its perils the move inland was crucial to connecting with unreached people groups, and Taylor (who was born in Yorkshire, England, but learned several Chinese dialects) blazed the first path in China. For that reason Chinese Christians, including many first-generation Canadians, revere him.

Yan says they celebrate Taylor the way he would have wanted, with the emphasis on Christ, the source of his strength and courage. “We don’t want to see Hudson Taylor lifted up. We don’t want to see OMF lifted up. If it was merely Taylor’s love for China that sent him to that place, he wouldn’t have survived long. He lost his first wife and five of his children there, but he went with his heart for Christ.

THE CENTRALITY OF PRAYER TO THE ORGANIZATION IS... ANOTHER WAY THE ECHOES OF TAYLOR’S LIFE STILL RESONATE WITH OMF.



Today, the general director of OMF is Patrick Fung, a medical doctor, who spent 25 years serving in the field.

And that’s what kept him there.”

That devotion will be chronicled in an upcoming film about Taylor’s life with the working title *A Thousand Lives*, referring to Taylor’s famous words (written in a letter to his sister Amelia) – “If I had a thousand lives, China should have them. No! Not China, but Christ.”

OMF Canada’s national director Jon Fuller is an advisor on the project, which is being written by UK-based screenwriter Bart Gavigan (*The End of the Spear*, 2006, and *Luther*, 2003). “We really believe that Taylor’s life is relevant today,” Fuller tells *Faith Today*. “His story is still very powerful.”

The centrality of prayer to the organization is evident in the list of anniversary events, which includes a yearlong prayer focus, another way the echoes of Taylor’s life still resonate with OMF. After all, “Prayer is central to being engaged in a wounded world,” says Fuller.

OMF will host Cantonese, Mandarin and English events in Toronto and Vancouver. The Chinese ministerials in Greater Toronto and Vancouver have been particularly active, unifying across denominational lines to organize a number of celebrations. Jamie Taylor, a fifth generation Taylor descended from Hudson, will speak at Knox Presbyterian Church on Spadina Avenue in Toronto, where Canada’s first China Inland Missionaries were commissioned in 1888.

OMF’s head Patrick Fung, a medical doctor who spent 25 years serving with OMF, seven of those in Pakistan, will also travel to Canada to speak. Fung is the first Asian general director of OMF, reflecting a general trend in missions. “It’s no longer the West to the rest,” says Yan. He estimates that about ten years from now non-Western missionaries will make up the majority of those in Asia.

Hudson Taylor would be pleased. The concept of indigenous ministry



Solina Chy carries on Taylor’s legacy

OMF CURRENTLY HAS

137 missionaries in the field from Canada. About 34 per cent of those are ethnically Asian. Solina Chy is an example of the type of missionary – the

product of one of many Asian diasporas – that’s ever more common in the organization’s ranks.

Chy fled the horrors of the Khmer Rouge in her native Cambodia. While living in a refugee camp in Thailand, during a self-described time of deep hatred for her people and country, a YWAM missionary shared the gospel with her, softening her heart for her people.

She immigrated to Canada in the early 1980s, where she met and worshiped with Cambodian believers in different cities. Chy eventually returned to Thailand on a short-term mission where she was mentored by an OMF missionary as they visited Khmer refugees in jails and hospitals.

Today Chy hosts a number of Christian radio programs that reach across the entire country of Cambodia. This spring she will work with a team of local missionaries in the province of Ratanakiri to help launch broadcasts to area tribal groups.

“When I look at my journey, how the Lord brought people alongside to love, care, support, encourage, mold, shape and model to me . . . I keep all these as a heritage, treasured in my heart as a museum,” she says. “But I give glory to [Christ’s] name alone.” —JEFF DEWSBURY

“means all our people live incarnationally in the environment they are in, so the response they have represents the culture that is around them,” says Fuller, who grew up in a missionary family in a tribal village in the Philippines.

“Jesus came and lived amongst us, and we want our people to live sacrificially with integrity where the gospel wasn’t before. There is a missions movement out of Asia today that would have thrilled Taylor’s heart.”

See www.omf.ca for details on OMF events across the country, including those this fall in Toronto and in Burnaby and Victoria, B.C. /FT

OMF’S DEMOGRAPHICS TODAY

1,400

WORKERS FROM

40

COUNTRIES AND REGIONS SERVE

100

PEOPLE GROUPS IN EAST ASIA.



Jeff Dewsbury of Langley, B.C., is a senior writer at *Faith Today*.



WHY CHRISTIAN CLASSICS MATTER

With thousands of new Christian books published each year, why read the old ones? BY BEN WHITE

John Wesley, cofounder of the Methodist movement, attended a meeting in May 1738 at Aldersgate Street in London, England. He went reluctantly, for he was struggling to establish his ministry and questioning whether he truly knew God. But as he listened to a reading of Martin Luther's *Preface to the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans*, he was overcome with comfort.

Wesley noted the experience in his journal: "About a quarter before nine,

while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."

This public reading of Luther's writing was crucial to Wesley's spiritual development, providing him encouragement at a time of need.

Today Canadians have free access

through digital downloads and public libraries to many such Christian classics, writings characterized by a biblical view of the Christian life and which have been recommended by "a multitude of voices across Church history" (*Reading the Christian Spiritual Classics: A Guide for Evangelicals*, IVP Academic, 2013).

But which of these many books have been the most helpful to the greatest number of believers? *Faith Today* asked several Canadian leaders for their recommendations and to remind us why



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ESSAY

reading them can be helpful in our walk with God.

WISDOM BEYOND OUR YEARS

Many believers today don't read Christian classics because we are busy with newer ideas and books, a mistake C. S. Lewis called "chronological snobbery," says Rick Reed, president of Heritage College and Seminary in Cambridge, Ont.

But Reed thinks Lewis was right "that every age has its own blind spots, and reading things from another era helps us see our world in ways that are tough for us to see because we're so immersed in it."

One lesson Canadians today need to hear from the saints of old is the importance of the contemplative life. As our world quickly increases its pace with technologies that keep us connected to our work and social media, our ability to set aside distractions to pray or meditate on Scripture, or even recognize the need to do so, is drastically reduced.

The attention span of Americans in 2013 averaged just eight seconds – lower than the nine-second span of a goldfish, according to Nancy Koehn of Harvard Business School (*Marketplace with Kai Ryssdal*, February 2014).

Does anyone want to argue that Canadians are exempt from this problem?

Often the most helpful classics draw on the contemplative tradition and were written by believers who also struggled to worship God without distractions – but who persevered.

Doralynne Manu of Langley, B.C., is global impact director for Power to Change Canada. She says Christian classics "allow for a reader to reconnect with some of the often lost mystical and contemplative elements of our Christian faith."

Personally, she says, she has been "most impacted" by the contemplations of St. Antony, Teresa d'Ávila and St. John of the Cross.

LEARNING FROM OUR ELDERS

"I think of reading Christian classics as seeking out and learning from other

Christians with a really good reputation," says Dustin Resch, assistant professor of theology at Briercrest College and Seminary and an Anglican priest. "When I read the classics, I get to expose myself to people and ideas and ways of putting things in which others in the Church have seen God's Spirit work."

Consider for example *The Life and Diary of David Brainerd* by Jonathan Edwards (1749), which describes Brainerd's tireless missionary efforts to Native Americans in colonial America.

The book has inspired preachers and missionaries alike for centuries, including the famous 20th-century missionary Jim Elliot. Like so many Christian classics, it can provide anyone (preacher or not) with an inspiring example of a life faithfully lived.

As John Wesley later wrote, "Let every preacher read carefully over the life of David Brainerd. Let us be followers of him, as he was of Christ."

CHALLENGING OUR MINDS

Christian classics also challenge us to go deeper with God by exercising our minds. "When I was in university," says Rick Reed, "Stephen Charnock's *The Existence and Attributes of God* [1682] pushed me to think about some of the characteristics of God that I had never given much thought to. And at that point in my life, that was a book that God used to help me draw closer to Him."

But how easy is it, really, to read a 17th-century author like Charnock? To many the challenge seems so daunting, they don't even try.

When I announced to the young adults at Temple Baptist Church in Cambridge, Ont., that our small group would be reading a Christian classic this year, their responses were probably typical – fear and hesitation.

A few weeks into the study, several still say they find the book requires careful reading, but everyone agrees the readings and discussions have been fruitful.

We're not made merely to experience God, but to think about Him and allow

GETTING STARTED ADVICE FROM REED AND RESCH

A modern edition of a Christian classic with updated language and an introduction to the work's historical context can help us get more out of our reading, says Rick Reed. A good place to start for those new to the classics might be **The Pilgrim's Progress** by John Bunyan (1678) or Bernard of Clairvaux's **On Loving God** (early 1100s). More advanced readers can try Saint Augustine's **The City of God** (426) or John Calvin's **Institutes of the Christian Religion** (mid-1500s).

Given that the ideas and perspectives in Christian classics can be unfamiliar to us, Dustin Resch advises, "The most important thing in reading any piece of writing is neighbour love. What I mean by that is I hope that I can read the writing of a fellow Christian (or anyone for that matter) in a spirit of generosity and patience and commitment to understanding what they are saying." One way to cultivate this patience is to form a reading group and get together to talk about worthwhile texts with friends and others from your church.

But Reed provides perhaps the most important principle for reading Christian classics when he says, "Whether the book is old or young, whether it's a classic or a lesser-known work, we have the same obligation, and that is to evaluate everything we read in light of the Scriptures." —**BEN WHITE**

our knowledge of Him to deepen our worship.

That's why in Proverbs 2:3,5 Solomon writes, "And if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding . . . then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God."

Those who give the classics a try discover, as Reed says, that "they are a little chewier and you've got to work a little harder to digest them. But they're more nutritious." /**FT**



Ben White works at Temple Baptist Church in Cambridge, Ont.

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HOW TO TALK TO YOUR CHILD'S EDUCATORS

Ontario's controversial sex ed curriculum alarmed parents. What's the best way to bring Christ into the classroom and interact with educators?

BY ALEX NEWMAN

Ontario's new sex education curriculum slated to take effect this coming September – and it's not just an Ontario issue of course – has stirred up strong reactions in parents who are concerned about what their children would be exposed to.

The subject has taken the blogosphere by storm as parents determine the best course of action. In the normal course of your child's 12-plus years at school you'll encounter many other issues and concerns – from policies on vaccinations, sex education or testing, to personal issues of bullying or bad behaviour.

We asked a number of parents and educators for suggestions on how to effectively communicate concerns to school authorities, regardless of the issue.

1. Identify first who you should talk to



"Best to speak with the person who's in closest contact with your child," says Laura Berends, who teaches elementary school in Toronto's Flemingdon Park. "Going to the principal first doesn't foster the close connection you want between parent and teacher. And if it's something better handled by the principal, the teacher will direct you there."



Even for curriculum matters, Berends finds it best to talk to the teacher. They can help you understand it better, and while they don't have the authority to alter curriculum, she says they have some creative flexibility. "Teachers make decisions all the time around curriculum – what to cover, when, how. Conversations with parents help to inform a teacher about her students so she can make those right choices for her class."

Sometimes, the first stop should be the principal, like when Stratford, Ont., parent Bruce Whittaker was registering his eight-year-old son who was not operating at his grade level. Although Ontario has a policy of not holding children back, Whittaker went to the principal, who placed him in one grade lower, then discussed it in-depth with the board. "In the end everything worked out," Whittaker says.

When my own daughter's anxiety disorder erupted near the end of Grade 9, I went straight to the guidance counsellor, who was able



assuming teachers are doing what they can. There's some deadwood, for sure, but the majority really do care, and even if you have moral or pedagogical differences, most are not bent on destroying our children's faith."

In fact, the education act states that teachers are to "inculcate by precept and example respect for religion and the principles of Judeo-Christian morality and the highest regard for truth, justice, loyalty, love of country, humanity, benevolence, sobriety, industry, frugality, purity, temperance and all other virtues."

In a TED talk, Joseph Grenny, a renowned change expert and Christian, says attributing "problems immediately to bad motives ... [results in] less than a 6 per cent chance you'll come up with healthy solutions."

Just sending your children to public school signals to Berends that "You are entrusting your child to my care. Parents need to do their part to trust the teacher, and talking with the teacher can assure parents their child is being cared for. It doesn't mean you don't ask questions, but if you are coming to the classroom with a shield, that's not productive."

Fish tries to approach issues with teachers as if they're "partners in this child's development, and that I'm there seeking info, and clarification."

4. *Speak with respect*



"You can't influence people you alienate," says Cooper. "Just being Christian will likely alienate some people already. You can't do anything about that, but you can do something about your rhetoric."

Or as Grenny puts it, "The way you show up in these moments is the greatest expression of your Christian walk."

to intervene on her behalf. She asked all eight teachers to make special accommodations (such as one-on-one presentations and altered seating near the door) until we were able to line up proper medical help.

Kevin Gietz, superintendent of Palliser Regional Schools in Alberta, says there's a definite process starting with the teacher. "You need to engage in that conversation and if not satisfied, then go to the principal. Ultimately if you're still not satisfied, come to the superintendent, and then on up to the board of trustees. When it comes to individual situations, such as expulsion or special ed, those can be appealed to the Ministry of Education."

2. *Do the research before loading your emotional gun*



Hot button issues can give rise to emotional, knee-jerk reactions. Doing research gives a broader perspective, as well as time to cool down.

Download the 50-page sex education curriculum, for example, which has both good and bad parts to it, according to Dr. Warwick Cooper, pastor of counselling & family ministries with People's Church in Toronto. "Parents can make an informed decision once they read the document for themselves."

There's also a wide range of blogosphere discussions you can tap into. In *A Christian Parent's Guide* on the Eganville Baptist website (www.eganvillebaptist.org), the writer answers some major concerns with relevant excerpts from the curriculum.

Susan Fish, a writer from Waterloo, Ont., finds that writing out her feelings on an issue helps her "blow off steam, and sort out what's at the core of the issue ... what I'd like to see happen, what I need to ask for."

3. *Opposition doesn't equal enemy*



Fish admits, "It's easy to see the school as a monolith, but I start by

HOT BUTTON ISSUES CAN GIVE RISE TO EMOTIONAL, KNEE-JERK REACTIONS. DOING RESEARCH GIVES A BROADER PERSPECTIVE, AS WELL AS TIME TO COOL DOWN.

Since Berends has been on the receiving end of complaints, she says tone of voice makes all the difference. “If you come in and demand that something be done about this thing you’re upset about, the teacher feels put on the spot. Teachers are at fault too for putting up walls, but if parents are calm, open minded and willing to listen, those walls can come down.”

But you won’t be taken seriously if you overreact or take things personally. In an interview with pastor Heather Larson (<https://vimeo.com/105587982>), Willow Creek’s Bill Hybels suggests learning what “flips your emotional switch,” and then taking a break – for a moment or a day – to regain your composure.

He also says the first ten minutes of any discussion, especially difficult ones, set the tone. “Be aware of words that are incendiary and aware of words that build up. Regard each other as builders of a team, with every interaction either building or dinging the relationship.”

It’s normal for parents to get emotional about their children, says Gietz. “But take time, 24 hours even, to cool off before approaching the school. Or write an email and don’t hit send. If I’m working with parents, I listen while they get the emotion out, then I try to identify the root concern. In our school board we talk about being hard on the issue, but easy on the people, because at the end of the day we have to assume that everyone is there to help the child move forward.”

Timing is equally important, Berends adds. Rather than grab a teacher at the end of a busy, tiring day, email or write in your child’s agenda to schedule a time to talk.

5. Think outside the box



When the open concept layout at her children’s school created mul-

tiiple problems, family doctor Judy Thompson brought out her medical trump card.

“Five classes on an open concept floor was loud, and hard for kids to learn. The school tried coping by staggering class schedules. The principal wanted to renovate the entire floor and create individual classrooms, but was getting nowhere with the board. I asked the principal if health effects had been considered – all open like an airplane, and teachers and students getting sick because of increased infection spread.”

Thompson then sent along medical journal articles, which provided enough evidence to prompt the board to approve renovations.

6. Get involved before issues come up



Schools are more receptive to involved parents. Whittaker sits on the council for his eldest son’s high school, and is surprised by how few parents are involved at this level. “We’re missing a huge opportunity to bring parents and administrators together to collaborate on the futures of our youth.”

Getting involved also gives parents a hand in making changes in the early stages. Janet Foord, president of the Canadian School Boards Association, is a mom of four and was a Saskatchewan school trustee for 27 years. School councils, she says, are “amazing resources.” One Saskatchewan school board had noticed several disturbing trends – high rates of absenteeism and addictions – so they invited local councils, made up mostly of parents, to discuss their observations and possible solutions.

Gietz says the board of trustees of Palliser Regional Schools relies very much on the school councils to let them know what’s happening at a grassroots level. “The board is sensitive to the fact that parents are the

first educator, and if they’re asking for something reasonable, we look at whether we can accommodate it.”

7. Strike an ongoing positive note



“One thing that really creates currency in school,” says Fish, “is that when things are going well, don’t hold back on commenting. I’ve sent letters to trustees glowing about a teacher who did an amazing thing for my child. Having an attitude of appreciation for the school system goes a long way, especially when it’s time to make your concerns known.”

8. Parents are primary influences



Studies show that school only partly influences your children. The rest of the work depends on parents. There’s much going on in school that parents won’t like and over which they have little or no control. “That’s when you need to be teaching your children right and wrong, and train them to be on guard, while still respecting the teacher,” Berends says.

9. Take the long view



Learning to moderate your approach with the school doesn’t mean conceding to the culture. In fact, Hybels says it’s precisely at these times that Christ wants us showing up.

“There’s a struggle for sure,” says Cooper. “And it’s one for the hearts of our kids. The relationship between parents and teachers is really key. Understand there are some things you can change and others you can’t. I believe God is calling people to do that, but He also equips you with the necessary grace to speak out with boldness.” /FT

“ WE TALK ABOUT BEING HARD ON THE ISSUE, BUT EASY ON THE PEOPLE, BECAUSE AT THE END OF THE DAY WE HAVE TO ASSUME THAT EVERYONE IS THERE TO HELP THE CHILD MOVE FORWARD.”



3 MILLION
NUMBER OF
ELEMENTARY AND
SECONDARY SCHOOL
STUDENTS IN CANADA
(CANADIAN SCHOOL
BOARDS ASSOCIATION)

Alex Newman of Toronto is a senior writer for Faith Today.

HOPE AND HEALING FOR FIRST NATIONS AND THE CANADIAN CHURCH

***Faith Today* visited with aboriginal leaders recently to hear their heart for their communities**

By Lisa Hall-Wilson



All that lines the horizon 700 km north of Montreal are lakes, bush, patches of clear-cut forest and hydro lines. Common scenery as Canadian landscapes go, but *Faith Today* has been invited by Chief Reggie Neeposh of the James Bay Cree First Nation of Oujé-Bougoumou to visit this remarkable community on the shore of Lake Opemisca.

The community's culture is preserved in large and small details from signs written in English and Cree to structures dedicated to hanging and skinning moose and smoking fish. The community is laid out in the shape of an eagle's head. The shape is deliberate. The elders desired to build a community that reflects the fact that it is a part of the natural surroundings.

Neeposh points out a state-of-the-art heating system that services the whole community and runs on wood waste from a local sawmill. Unlike the First Nations reserves so often featured on national media outlets, the homes in Oujé-Bougoumou have siding and windows and are equipped

with heating and plumbing. The yards are well kept.

In the nearby town of Chibougoumou, all the locals seem to know Chief Neeposh. "I'm with a reporter," he tells people he meets, like he has to explain why he's hanging out with an outsider – a white girl.

His people are polite, but largely uninterested. An outsider asking questions is hardly unique, but an outsider willing to listen is at least worth speaking with.

Neeposh is a big man with a bigger smile. As he drives his white 4x4 pickup truck he shares about being raised by his grandparents, going to residential school and the physical abuse he endured. He talks about one teacher who made a positive impact on his life, and of his love for hockey. He shares about his first moose kill, and the day his grandfather accepted Christ as Saviour.

Oujé-Bougoumou has been recognized by the United Nations three times for innovation in human settlement. But it's not buildings that make a community successful.

"When we built this place, we did it through faith in God," says Neeposh. "Canada should

An aerial view of the James Bay Cree First Nation of Oujé-Bougoumou; (below) Chief Reggie Neeposh.



understand that this is what happens when you work with First Nations people."

Neeposh acknowledges the good intentions of many congregations from across Canada who want to respond when they hear of the plight of some First Nations communities. He advises that cross-cultural training should be a prerequisite for those planning a ministry to the First Nations. "The Church needs to learn our culture. Try to understand what we face," he says.

Neeposh, who feels a special burden to reach at-risk youth, would love to see a year-round biblical program to engage the youth in the community. "When they come to church,

they're looking for a relationship and to build a friendship. That's the thing I don't see happening. Give your time."

Neeposh believes three things need to happen to strengthen relationships and trust between the Canadian Church and First Nations – Stop stereotyping people. Get out of the pew. And connect with community.

A harsh reality

Oujé-Bougoumou is a new community built with an eye to urban planning and future economic development. But the majority of remote communities in the North lack its financial resources and endure the worst living conditions in Canada.

Access to these remote First Nations communities is limited to float planes in the summer and ice roads in the winter. There can be six weeks or more every spring and fall where nothing gets in or out. A lack of education and employment opportunities in addition to the fallout from the residential schools has sent some communities into a downward spiral.

Harvey Yesno is grand chief of the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation



Harvey Yesno, grand chief of the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation

(NAN) encompassing 49 Ojibway First Nations communities in Northern Ontario. In the last dozen years, no fewer than ten NAN communities have declared a state of emergency.

Yesno grew up in Eabametoong First Nation (known in English as Fort Hope), a remote fly-in community on Eabamet Lake, more than 350 km north of Thunder Bay, Ont. He survived physical and sexual abuse at two residential schools before being nominated and elected chief in 1978. He was 22.

"Our first suicide was in '91, I think," Yesno says. "From there on, for the next year there was a death like every month. My response? I drank pretty heavy. Had no way of coping."

Yesno got help for his drinking and sought healing for the abuse he'd suffered. When he was healthy again, he returned to serve as chief.

"There's a lot of goodwill when people respond, and that's the mission field mentality. We're beyond that," said Yesno. His advice to Canadian churches – "Stop looking at us as a mission field and get practical."

Churches on the reserves are often small. If there's a staff member, that person can be overwhelmed and might lack sufficient seminary education and training in biblical counselling. "There's huge burnout," Yesno says. "We get preaching, but we're not getting down to teaching." He suggests a partnership with urban churches to provide much-needed mentoring opportunities for smaller, more remote First Nations congregations.

Yesno cites the breakdown of the family, rampant sexual and substance abuse, un-

A REMINDER OF THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL REALITY AND LEGACY

The residential school era is a black mark on Canadian history, far from forgotten. The first Indian residential school opened in 1828 in Brantford [nicknamed Mush Hole because of the poor quality of the food] to serve the Six Nations near the Grand River. The last one closed its doors in 1996. In between, seven generations in some communities had children as young as three forcibly removed from their homes and families. Children were abused. More than 4,000 children died, according to the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Reflecting the poisoned culture of the time, Dr. Duncan Campbell Scott, deputy superintendent of the Department of Indian Affairs between 1913 and 1932, wrote, "I want to get rid of the Indian problem...Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question."

Prime Minister Stephen Harper officially apologized in 2008 saying, "We recognize that this policy of assimilation was wrong, has caused great harm, and has no place in our country." The fallout of the residential schools has been catastrophic and many of the problems found in First Nations communities are traced back to these schools.

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Visit www.faithtoday.ca/ajr to read an *Anglican Journal* collection of articles that tells the story of residential schools and their fallout in Canada.

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

The website of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (www.trc.ca) offers reports and updates.

—LISA HALL-WILSON

resolved conflict, grief and trauma as areas where well-trained biblical counsellors could help. "Some of the chiefs will tell me we've got our own counsellors, elders, sweat lodges, but what we need are Christian counsellors," says Yesno. "Our own people sometimes ostracize that because of the residential schools, but there are people who want Christian counselling."

Know the facts. And the history

Terry LeBlanc is director for the Indigenous Studies program at Tyndale University College & Seminary in Toron-

to. His family roots are in the Mi'kmaq First Nations in New Brunswick.

Have relations between Aboriginals and Canadian churches improved in recent years? LeBlanc says attitudes have softened on all sides, but there is still a shift in perception that needs to happen within the Church. "Stop seeing us as heathen savages and believe me, that's still – though the word is not used – very salient. The Church wants to correct the problem without understanding it."

Lori Ransom says the settlement churches (those directly involved in the residential

schools) have done a lot of work on the reserves, but other churches seem to be taking a watch and wait stance. She is senior advisor for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and a member of the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation. “Learn the history and find out what survivors are saying,” she advises. “There is a story of Aboriginal people and residential schools that’s not widely known. And it should be.”

History lessons might help churches to understand the trauma and injustices committed a century ago that have never been reconciled.

Chris George is a former chief from the Oneida First Nation outside London, Ont. The Oneida came as a group to Southwestern Ontario after joining with George Washington in the American Revolutionary War. After the war, the settlers failed to distinguish between the tribes who helped or fought against the Americans. Some of the Oneida people bought land in what was Upper Canada, but the British government reclaimed the land and created a reserve when the people were unable to pay outstanding back taxes they knew nothing of.

“My people remember,” says George, tapping the table with a stiff finger. “The local church should know the history of their church land, their community. Was it a burial ground? A hunting ground? Was there a battle there?” That history has to be mended, says George.

When history heals

Jonathan Maracle is a Mohawk Christian musician whose band Broken Walls tours North America and abroad, building bridges between First Nations reserves and white communities.

Maracle recalls one Prairie church trying to reach out to their First Nations neighbours. The congregation took the time to learn their history and discovered that more than a century ago there was a land dispute with the First Nations. One night the non-Natives conducted a raid and killed most of the First Nations people in the community. That injustice was never addressed.

“The church leaders figured this out and began to pray,” says Maracle. “They raised the funds to help the First Nations people buy back the land that was taken from them. It’s going to take people who are willing to step out and make a difference.”



Jonathan Maracle (centre) and his band Broken Walls seek to build bridges between First Nations and nearby white communities.

Build a playground. Then sit on the swing

Sixty percent of First Nations people live off-reserve, according to a 2006 Statistics Canada report. “Many churches wouldn’t know what to do if a First Nations person walked in, and that’s got to change,” says Maracle from his home on the Akwasasne Mohawk Reserve in Ontario.

“The gospel has been preached, we’ve heard it so much, we’ve become numb. People come in and whoop them up rather than meet their needs,” Maracle says. “People need a sense of the need and the urgency. Building a playground is great. Being there to help build it and building a relationship with the kids who will use it is even better.”

This is a story of hope and potential

Back at Oujé-Bougoumou, Chief Neeposh’s office over-

looks the community’s elementary school and a storm-choppy Lake Opemisca. An elaborate feathered headdress hangs on the wall next to a bookshelf crammed with volumes on economics and history.

Neeposh points to metal art on the windowsill depicting the Trail of Tears – it’s in the shape of a First Nations warrior barely upright on a weary horse. Neeposh tells the story of the eagle found by a farmer, who took the bird home and raised him with the chickens. Everybody who came to the farm knew he was an eagle. But when the farmer tried to teach the eagle to fly, he wouldn’t try.

Finally, the farmer took the eagle to a cliff. The majestic bird hesitated, but when he saw other birds in the sky like him he struggled at first, but then he flew. “We can rise up again,” Neeposh says. /FT



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

MANY AFFILIATES OF THE EVANGELICAL FELLOWSHIP OF CANADA WORK WITH FIRST NATIONS

→ Pioneers Canada (www.pioneers.ca)

has two teams working with First Nations communities in Ontario and New Brunswick doing ministries such as faith circles, counselling, restorative justice and youth work.

→ **SIM Canada (www.sim.ca)** has a new posting in Saddle Lake Cree Nation. Current ministry focus is youth engagement through music, arts, fitness, employment training and church plant support.

→ The Evangelical Mennonite Conference

(www.emconference.ca) has several workers with agencies working in First Nations communities. Two are with Northern Canada Evangelical Mission, one with Native Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, and one with Mid-Way Christian Leadership. The Evangelical Mennonite Conference has partnership agreements with these three agencies. They are also involved with Inner City Youth Alive in the north end of Winnipeg.

→ Samaritan’s Purse Canada

(www.samaritanspurse.ca) has opened a ministry centre in Dease Lake, B.C. The centre features a drop-in facility where young people find a welcoming, fun environment. The centre also serves as a launching pad for programs that engage local youth, develop their potential, build mentoring relationships, encourage good choices, and introduce them to Jesus Christ.

MY FAITH STORY? SURE, AND WHAT'S YOURS?

BY JENNIFER M. SHEPHERD

Rethinking how we share our faith in a changing world

There are few moments in my life that I remember as vividly as my first and only 400 m race. There I stood in the outside lane, a natural sprinter, completely confident that I would do fine.

I glanced back at the other runners in their staggered starting positions and thought to myself, *Wow! Look at the head start I have on everyone else!*

I bolted out to an impressive lead, but after 140 m my confidence quickly faded.

I finished last. Dead last. So far last I was delaying the start of the next race.

Everyone who knows me will tell you math is not my “gift,” and that day it was painfully obvious I did not consider the semicircles at the ends of the track, how they influence the length of the lane and why this race had staggered starts.

But math wasn’t my real issue. Before the starting gun even sounded, it was my sense of my own advantage that really did me in.

Personal faith doesn’t start from the same place

Five years ago, I realized the same issue was influencing how I shared my faith.

I already knew 1 Peter 3:15 calls Christians to always be ready to explain why we are confident in our beliefs to everyone who asks (commonly referred to as “apologetics” in academic circles).

When I discussed personal faith, I believed my Bible knowledge, years of church attendance and academic credentials gave me a head start over others.

But then Renée caught up to me. I didn’t even see her coming.

“I haven’t really read the Bible,” she said, “but I believe God is real.”

“That’s good,” I said, “but you need to read the Bible if you want to know God. That’s where you have to start!”

She smiled and said confidently, “No I don’t. I know He’s real.”

Soon Rachel was quickly on my heels. She had just returned from a summer of street ministry and outreach in Chicago.

“It was so rewarding just ‘being’ Jesus,” she gushed. “He never judged anyone. He never raised His voice. He just loved everyone.”

I smiled and asked, “What is your favourite Gospel?”

She shrugged her shoulders, somewhat puzzled by my question. “I don’t know. I don’t read those very much.”

I countered, “But you can’t be Jesus unless you have read about Jesus. That’s where you have to start!”

She smiled and said confidently, “No I don’t. I know what Jesus would do.”

I barely caught a glimpse of Brenda as she passed me in the race of faith. I had joined my Nana for the Sunday afternoon church service at the seniors’ home, where Brenda faithfully showered the residents with physical touch, personal attention and the message that God loved them.

Brenda also showered them with an overwhelming number of Bible verses so haphazardly strung together that I wondered, *How can she be so careless with God’s Word? I don’t think she even studied or prepared!*

Then she landed on 1 Corinthians 13, immediately silencing my inner debate with this simple truth. “I may not be the most eloquent of speakers, I could be more knowledgeable, and perhaps be more prepared, but I’ve got love for these people, and



without love, I am nothing.”

Eventually I started to wonder. Maybe the philosophical sort of apologetics that have been dominant for so many years are not the only ways to arrive at and share faith.

Here’s how Michael Spencer, a Kentucky blogger who called himself the Internet Monk, put it. “I’m convinced the game is not primarily about arguments anymore. [Tim] Keller is still great. C. S. Lewis is still helpful. [William Lane] Craig is still impressive. But I’m not sure their arguments are on the right channel. Vast numbers of people aren’t asking for philosophy. Pay closer attention. The game has changed” (www.internetmonk.com/archive/reatheism).

So what are people asking for?

Personal faith begins with a personal story

North Americans today tend to speak of God in terms of our own personal values, rather than using traditional philosophical or biblical concepts.

This shouldn’t surprise us. We all start our stories with what we know best – our own lives, our own experiences and our own histories. These multiple, subjective starting points do not disqualify us from the conversation.

Traditional apologetics is not rendered useless in this context - we can still debate ideas and conclusions – but debate-style approaches that try to poke holes in other people’s ideas and stories often undervalue the skills and tools of dialogue that are so crucial today.

Here are three to start thinking about.

SKILL #1

Recognize that you went through a process to arrive at your current beliefs about God. Share the truth that even now you don’t have all the answers.

Each of us should speak frankly about our own story of faith. Many people are genuinely open to hearing our story in the context of conversation, but if we are not able to share our faith with its highs and lows, its victories and failures, its certainties and doubts, we sound like we aren’t being honest.

Our goal should be to share in easy, normal, personal or relatable ways – conscious of the reality that there is still more to be written.

SKILL #2

Accept that people with different beliefs have also gone through a process to arrive at their convictions. Listen to understand where they started from, and the events and ideas that shaped their spiritual journey.

This means listening to someone else’s story differently, looking not for errors, but for connections and new information that can enhance our own journeys.

Most people aren’t engaging in debate when they share their stories of faith. It’s actually counter-productive when we trot out our well-prepared rebuttals because we sound like we’re saying their story can’t be trusted.

Instead of looking for ways to discredit other people’s stories, let’s start listening to what has led others to believe what they do and be willing to wonder aloud about our own journey (rather than focusing on our current theologically correct ideas).

SKILL #3

Recognize the many starting points for faith. Embrace the reality that imperfect ideas and experiences shape these starting points.

In today’s world it’s acceptable that everyone has a story to tell. You have a chance to hear other stories. Your story does not have an advantage over others.

Most people are not concerned if their story of faith is shaped by philosophical, well-reasoned biblical arguments. So if we insist faith is best understood in certain ways, it sounds like we are saying our story is better.

If God is as big as we say and desires relationship more than we can imagine, let’s stop trying to make someone else’s story match our own.

Are we prepared to consider the faith journeys of others and ourselves without trying to lurch ahead too quickly to a supportive chapter and verse or to a theologically correct destination?

As I wrote this article, my god-daughter Macey told me that she believed in God and Mother Nature. Five years ago I would have told her she had to choose between the two. Now, I began where she started and we talked about faith in a God who both creates and nurtures. It was wonderful. /FT



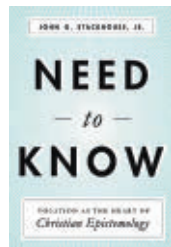
Dr. Jennifer M. Shepherd is founder of the Faith Fingerprints and Same Seed, Different Soil training programs (www.engageconsulting.com). She has taught at Columbia Bible College, Masters College & Seminary, Summit Pacific and Trinity Western University. Her first book *Faith Is the Story You Tell* will be published in October.

ONLINE QUIZ WHERE DO YOU START?

Go online to www.faithtoday.ca/ApologeticsQuiz to try out a quiz that Jennifer Shepherd designed for *Faith Today* readers who want to think more about questions like these: When you tell your story, where do you start? What kind of an apologist are you – what confident story do you tell about God – and how does that set you up to hear other stories about God?

REVIEWS

Stackhouse suggests that a pluralistic and postmodern world calls for a new model of thinking constantly in a Christian way about everything.



Need to Know: Vocation as the Heart of Christian Epistemology
By John G. Stackhouse, Jr.
Oxford University Press, 2014.

278 pages. \$31 [e-book \$9.99]

AS CHRISTIANS, we are to love God with all our heart, soul and mind. Part of our divine calling is to think. What then does it mean to think Christianly? *Need to Know* is John Stackhouse's answer to questions about how we know things and how we know that we know them. His aim is to show how we should reflect upon whatever God calls us to think about.

Stackhouse, a prolific Canadian professor and *Faith Today* columnist, suggests that a pluralistic and postmodern world calls for a new model of thinking constantly in a Christian way about everything. An enriched Christian mind can be informed by "both faithfulness to the past and openness to new ideas."

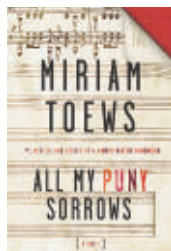
He contends that the heart of Christian knowing (and related issues of epistemology) is vocation, which he defines as "the divine calling to be a Christian in every mode of life," whether public or private, religious or secular, corporate or individual. God intends for us to honour our voca-

tions, so He will ensure we know enough to do so.

The reader may occasionally wonder about the route Stackhouse is taking but, to his credit, in the final chapter he demonstrates how Christians can use vocational epistemology to know precisely how to make decisions in an ambiguous world.

The most practical part of *Need to Know* is the appendix in which Stackhouse sketches how his method can work by demonstrating how he arrived at his understanding of gender.

Need to Know is a rigorous piece of scholarship, requiring keen focus and concentration, but the determined reader will be challenged by the hope of *shalom* which is, Stackhouse explains, "an ideal of universal well-being." —BURTON K. JAMES



All My Puny Sorrows
By Miriam Toews
Knopf, 2014.
336 pages.
\$14 [e-book \$13]

IF YOU are on the lookout for a book that will leave you with feelings of happiness and hope, *All My Puny Sorrows* would be a bad choice.

As the title accurately suggests, this sixth novel by an award-winning Canadian novelist is saturated in sorrow.

Sisters Elfrieda and Yolandi have a unique bond that has carried

them through childhood and into adulthood, but when Elf's suicide attempts land her in the psych ward, Yoli must decide just how far that sisterly bond will take her.

We follow Yoli on her quest to keep her sister alive, and to finally question whether she should. What do you do when your suffering sister wants to die?

The story is written with passion and fluidity, although it can be confusing at times to discover if we are in Yoli's past or present. There is some language and sexual connotation that may offend, but the deep ties between the sisters are enjoyable to read.

It succeeds at painting a very real picture of mental illness and draws readers deeper into the difficult question making headlines this year across Canada – "Do any of us have the right to decide when we die?"

Toews, who grew up in a Mennonite family in Steinbach, Man., knows depression personally – her own sister committed suicide and their father also took his own life 12 years earlier.

To be clear, this novel is not written from an evangelical perspective. It allows no room for an all-knowing God to enter our debates about assisted suicide. Instead, it challenges readers to consider if these dilemmas are as black and white as we may have believed them to be. —CHRISSEY DENNIS



We Are One
Sky Terminal
Independent, 2014.
\$15 [digital download \$6.99]

FROM THE OPENING guitar riff on *We Are One*, it's obvious Sky Terminal is no ordinary Christian rock group. The band from Mississauga, Ont., calls its music "good old crank-it-up rock'n'roll ... modern rock with an indie twist." It's the heaviest Christian rock I've heard in years, with a sound that reminds me at times of vintage U2 and Simple Minds.

Great rock tunes such as "If the World," "Awake Awake" and

"Satellite" recently helped the album win Rock Album of the Year at the Canadian Gospel Music Association Awards.

But the 12-track album also offers creative contrast in "Lay My Head Down," which includes nothing but acoustic guitar and some sensitive cello by Sybil Shanahan. Talk about extremes!

The tunes have surprisingly strong and well-sung melodies for hard rock, and even more surprising are the lyrics – no

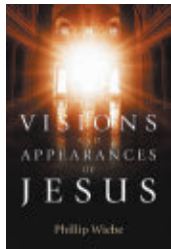
in-your-face preaching here. Instead, the lyrics are introspective, prayerful and highly personal. They may seem murky at times, then suddenly a message of hope shines through.

What Christian could not sing along with these words from "Under the Stars"?

"I fall down, fall down / Oh I'm where you are / I fall down, fall down, you hold the stars / I fall down, fall down / In awe where you are / Where you are."

The band started with singer Marcel Preston and guitarist Mike Crofts, and later added bassist Matt Stride. Although the punchy drum is very prevalent, there's no full-time drummer [yet]. The band earned a Juno nomination for their self-produced 2011 debut *Don't Close Your Eyes*.

Before buying, listen to the entire album at www.skyterminal.net. —TERRY BURMAN



Visions and Appearances of Jesus
By Phillip H. Wiebe
Leafwood Publishers, 2014.
240 pages. \$18
[e-book \$9.99]

PHILLIP WIEBE'S interest in exploring visions of Jesus began when his mother had one. This readable collection of similar stories is the result of years of research by this professor of philosophy from Langley, B.C.

Wiebe begins by naming the elements that must be satisfied to make such visitations plausible. He continues by listing Jesus' post-resurrection appearances starting with the Bible and going through every era to the present, including stories from 30 people he interviewed. He ends with a discussion of images like the Shroud of Turin.

The book is a fascinating collage of visitations – from the stigmata of medieval mystics to the extraordinary light, compelling gaze, physical healing, and resulting motivation to live differently that many moderns have experienced.

Wiebe's carefully worded comments let readers come to their own conclusions. He articulates his position at the end of one of the stories. "The challenge ... is being neither too gullible nor too critical."

While most of these accounts were out of my range of experience, the sheer number of them brings Wiebe to a conclusion that, by the end of the book, is convincing – "Finding so many independent accounts of similar experiences [makes] rejecting them all ... unreasonable."

This is a book to bolster faith that Jesus is alive, engaged, and could at any moment peel back the veil of earth-reality from any of our eyes.

–VIOLET NESDOLY

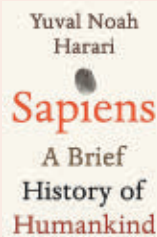
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Reading THE BESTSELLERS



Sapiens:
A Brief History of Humankind
By Yuval Noah Harari
McClelland & Stewart, 2014.
443 pages. \$18 [e-book \$16]

YUVAL NOAH HARARI, a professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, points us to prehistoric handprints on cave walls in France and Argentina and a bootprint on the moon as he contemplates the stellar but also disquieting rise of the most powerful creature on the planet – *homo sapiens*.

Consider that a mere 66 years passed between the time a plane first took flight and a man's foot first touched the moon. That's amazing. At the same time, Harari writes, we can link the rise and growth of *sapiens* to all sorts of suffering – war, the extinction of other creatures and, he thinks, a heartless meat industry (among other things).

Harari's view, in a book that is well informed, but also flies at a high level of generality (and thus slips in overstatement), is strictly secular. This leads him to make unprovable assertions such as "There are no gods in the universe."

While he recognizes the great majority of people who have lived would sense internally there is something wrong with this outlook he, like other provocative secularists, seems to place himself above the herd – a kind of postmodern Moses dispensing truth to the masses.

Aside from Harari's sometimes irritating omniscient tone, the book as a whole is compelling. Perhaps the most interesting section has to do with the theme of human contentment. "Was Neil Armstrong, whose footprint remains intact on the windless moon, happier than the nameless hunter-gatherer who 30,000 years ago left her handprint on a wall in Chauvet Cave?"

Harari thinks the answer is complicated. He recognizes that the prosperity and freedom Canadians enjoy has contributed to the unravelling of the family and led to higher levels of unhappiness. A degree of wealth makes us happier – frazzled human relations don't.

Christians will disagree with some – perhaps much – of what Harari writes. But he sees what they know. *Sapiens* are a mixed creature – partly dust, the stuff of the natural world; partly spirit, the image of God. Life is complicated.

–PRESTON JONES

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Peter formed his passion for defending people caught in sex trafficking in Southeast Asia. Encouraged by professors, he took the challenge to become a human rights lawyer.

Whitney fell in love with children with autism. Moved by the children, she ran Tyndale's day camp for children with autism and continues to work in the field.

Keith was inspired to start his own company. Today he is the co-CEO of a company that connects talented people from developing economies online with North American clients.



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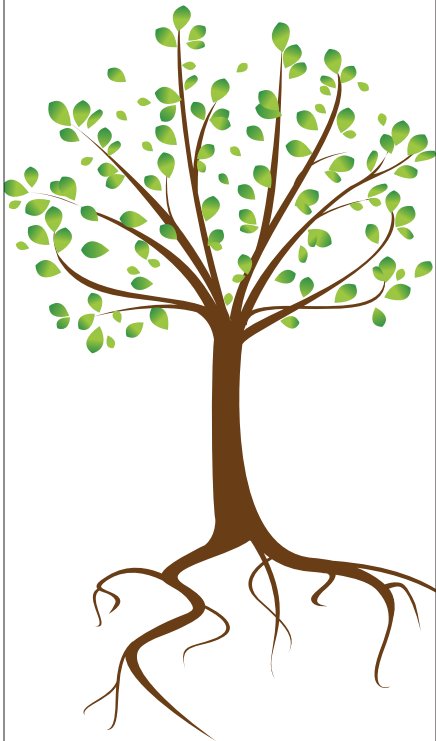
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of study and is valued at up to \$40,000. Ava Peacock was honoured to be named the presidential scholarship recipient for the 2014/15 school year.

Ava is studying in the history program at Ambrose, and after completing her degree she hopes to enter law school to specialize in either criminal or humanitarian law.

"I have always loved history, particularly modern history, and I knew I wanted to go to school at Ambrose, so I was thrilled that they had a history program," she said.

In choosing Ambrose, Ava was also keen on attending a school where the community experience would enrich and support her learning. "I came from a tiny high school ... where I was used to a small, close-knit community. Ambrose was perfect for me because the teachers are all extremely approachable and accessible if you need help. I also feel confident participating in class discussions because the classes are smaller."

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All five courses are for credit and can be applied to any of the graduate certificates, diplomas or master's degrees that Heritage Seminary offers.

www.DiscoverHeritage.ca



Axel Kazadi [MTS 2015]

Axel is a Tyndale Seminary student and a member of the Tyndale Hip Hop Movement, is passionate about theology. Born into a Christian family, Axel was exposed to Christianity from an early age but it wasn't until after a tragic experience in Grade 12 that he began to take God seriously. During that difficult time, he experienced depression and a fear of death, but God was with him. "I thank God for rescuing me from that state of mind, from that depressive state. Christ helped me overcome that situation and gave me a sense of peace that I was looking for." The experience encouraged him to explore theology and Christology. Axel came to Tyndale Seminary to do just that. Currently in his final year, he is working on a major research paper, hoping to be admitted into the PhD program at the University of Toronto. Working

Does God Suffer With Us?

with Dr. Dennis Ngien, Professor of Systematic Theology, Axel has chosen to research and write about the question of whether God is able to suffer relationally with us. Axel explains, "It looks at how He relates to us and how He takes suffering upon Himself."

Axel is passionate about this topic because of the difficult experiences he has had. "I'm interested in understanding whether God is able to suffer relationally with us or whether our human suffering affects Him." He hopes to take what he finds and use it to aid the church. "I want to do my PhD because I feel like there is more that I need to learn and I want to teach theology." With his experiences and his studies, he wants to provide a good theological teaching that people and the church can benefit from.

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Misplaced metaphors muddling mission

Is a Christian organization really just like a church or family?

Why do people who are fully capable professionals become weirdly dysfunctional when they participate in a Christian ministry?

I'm thinking of the problematic work behaviour of otherwise successful parents, teachers, executives, salespeople, health care workers and so on when they work at a Bible school, summer camp, campus ministry or community group.

What leads us to mar our contributions to Christian ministry by ignoring policies that have been painstakingly constructed, insisting on our own way despite all objections, condescending to others who are in no way inferior, refusing responsibility for the harmful implications of our actions, and undermining the hard work of our fellow Christians?

The apostles denounced these behaviours, and they remind us constantly to love each other, be mindful of each other, prefer each other, honour each other, edify each other and do good to each other. The apostles knew already in the Church's earliest decades how badly believers could treat each other and how crucial it is that we don't.

Some people treat each other badly, of course, because some people are bad. Indeed we are all sinners, and each of us is capable of willfully injuring another.

Before I assume, however, that the latest slight or frustration I have suffered was intentional, I should consider an important social fact about Christian organizations. They are commonly complex to the point

of dysfunction when it comes to the simple question of *mission*.

People participate in Christian organizations for lots of different reasons to achieve lots of different goals and according to lots of different values. That complexity doesn't exist in many other sectors of life. The business of business is business – maximizing return to the shareholder; performing a valuable service or producing valuable goods at a decent profit; treating everyone involved (vendors, customers, employees and other stakeholders) with dignity; and the rest of it.

Hospitals and schools are reasonably simple in their central outcomes as well – making sick people well and ignorant people informed.

What, however, is a church for? What is a Christian university, periodical or political group for?

Some have admirably clear goals, and it is thus relatively easy to get everyone pulling in the same direction. Too often, however, missional coherence becomes muddled by the imposition of other metaphors.

"Family," for instance, is too often invoked in organizations that decidedly are *not* families. Sure, during celebrations, no one should mind if the CEO declaims about "our family of fine coworkers." But most of the time, no, we're not a family.

You shouldn't treat family members as you would employees, nor vice versa. Church life should not be governed by the values of a family reunion – judging success by how many people attended and whether everyone had a pleasant time. And doesn't the family metaphor vapor-

ize when a Christian organization has to fire an employee?

Perhaps the most common mistake is to assume other Christian organizations can function just like churches.

Presidents and deans and COOs and HR personnel and department heads and interns and consultants all have a proper place within many organizations, but there are only the roughest of equivalents for any of these roles in congregational life.

It hurts organizations when executives act like pastors, or employees respond to leadership as if it is coming merely from a fellow believer rather than a job supervisor.

The skills so many of us have honed in the work world can get results more quickly and effectively there because the rules of the game and the point of the game are quite clear.

But in church both the rules and the outcome may be unclear, or be seen as in conflict with what is normally done, or even simply be at odds between one Christian and another.

Wise leadership, then, and good relations with each other will require us to notice when there seems to be needless friction in the system, when antagonism is surfacing among people who could normally be expected to co-operate, and when decisions take forever to be made.

Maybe it's just plain sin, and some people need to be disciplined accordingly.


But maybe, instead, it is the result of confusion arising from good people energetically and sincerely pursuing cross-purposes according to values that are appropriate in another sphere but not in this one.

A church is not a family is not a college is not an evangelistic mission is not a store is not a clinic. /FT

3

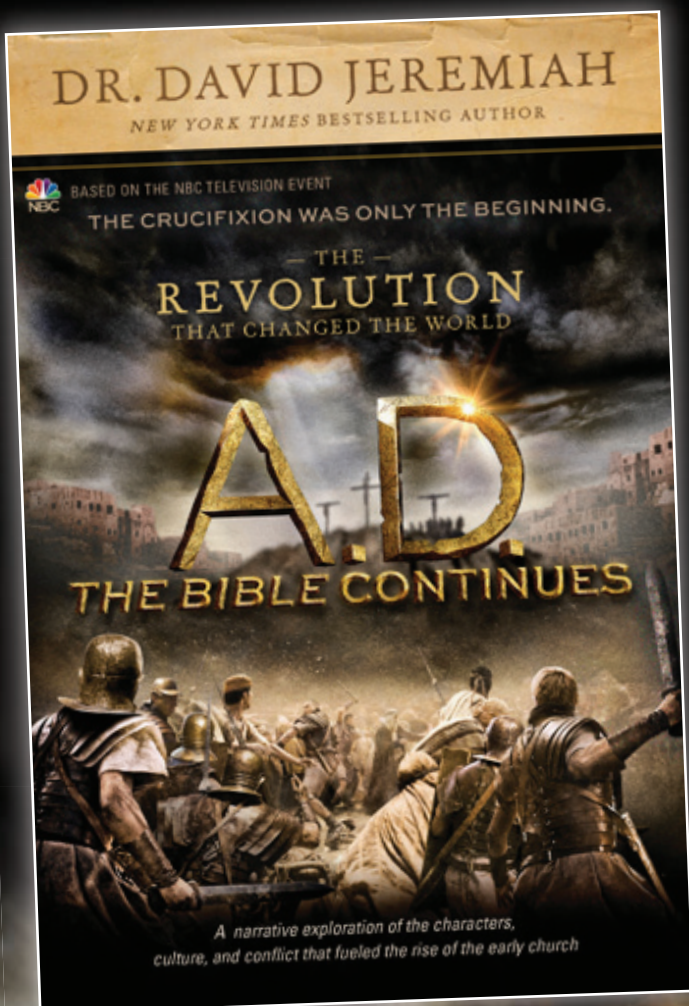
"THERE ARE THREE STAGES IN THE WORK OF GOD: IMPOSSIBLE; DIFFICULT; DONE."

—HUDSON TAYLOR (1832-1905), BRITISH MISSIONARY TO CHINA

 This summer John Stackhouse leaves Regent College for Crandall University, where he will serve as the Samuel J. Mikolaski professor of religious studies and dean of faculty development. Find more of these columns at www.faithtoday.ca/ChristAndCulture.

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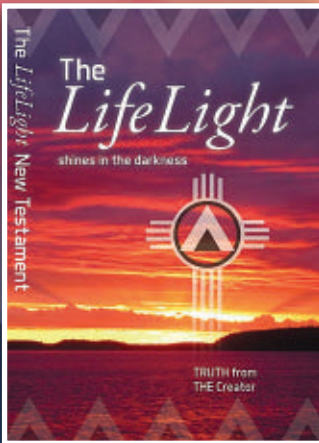


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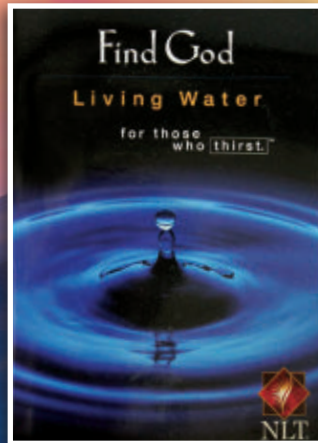
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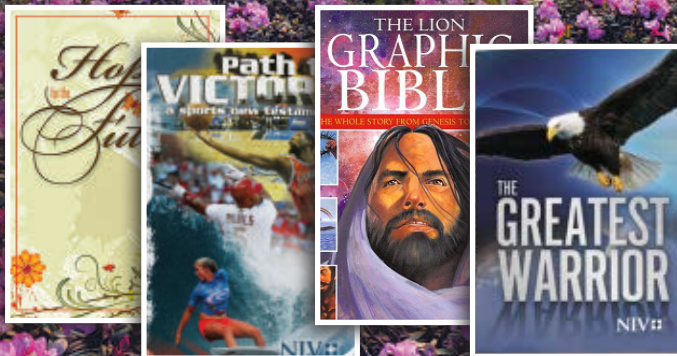
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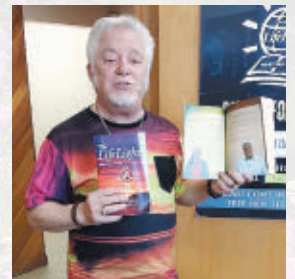
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- The Chaplain, Charles, at Prince Albert Penitentiary said the First Nations New Testament was well received and some of the fellows just rejoiced upon receiving it!
- Gordon Hausteader, an evangelist to First Nations communities, reported that the Bible was well received in Saddle Lake, AB and they are looking for more to come, hoping to start a First Nations Bible school!
- A Metis lady from Winnipeg said she really appreciated and approved of the First Nations New Testament and said, "Praise the Lord!" She wanted one to share with someone she knew and knew it was going to be an open door for Salvation.



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MICHAEL.A.AMOS

FROM THE
HOOD TO
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ISSUE9
MAY/JUNE 2015

WWW.LOVEMOVEMENT.ORG

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WORDS FROM THE EDITOR

Just like pain, they say change is inevitable. Change is a concept that can either consume us or allow us to grow as we choose to either embrace it or enslave it. Situations are bound to happen, choices have to be made in crucial circumstances, but it is our ultimate reaction to Change that's going to determine the outcome physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually.

One area that we are all affected by as it rapidly continues to change is this world, in particular technologically speaking. It almost seems as if we are running out of options of what to watch on TV, what to listen to, what school to attend or simply what to wear. Evidently the content of this world is highly influential for our society. Celebrities are more than ever determining what "happiness" is. While seventeen year olds should be focusing on what post-secondary educational options they have, their role models of which are of the same age are emphasizing plastic surgery and relationships. Instead of challenging each other to achieve our educational goals, young people are challenging to recreate celebrity's lips.

These questions seems to be haunting the minds of the current young Christian generation and the ones to come as it's becoming more confusing to differentiate between what is acceptable influence or not. Are we supposed to conform to the behaviours and messages of this world? Are we as Christians supposed to adapt to these rapid changes? How do we handle living for Christ in a world that is changing in favour of sin more and more?

It isn't just the media or Internet domains that are hastily changing. The educational system, government policies and decision, and social pressures are some of the big areas in our lives that, whether we like it or not, force us to acknowledge its changes. The difference then lies as to how much of its changes do we allow to settle with us.

Issue 9 will explore many types of changes and situations that we are all at some point or another faced with. Being uncomfortable in a secular classroom, entering the work force or being raised in a dangerous neighborhood, are some of the areas explored. However, aside from all of the changes occurring in the world, one thing always remains true and comforting, knowing that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. Let's hang on to the promises of God. Despite the chaos of the speedy changes of the world, His promises for a bright future and a hope remain unchanging.

- Crileidy Liriano; Senior Editor of LIA Magazine

LOVE MOVEMENT/LIA MAGAZINE

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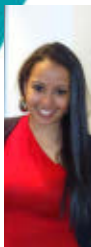
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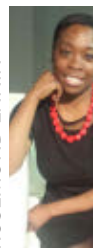
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ROSEMOND ENININ



LOVE
MOVEMENT

This world suffers from FoMO
- The Fear of missing out.

We spend our days memorizing social media like a dictionary.
Drinking the wine of its definition.
Reading other people's highlight reel like it is truth.
Watching staged, filtered, duck face, perfectly angled, to hit all the right angles, pics until we are a library of pervasive apprehensive thoughts, that others are having a better time than us; in fact other people are better than us.

We follow and like,
and follow and like,
and follow and like until it makes us sick.
Still we drink again and again like we are bobbing for apples in Eden.
Welcome to the party.

This poisoned world tries to fill us with continually connected knowledge of what others are doing.
We are full to the top with FoMO.
An overflow of fear that we have made the wrong decision on how to spend our time.

We should be somewhere else.
We should wear something else.
We should be someone else.
There is always something better... if I can just Google what it is...
There is something missing.
So, we continually plug into our keyboards.
Add power bars to power bars to extension cords like more electricity will bring us back to life.

Distraction is key.
But keys can set you free or lock you inside.
Keep you at home on Sunday to focus on Facebook.
Check-in, #SELFIE! Take a picture of your lunch
- You are having such a good time!
Quick take my picture...make me look like I'm having such a good time!

Pin each picture to your "Self Worth" wall and judge your worth in an unworthy world by the # of likes, views, and shares among friends you don't even know.
This world is selling you a super size version of everyone else's life.
It wants to keep you looking for the upgrade.
It wants you to think that you can buy, whatever it is that you need.
But there is nothing that can purchase that Jesus has not already died and paid for.
We are signed, sealed and delivered.

They will tell you the cross is just jewelry.
Instead of a reminder hangin' from our necks that it should have been us hangin' there instead.

A Man died on the cross.
The world will tell you it is a historical fact
They will focus on the fact - He was a Man.
But in a report you must provide all the evidence.
Face the fact that there will be some facts that you cannot face but yet they are true.

Fact: A Man, flesh and bone, knew He was to going to die, feel every sin,
wear a crown of thorns, be beaten, shamed, humiliated.

His skin would be torn, His blood dripping.
At His greatest moment of torture
His own Father would turn away.
Still he took every nail
for His followers,
for His enemies,
and for the lukewarm He walked straight into fire.

Fact: If there was any sin he had not taken on yet
Jesus would run toward it and impaled Himself on it.
If that meant one more heart would be saved.

Fact: There is a reason it is called "going viral"
It is an infection that has overtaken our minds and is aiming for our souls.

Fact: I have a fear that the world is missing out on the sound of His voice, caught up in a raging ocean of idols.

Fact: One drop of the blood that was pressed from Him could fill
the hole shaped like Jesus dug into your chest by the world.

Fact: The world is just the world. You will leave it behind.
So, check our status with Him before all others.
And instead of Facebook put your face in The Book.

To see more of Dagmar's work, contact her at:
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FEAR OF MISSING OUT / DAGMAR MORGAN

F O M O

LETTING PURPOSE DETERMINE YOUR PATH: TRUSTING GOD WITH THE CHANGE

BY: EMILY COOK

We've got it wrong. We've got it desperately wrong.

No matter what path your life is taking, whether academic and leading you to higher education, or vocational and leading you to apprenticeship, there are phases in each of these paths in which decisions have to be made and changes have to be dealt with. It's all about perspective, and we're just not doing it right.

Behind each of these directions is the blaring truth that it's not about God. I am currently heading towards the finale of my undergrad, and the question of the year has been, "What do you plan to do with your life when you graduate?" The questions always focused on me. Who do I want to be, how am I going to provide for myself, what's going to make me happy? Silly me, I haven't come up with an answer yet. But maybe that's a good thing.

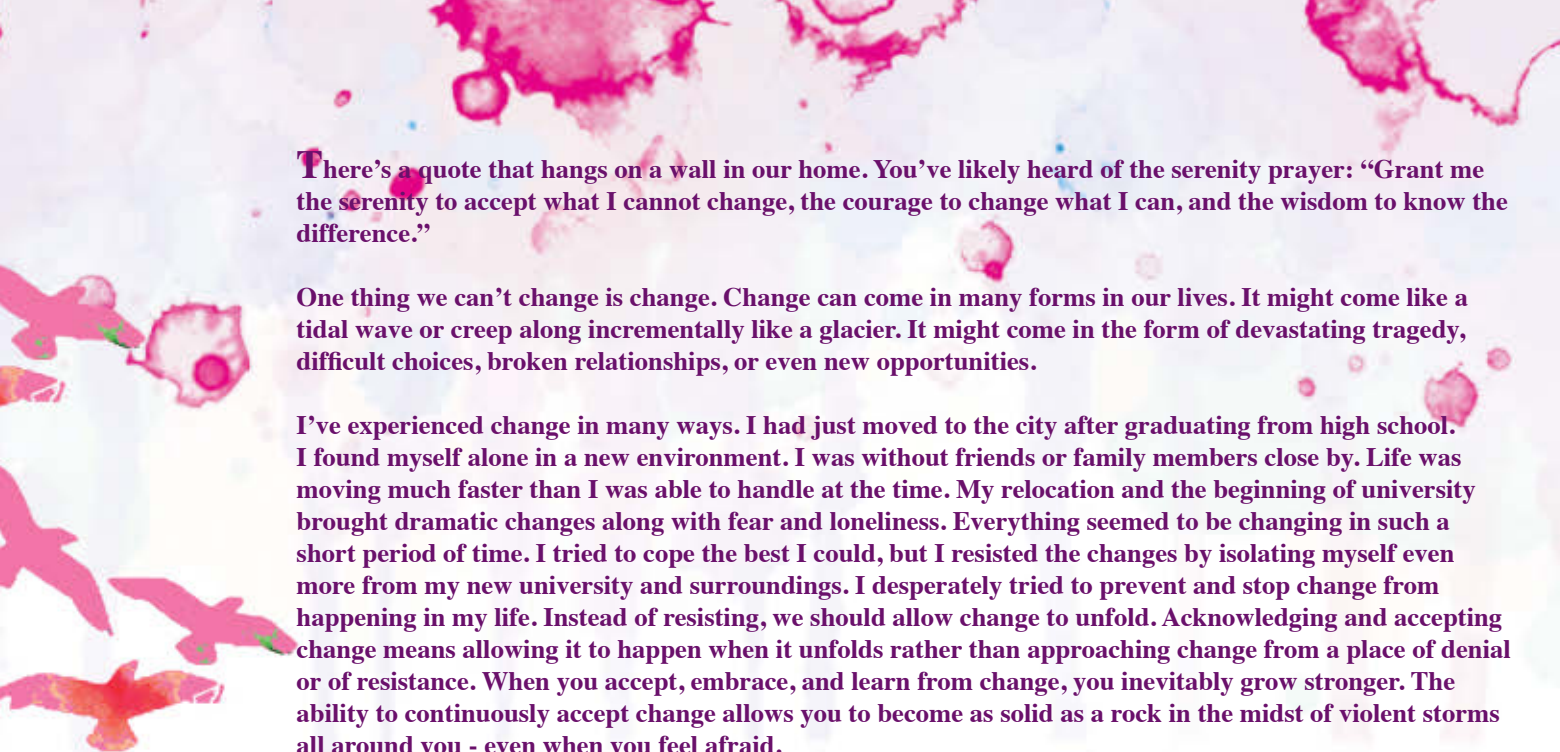
There is so much pressure, at all phases of life, but especially when young, to have a clear vision of what career you want, and what life-goals you have. And it's all so very worldly. This self-centered perception removes all elements of trust and faith in something else when facing the unknown. If we have it under control, there's no longer space for God. I know this because I've seen the panic in classmate's eyes when they talk about their future; heck, I've seen it in my own. The root? It's in the worry of losing purpose.

You see, without Jesus, purpose comes from the world's validation. You long to know you have an acceptable job; the correct income to provide "sufficiently" for your family, and that you did live up to something after all. But that's not what us, as Christians, ought to be living for.

We already have our purpose. We've had it since the moment we dedicated our lives to Christ and started on a journey of healing with Him. Jesus replied, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it; Love your neighbor as yourself; All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments," Matthew 22:37-40.

A wise friend of mine once told me that I can go anywhere and be doing any job and still have an incredibly fulfilling life, if I am living in the knowledge that my purpose extends beyond this world, and is not defined by my occupation or education level. Therefore, the changes that come with graduation, or any other life event, should be met while living in the grace of God, knowing that each day is a gift from Him and no matter where life takes us, He will go before us and He is our purpose.

It affects everything, and it's life altering. It's time we, as Christians, start living counter-culturally and acknowledge there is more to life than our paychecks, and our titles. We are sons and daughters of the living King (2 Corinth 6:18), and that should always be enough.



There's a quote that hangs on a wall in our home. You've likely heard of the serenity prayer: "Grant me the serenity to accept what I cannot change, the courage to change what I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."

One thing we can't change is change. Change can come in many forms in our lives. It might come like a tidal wave or creep along incrementally like a glacier. It might come in the form of devastating tragedy, difficult choices, broken relationships, or even new opportunities.

I've experienced change in many ways. I had just moved to the city after graduating from high school. I found myself alone in a new environment. I was without friends or family members close by. Life was moving much faster than I was able to handle at the time. My relocation and the beginning of university brought dramatic changes along with fear and loneliness. Everything seemed to be changing in such a short period of time. I tried to cope the best I could, but I resisted the changes by isolating myself even more from my new university and surroundings. I desperately tried to prevent and stop change from happening in my life. Instead of resisting, we should allow change to unfold. Acknowledging and accepting change means allowing it to happen when it unfolds rather than approaching change from a place of denial or of resistance. When you accept, embrace, and learn from change, you inevitably grow stronger. The ability to continuously accept change allows you to become as solid as a rock in the midst of violent storms all around you - even when you feel afraid.

ACKNOWLEDGING AND ACCEPTING CHANGE

BY: CANDACE MAXYMOWICH

Sometimes when we go through major changes we think we are dealing with something no one else can possibly understand or that no one else is going through. No matter what you're going through or what you're feeling, there are others that can empathize with you. You're not alone and ultimately, none of us are separate from the Creator.

Things change all the time and we resist it. Our day changes and our relationships change. We ourselves are changing constantly. All of this can be hard to deal with. For me, the pain of change is not being in control.

How do we cope with pain of change? We can cope with this pain in numerous ways. Maybe we get angry and yell. Maybe we drink or do drugs, eat junk food, watch TV or find other distractions. We can find positive ways to cope and we can learn to shift our perspective to embrace changes in our lives.

Give yourself permission to be vulnerable. Some of us like to project an image of being strong and fearless, but sometimes we're not. Maybe we're scared of change. Maybe we feel like we're exposed. Vulnerability is just part of who we are as people. There's always learning and growth that can come when we allow our true selves to be seen. When you allow people to really see you, they can help.

When we scroll through Instagram and marvel over the adventurous and perfectly filtered lives of our friends, or when our to-do lists at work suffocate us or at home, our minds start to harp on what we wish we had. We should appreciate what we have in our lives and we can focus our attention to being grateful on a daily basis. During seasons of change and always, we need to be thankful and grateful for all that we have and all that God has provided rather than discontent or grumbling about our circumstances. A few months ago, I started a writing exercise. In the morning before the start of each day, I flip open my journal and write down three things I'm grateful for. Sometimes I also take time to write about what's on my mind, in my dreams, or on my plate for the day. I challenge you to do the same.

"I am the Lord; I do not change" (Malachi 3:6).

Although our lives and circumstances continue to change, God is always the same. We can trust Him not to turn against us. His love is unchanging. He never leaves us or forsakes us.

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).



ASK & WE'LL ANSWER

BY: CRILEIDY LIRIANO

FOMO EDITION

FOMO –Fear Of Missing Out Do you have it?

FOMO is the feeling you get when you scroll through a person's Facebook, Instagram or Twitter page and begin to compare their "perfect" life with your not-so-perfect one. It is the moment where you scroll through these social media pages and analyze how "good" your friends' lives seem and not yours. It is the concept of wasting endless hours reviewing your acquaintance's pictures that make them seem well put together as they showcase their good fashionable sense, economically awesome status as they travel and their heartfelt inspiring life quotes that gives the rest of us a lesson or two to apply to our lives. The reality is, we sometimes forget that behind the perfect pictures, quotes and sense of humour lies a bunch of souls that are many times dealing with one or more broken hearts, depression, loneliness, void and lack of intimacy with God. We long for love and acceptance as we try to hide our broken lives behind perfectly orchestrated profiles.

We took to the public the question of the FOMO (Fear of Missing Out). Do you have it?

How can you not? I feel like everyone on my page is having the time of their life and I'm here... not.

-Jessica P.

There are always those moments of, "Wow why can't I have done that. Only if I had a better job"


-Anonymous

You know, sometimes I stop and wonder if these people have any bad situations (aside from those that make it a priority to share with the world). I think I find myself imagining their bad days, especially those I don't ever see in person. Kinda weird now that I think about it.


-Maria A.

I just go online to entertain myself a little bit. That's all. But in the end... I guess sometimes I wish I were as funny.

-Adam

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FROM THE HOOD TO SUCCESS



INTERVIEW WITH MICHAEL A. AMOS
BY: CRILEIDY LIRIANO




BOTH SIDES OF THE FENCE

SURVIVING THE TRAP



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CANADA

Michael A. Amos is an actor, author and keen athlete born and raised in Driftwood Court, an area of the Jane and Finch community located in the Northwest part of Toronto. Jane and Finch is said to have one of the largest intensity of criminal gangs of any area in Canada. Although a very multicultural neighbourhood, it has a large population of single parent households, low-income earners and not to mention one of the highest percentages of youth within a community.

Michael A. Amos is a dreamer and an optimistic individual whose fatherless household had affected him tremendously as he was left growing up with a void. Amos describes growing up with the void as having no other choice but to fill the emptiness with other things, in his case, turning to the streets in his early teens; however, quickly changing in his late teens as he discovered opportunities to prosper and the chance to turn his life around. He landed his first movie role in *Against the Ropes* starring Meg Ryan, Omar Epps, and Kerry Washington at the age of 17. Soon after that he got casted in the made for T.V movie *Redemption*, starring Jamie Fox.

Amos' book, *Both sides of the Fence* launched in July 2014 and had originally started as a personal Journal documenting his life. Michael A. Amos describes the purpose of his journal as evidence of what he was going through for his mother just in case something was to happen to him and for it to be read at his funeral- she would know the truth about her son. During the times of writing his journal entries, Michael A. Amos dropped out of school and started getting involved in the streets. He says all along he knew he could do better, but for some reason he felt like he couldn't. He felt like everyone around him had predestined their negative mentality for him, just like the rest of the youth, failure. The more he kept writing, the more he realized his journal began to look like a book. Writing encouraged him to stay off the streets since he was actually doing something productive and positive for his life. He decided that instead of allowing his journal entries to be his own eulogy at his funeral, he began to think he could use it and turn it into something positive- to help others who are living in his shoes realize that there is hope. He describes it as a blueprint on how it's going to go down- from the Hood to Success.

Originally, Amos was raised in a Catholic influenced household, and it wasn't until about a year and a half ago that he began a close and personal relationship with God for himself. Michael A. Amos was asked what was it like growing up in Jane and Finch as someone who had a general understanding of God. Amos reflected and expressed that at that moment in time, you believed in God just because you grow up being told about Him, but in reality you don't really understand what you're believing or doing. It wasn't until living in Kitchener, Ontario that he began to discover God for himself, as he was curious and intrigued by what certain messages on TV said about God through Christian preachers. Amos was surprised to find in his bible the same thing that the preacher would mention during the message. He then began to understand that listening to the messages wasn't enough; he had to know God for himself.

Being in the film industry, it is an area of work that can be highly influential. Amos was asked if he has ever had the FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) as he was surrounding himself with a lot of people with high social statuses that seem to have it all together, particularly through social media. He expressed that, even for himself, it's hard not to look at other people's pages and not want to or say sometimes, "I wish I could trade". He quickly expressed that mentality for someone like him goes away fairly quickly. He says there is always the pressure of comparison, but once you realize you should only compare yourself to your older self, it is only then that other people's lives won't be envied as much.

Being someone who is taking his relationship with God at a deeper level and making the decision in recent years to know God more closely, he is more than ever surrounded by the pressures of worldly influences, predominantly in the film industry and social media domain. Amos was asked what are some ways he ensures that he still lives a godly life while working in the industry, especially now that he is an example in his community. He mentioned something extremely important: Giving thanks to the Most High God. Amos says he makes sure before his feet touch the ground he gives thanks for what he has. He expresses that this doesn't mean you can't aspire to want more, we should just simply be happy with what we have. He reveals that the moment you become a slave to your fears and lack of confidence, that's when the devil creeps in.

An individual who comes from a direct situation or place in the past and who has now found a way to succeed, is someone who is able to give good advice to his community. Michael A. Amos tells, not just the young people of Jane and Finch, but also everyone reading, to not become a slave to your possessions and to never apply your current situation to the rest of your life. He himself thought that at that moment his world was the Driftwood Court neighbourhood, until he started to become successful and travel the world. He emphasizes that your current situation is just a brief period in your life and to never give up hope. Just like he once heard, God will take you places you've never dreamed of because His power is limitless. Remember you don't have to be an actor, an athlete or an author for God to move in your life.

-Crileidy Liriano

For more information about Michael A. Amos, please visit www.michaelaamos.com



Models:
Josie La Corte
Derek Appiah-Kubi



TRINITY FASH ION

BY: CRILEIDY
LIRIANO

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The long winter is soon to be part of our 2014/2015 history as we get ready for Summer 2015. It's evident that dressing up for the winter and spring is much easier than deciding what to wear for the summer. The big question always seems to linger in the air for young Christians as to, "what is appropriate or not" for the summer? How short can our shorts be? What is considered stylish yet acceptable? In a world that is so highly influential by fashion and fitness through Pinterest, Instagram and Facebook, let's examine how young Christians can remain virtuous, trendy and comfortable in today's modern society.

Send us some suggestions and pictures of what is appropriate and trendy for this summer. Your pictures and suggestions can be featured in our July/August Issue of LIA.

HANDLING THE BREAKING POINT

BY: ROSEMOND ENNIN

Can you relate to this? It's the end of the school semester, final essays and exams loom heavily on your mind as due dates approach closer and closer. All nighters seem to become your best friend, while sleep becomes your worst enemy. The stress towards these final moments of the school year can be unreal. You try to consume loads of knowledge, but truth is doing one more math problem, or reading one more line will make you lose it. Your brain is tired. You are tired. It feels like you reach the brim with how much information you can absorb. You feel like you just want to curl up in your bed and sleep, yet the pressure to perform well builds a tension in you like no other- and like that, you've reached the "breaking point"!

Google defines it as "the moment of the greatest strain at which someone or something gives way". The breaking point is not just experienced in school, but in every area of our lives, and ultimately this year I've come to experienced it in my walk with God.

It's interesting to note that this year has been declared the year of "Supernatural Breakthrough" in my church. When I first heard this, like others, I shouted for joy, because I was excited for God to "plop" breakthroughs out of the sky and into every area of my life; however, God quickly debunked that notion. I realized that supernatural breakthroughs come as a result of breaking points, and it is reaching the breaking point, when you feel like you can't push any further, that set up heaven to intervene and bring about your breakthrough.

But even after that revelation, I still had a question: Why don't all breaking points lead to BREAKthroughs? To answer this question, God brought me back to the story of the Israelites in the wilderness. Israel was enslaved in Egypt for over 400 years and constantly cried out to the Lord to deliver them from this slavery. God in His mercies used Moses to take them out of Egypt to bring them to the promise land. The greatest crux of the story I find is not in Egypt with the 10 plagues and the display of God's power or in the serenity of the promise land, but in the ordeal of the wilderness. The wilderness revealed the Israelite's breaking point. It was in the wilderness where we could see what they could handle and the state of their hearts. I recognized that their breaking point came at crucial moments. They came at moments just before a glorious miracle happened. I noticed with us Christians today the same is true: the breaking point comes just before the miracle emerges.

Even so when you reach a breaking points two options lie before you: you will either respond with faith or with familiarity. Take the Israelites for example, it was only when they reached their breaking point that all of a sudden they would long to be back in Egypt. It was as if the breaking point made their 400 years of slavery look enjoyable-what!?! "We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic..." (Numbers 11:5)- could garlic and cucumbers really be compared to freedom (who even likes that stuff anyways- bad breath alert!)? I realized Egypt could look good, as like past sins and destructive habits, even after we've been delivered, when we respond with familiarity. But if you take a closer look, familiarity is really dressed up in fear. At the core of it, it is fear that causes someone to retreat back to their comfort zone (even if the comfort zone is slavery/bondage), because F-E-A-R really mean "False-Evidence-Appearing-Real". To the Israelites (Moses' generation), they believed the lies that they couldn't actually reach the promise land. God's promise looked too good to be true. They were limited to see only to the extent of their experience, and not to the possibility of their faith.

As Christians, our ability to see shouldn't end at what we experience, because like the scripture says, we walk by faith and not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7). The truth of the matter is God didn't allow me to reach my breaking point so that I could respond in fear, but He brought me to that moment to hold on to His hand a little tighter and keep on walking forward in faith, because what awaited me was more glorious than what I could ever leave behind.

Keep on walking!

-Rosemond Ennin

IS THE WORLD GETTING BETTER OR WORSE?

A CHRISTIAN RESPONSE

BY: JESSE HOVE

If you're a fan of T.V. shows like Star Trek or the recent blockbuster movie Interstellar, you might have been convinced that humanity is on a path of general evolutionary progression. In the world of Star Trek, the future earth eliminates global poverty and the entire planet has been peacefully united under one governmental rule. In the movie Interstellar there is reference to humanity's future reality being one of disembodied spirit energy operating on a general ethos of "love" and being able to transcend our current limits of space and time. Both paint a rather optimistic version of the future. If you're a fan of shows like Game of Thrones or House of Cards you might be convinced to go a different direction. In this outlook on the world human societies and their leaders have a continual lust and struggle for power with the greatest political and military leaders dominating one another. Violence and sexuality are tools for increasing influence, dominance, and power over one another.

The current reality is a little more complicated than either of these extremes. As Christians caught in the ever growing secularized Western world we look at the loss of unborn life, divorce rates hovering around 50 per cent, and increasing reports of depression, mental illness, suicide in our youth and young adults, and romanticize a world that would follow a more strictly Christian standard. This does not tell the whole story of where we are at in the world though. Different degrees of universal health care exist in most of the Western world in a way that we have never seen before, we have more charities working to support the poor and disenfranchised than we have ever had in the history of the world, and organizations like the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation have significantly decreased diseases and viruses like Malaria and HIV on a global scale. Our opportunity for individual expression and betterment is unprecedented, and the last 70 years have been a time for chasing personal goals and dreams in a way that has never before existed in the Western world. While Christianity has had less and less of an influence on the public sphere, Christian thinkers have still played important roles. Baptist ministers like Tommy Douglas and Martin Luther King Jr. profoundly shaped our world with Douglas introducing universal healthcare to Canada and Martin Luther King Jr. gaining ground in the battle for racial equality in the United States.

Photo Caption:

Dundas Square epitomizes much of what represents both the good and bad of humanity. Corporate greed, global advertising and poverty represent some of the negative aspects of this busy street corner. Freedom of speech, communal concern for one another, and a strong representation of global humanity represent some of the positives. David Ross is seen here asking one of the most important questions humanity has ever asked.

Photo Credit: Jesse Hove



It is also important for us as Christians to recognize that our lessening influence on the public sphere was a conscious decision made by our Christian leaders from the 16th to the 18th century as a means to protect ourselves from ourselves. During and after the time of the Reformation many different Christian denominations were formed. This fragmentation of the Church created a lot of violence, abuse, and death within the church and outside of it. Christian leaders looked back on our history and we realized that we were just as likely to abuse our power as anyone else.

The important question for us as Christians today then is not whether the world has become a more or less sinful place with fewer Christians in charge, but how we can preach and practice the way of Christ from a position of less authority. The truth is that having less authority in the world actually makes it easier for us to act as servants for Christ. No longer is it time for us to struggle for political power or demand people listen to us because we are the "boss". Christ did not regard "equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross" (Philippians 2:6-8). When Christ calls us to deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow him, this is what He is intending (Matthew 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23).

In a world that is no longer predominantly Christian we have an opportunity to decrease our struggle for power and seek to serve under the thumb of the empire as the early Christians did before us. Before Christianity became "Christendom" we were a religion, which appealed to those who were seen as least desirable in Roman society. During the second century, the Greek Philosopher Celsus critiqued Christian converts as generally being "unintelligent, or uninstructed, or foolish persons" who were often "women and children" and "the stupid" (Contra Celsus-Origen). Today Christians are often looked at in the same way. If you convert to Christianity you are seen to be lacking a proper education or enlightenment. If you are a convert from a developing country you are ironically seen by the Western world as naive to Christianity's inherent colonialism. This view of Christianity in the Western world is not something for us to begrudge or dismay against, rather it is where the truth of the Gospel is able to flourish. As Christ himself declared that "the last will be first, and the first will be last" (Matthew 20:16).

If you were in my grade 10 English class, you might know me as “Bible Girl”. Needless to say, this isn’t a name that I chose for myself. Last fall I was publically challenged about my faith in a classroom, in a way that made me uncomfortable, not knowing how to approach it.

My grade 10 English teacher made it pretty clear that she had strong atheist views, by continuously bringing up controversial topics, and never once failing to tell stories of why Christians are hateful if they don’t agree with the general public’s opinion.

She found out that my Dad was a pastor, and after that, I felt like she was trying to get me to react. While it may have been my imagination, or me just looking for an opportunity to get in a debate, it felt like every time that she made a pushy comment, she would look up at me to see how I was responding. One day in particular, she was talking about how, as much as she loves her aunt, she can’t stand being with her for too long because her aunt will start talking about how much she loves Jesus. To my teacher, that was just too weird. A few minutes later, she had finally moved on to talk about “To Kill a Mockingbird” (the reason we were there), and asked us to each share a value or lesson that our parents had instilled in us as children. Giving in to her provocative comments, and feeling a little pushy, I shot my arm up in the air and responded with, “That I should never make fun of somebody else’s beliefs, and should be open to what they’re saying.” I think she got my point, which was why the rest of the semester was so weird. I got the name ‘Bible Girl’ and she would ask me questions, like why I wasn’t allowed to read Harry Potter (which I am, by the way). Part of me found the experience exhilarating, I felt like I was finally getting to stand up for God, do the whole fight for the kingdom thing.

Then one day, I was doing a presentation, where she stopped me mid-sentence. She asked me to explain to the class what the term “Foot-washing Baptist” meant, a term mentioned in my book. I butchered my answer. Like, I said the worst possible thing. I’ve tried to block it out of my memory, but it was something along the lines of taking the Bible too seriously. I screwed up. I felt like I failed God. When I had an opportunity to explain the idea of serving others, I slammed the door shut. I felt badly for days.

As the guilt lessened, I started to think about how we use my words. As important as our speech is, actions still speak louder. I tried to think about the ways that Christians had proved God to me, and I couldn’t think of a single one. I, for one, did not come to Christ because I had lost an argument, or had been outsmarted by somebody. I came to Him because of His love that I had seen through the way that Christians interacted with other people, through the way that they listened to people who were broken, without judgment.

I doubt anybody remembers the way that I had answered her question during my presentation that day, but they may remember the way that I treated people.

Even though my teacher wasn’t being very professional in the way that she treated her students, we are all broken people, including my teacher, who need to be treated with love and understanding. I guess I wasn’t being very professional myself.

For the rest of the semester, I tried my best to find common ground with my teacher. Being friendly with her was actually more uncomfortable than it was when she would challenge me, because honestly she scared me. But it turns out that we are actually interested on some of the same things, and have a similar sense of humor. The last thing that a bitter person needs is for people to be angry with them. The thing they really need is love.



SURVIVING AS A CHRISTIAN STUDENT IN A SECULAR CLASSROOM

BY: HOLLY STILLER



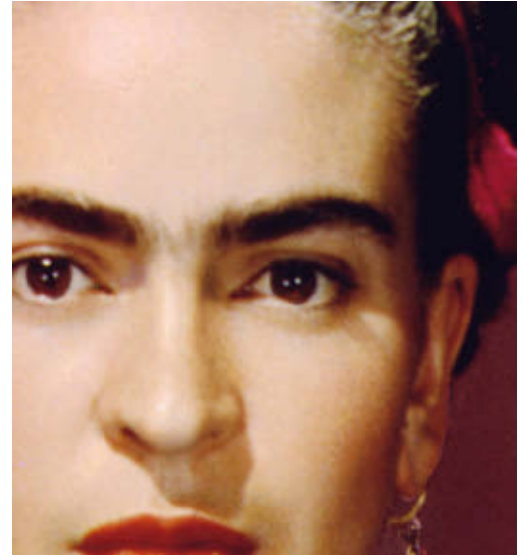
**SAM
ASIRIFI JR.
NAOMI
ADOWAA**

**CREATIVE
PAGE**

LIBERATING LOVE

His WORD wounds our desire to sin. It then causes us to break free from the darkness that once surrounded us. The key is who we are in Christ, and it took His kind of light to make us realize this indestructible truth. We shine like the moon in the darkest hour because we reflect the Son, the Son of God. That is why we can stand, stand still, stand in awe of the One who knew us before we're in the light. The darkness once chained us and caused the blindness of our eyes and our vision, blurring us from the reality of destiny and how much God desires us to be FREE and recognize that He is our Father. God, the one that we can't see but loves us so much, is our Father, and there is NOTHING we can do to SEPARATE us from the LOVE of GOD.

-NAOMI ADOWAA



GOD IS ART.
(The evolution of art)
- Sam Asirifi Jr

The true work of art is but a shadow of the divine perfection.
Michelangelo

Art. Defined as the expression or application of human creative skill and imagination. The thought, the feeling, the sight, and the hearing of art are a beautiful gift that we humans possess. Art in many forms has dramatically changed over the course of time. Some criticize that modern day art, whether visually, or through literature, music, and even drama, is polluted, perverted, and plagued with no substance at all, while others say that modern art compared to traditional art has evolved into better more complex art where one's freedom of expression is being put to more use. But how can one survive without the other? The famous Aristotle, a Greek philosopher and scientist, said it best, "The aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things, but their inward significance". Art is changing rapidly; one can say that today's art is becoming more and more self-glorifying than it is glorifying God. So how does a follower of Christ differ between what is "good" art and what is "bad" art? Simple; your heart determines what you see. Art is what one receives, from one's perception.

Luke 6:14 A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart.

Imagine, if Beethoven were to listen to a Jay-z album, what would his thoughts be? Or if the famous artist Leonardo da Vinci, who simply used paint and brushes to create his art, were to see the work of modern day artist Young-Deok Seo who uses bicycle chains to create human sculptures, how would he react to such different type of art. From Author Harper Lee famous for the book "To Kill a Mockingbird", to the creator of "50 Shades of Grey", E. L. James, art even though its essence hasn't changed, yet it has many different ways of expression. And that's what makes art, art. The fact that two people can look at one creation and receive two different feelings and thoughts, is what makes art a beautiful thing. Even though today's art has tremendously changed compared to traditional, and the created has forgotten their creator, any type of art, no matter how it is expressed is a gift from God, and such talent is to be celebrated by glorifying God, because God is art.



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