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MAY/JUNE 2013

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Healthy Minds, Healthy Expression

How should we think about mental health? About freedom of expression?

We had already finished our interview on Christians and mental health with Mark Vander Vennen, executive director of Shalem Mental Health Network, when the news hit like thunder that Rick Warren's 27-year-old son Matthew had committed suicide.

Warren, author of the influential and best-selling book *Purpose-Driven Life*, is a leading evangelical voice in the United States, but his influence is global, including Canada of course.

In his public statements after the tragic death, Warren was transparent that his son Matthew had struggled with mental health issues his entire life. The Warrens' extremely public tragedy is a stark reminder that a being a follower of Christ does not shield us from the hazards of being human.

Our interview with Vander Vennen sheds some light on the particular way – both the strengths and vulnerabilities – in which Christians deal with mental health issues.

The month of May includes mental health awareness campaigns by several different organizations. Whatever our level of participation, Christians can also clearly benefit by addressing this topic together.

You will see from our stark cover image there is another issue on the minds of a lot of Canadians these days. Why *is* it so difficult to talk about abortion in Canada? The experts quoted in Alex Newman's cover story offer

some thought-provoking answers.

Part of the challenge of speaking publicly about abortion can be legitimate concerns about our country's rules on freedom of expression, a topic Stephen Bedard examines a few pages later.

This issue also introduces "History Lesson," a new series on Canada's evangelical past and its relevance to our situation today. Author Kevin Flatt of Redeemer University College kicks off the series with the story of Henry Alline, the "apostle of Nova Scotia."

This new history series is in response to several requests from readers, so be assured that if you let us know what you'd like to see in the magazine, we will seriously consider your input.

Looking ahead, we'd like to remind you our Jul/Aug issue will again be available in digital format only at www.faithtoday.ca/digital and also in our free mobile apps. Please do read it, print off your favourite articles, share it on Facebook and other social media sites. If you're not currently receiving an email reminding you when each new issue is posted, sign up to get them at www.faithtoday.ca/subscribe. The next printed issue will be Sep/Oct. **FT**

BILL FLEDDERUS of Hamilton, Ont., and
KAREN STILLER of Port Perry, Ont., are
senior editors at *Faith Today*.

Faith Today

Vol. 31 No 3

Publisher: The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, Bruce J. Clemenger, president
Senior Editors: Bill Fledderus, Karen Stiller

Associate Editor: To be announced

Production: Robert Robotham Graphics

Advertising Manager: Brian Shephard

Marketing: Gina Waugh

Distribution: Anita Kwan

Senior Writers: Jeff Dewsbury, Drew Dyck, Debra Fieguth, Alex Newman, Patricia Paddey, Karen Stiller

Copy Editor: Janet Dimond

Printer: Dollco/Lowe-Martin Group, Ottawa

Founding Editor: Brian C. Stiller
Founded: 1983

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

Proud sponsor of: www.christianity.ca

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

Rethinking Disability

Re: Which Girl Would You Marry? (Mar/Apr 2013)

I enjoy your online version of *Faith Today* as a link to the dynamics of the Christian Church in Canada and beyond, although since I have been visually impaired since birth, it can sometimes be a struggle for me to go through all the longer articles. My husband just read to me the articles on disability.

Throughout my life, from elementary school through college and into my career as a musician, performer, recording artist, Bible study leader and worship director, I have often encountered people whose perceptions and expectations of me were tempered by their own bias of my "dis-ability" and not my own "ability."

And so I was particularly impressed by what Mark Bu-

chanan wrote. It gives us all the challenge to "re-think" how we view others' sense of worth and worthiness.

Cathy Quicke
Vancouver, B.C.

Disability Stories

Re: The Beauty and the Pain of Disability (Mar/Apr 2013)

I really liked the article, but it gives only one side of the story of the disabled. I served on a parent committee at a school for disabled children in Quebec City, where our son also attended. That experience opened a whole new world for me. I saw how some mothers of disabled children withdraw into themselves, turn away from their husbands, and devote themselves exclusively to the care of the child. The pain and the sorrow can be unimaginable.

It can also feel very hard for parents to leave their child alone, even for a minute. Who else could know

the needs as well or meet them as well? I remember one parent that our committee had contact with who had not taken a day off caring for a child or gone on some kind of vacation for 14 years. It was a great victory for our committee and for this parent when finally the parent agreed to take a weekend off, leaving the child in respite care in the centre where the school was located.

Martin D. Geleynse
Stratford, Ont.

In future could you touch on another very big but kept quiet area of disabilities – FASD (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disor-

der)? Because it does not usually involve wheelchairs or oxygen tanks, it cannot be seen unless

significant amount of time is spent with the individual. A lot of families are silently suffering because they do not know where to turn for support.

Linda Bienert
Grand Prairie, Alta.



Righteousness by Faith

Re: Faith Forum (Mar/Apr 2013)

Lloyd Alstad, in his letter, seems to interpret my words about the need for churches to recover the gospel as pertaining to a "one-time decision of repentance and faith." This interpretation points to a misunderstanding of the Good News common

Milestones

APPOINTED

Michael Pawelke as president of Briercrest College and Seminary in Caronport, Sask. Pawelke, an alumnus of Briercrest, served 19 years as a senior pastor in Ontario and instructor at Briercrest and McMaster Divinity College. He holds a DMin degree from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Pawelke succeeds Dwayne

Uglen, who served on staff for 26 years. Briercrest also just received provincial government accreditation for its bachelor of arts degree in humanities. Many universities already accept Briercrest BAs thanks to existing accreditation in two religious college associations, but

the change opens doors for graduates at some mainstream graduate schools. Its BAs in English and history should soon follow. Briercrest has more than 500 college and 50 seminary students.

Mark Buchanan, best-selling Canadian author and pastor, as associate profes-

sor of pastoral theology at Ambrose Seminary in Calgary. He leaves New Life Church in Duncan, B.C., after serving more than 17 years as lead pastor.



Jonathon Raymond

in Langley, B.C., with more than 1,500 students enrolled in 42 bachelor's degree programs and another 600 in 16 graduate programs.

RENAMED

CAM International of Canada officially switched to the new name Camino Global in March. The change was previously announced in the Jan/Feb 2012 *Faith Today*. The ministry focuses on Spanish speakers worldwide and has 300 staff in nine countries.

NOMINATED

Several *Faith Today* authors are again in the running this year for Canada's top Christian writing awards, including Karen Stiller for "Hemorrhaging Faith: Why They're Leaving" as well as "A Visit to the World's Newest Country" (both from Sep/Oct 2012) and for "Canadian Women Are International Leaders" (Mar/Apr, co-written with Bill Fledderus); Steve Bell for "The Shape of Things to Come" (Nov/Dec); and Richard Erlendson for "The Life of Peter Penner" (Mar/Apr). *Faith Today* columnists James Beverley, Bruce Clemenger and John Stackhouse are also shortlisted, along with Brian Stiller for his book *Find A Broken Wall: 7 Ancient Principles for 21st Century Leaders* (Castle Quay). The Word Awards will be given at a gala event in Mississauga, Ont., on June 12. Details and event tickets are available at www.thewordgild.com. Following the gala 250 writers, editors, agents and publishers will meet in Guelph, Ont., from June 13 to 15 for Canada's largest annual Christian writers' conference (www.writecanada.org).

SUPPLIED PHOTO



Michael Pawelke

across the country, a dangerous perception that, though the gospel comes by faith and is for our salvation, our sanctification happens by some other means.

Alstad asks, "How about the Church teaching better the things that follow faith?" I defer to the Apostle Paul: "For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed – a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: 'The righteous will live by faith'" (Romans 1:17). In this sense, there is nothing that follows faith.

Whenever we are confronted with ways we are failing to live righteously (as Alstad confronts us in his letter), we are being confronted with our sin. This is true both for non-Christians and for the most mature of believers. We need to recognize that the Christian life is a repeated response to the same Good News.

In every case, we first exercise our faith by acknowledging our sin and embracing the work of Jesus Christ who has paid sin's penalty. But we don't stop there. Part of the Good News is that Christ has freed us from the bondage of sin and promised the Holy Spirit to enable us to live righteously.

We continue exercising our faith in the same message of the gospel as we turn from our sin in Spirit-empowered repentance and do what God's Word says is right.

If we proceed in any other way, we are acting like the foolish Galatians Paul says were abandoning the gospel. Having begun by faith, by means of the Spirit, they were trying to finish by means of the flesh (Galatians 3).

David Rennalls
Louisville, Ken.

Letters to the editor

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Canadians Teach Organic Farming With a Twist

Artemesia is a hardy plant with leaves that brew up a bitter-tasting tea with a powerful medicinal punch. It is just one of the leafy greens on Dale Bolton's fab 50 list of plants that grow easily in African communities, and combine solid nutritional and medicinal values.

Bolton is executive director of a Canadian Christian organization called Organics 4 Orphans (O4O) (www.organics4orphans.org). O4O is at work in 10 different African nations with, at last count, 200 local people trained in this style of organic farming with an emphasis on indigenous, highly nutritional and highly medicinal plants.

This combo package of nutrition with natural medicine makes all the difference in the world, according to Bolton, based in Thornhill, Ont.

"Pretty much all African countries have some form of organic association, but often they're not growing food that is the best for people's immune systems," says Bolton. "We started working with naturopathic doctors, and Anamed International (www.anamed.net), a German Christian organization that offers courses on the medicinal beneficial effects of plants that are easily grown in most parts of Africa."

Bolton says most organic farming efforts in Africa focus on grains, which are good for calories but don't necessarily build immune systems. "It seems like God has placed this stuff right there to treat what is



Supplying tools for projects in a Kenyan village.

local," Bolton explains. "There are either people really excited about organic farming or natural medicine, but not the two together, and that's what we are doing."

O4O teaches organic farming and nutrition in short educational sessions by trained facilitators who return to the communities to check on progress.

Bolton and his wife Linda travel to Africa a few times a year to check on O4O communities. They hope to reach 50 countries with their low-tech, high-impact, high-nutrition approach.

O4O emphasizes a "10-foot diet," where crops are grown vertically on the sides of houses or in small but efficient garden

beds. Each O4O project costs approximately \$500 a year, for the training and tools communities require to grow their own organic gardens and meet the nutritional needs of those communities.

At the heart of O4O's mission is providing better nutrition for communities where the HIV/AIDS pandemic has left so many children without parents. "You look for the thing that would break His heart the most – 24,000 children under the age of five dying every day is probably pretty close to the top of the list," says Bolton. "And Africans have an amazing capacity to look after unsupported children as long as there is enough food." **FI** –Matt Lowe With Karen Stiller

Canadian-Supported Clinic in Mali Carries on Despite Fighting

Despite ongoing battles in the northern region of Mali, work at a small Canadian-funded clinic in the opposite end of the country goes on unhindered. "Thankfully [the fighting] has not affected Koura at all," says John Telgmann, a Canadian accountant who helped establish the Koura Centre de Santé Confectionnel.

Telgmann's relationship with the village began 17 years ago when he was auditing the books for Wycliffe Bible Translators in Ivory Coast and Mali. A request to see a village firsthand brought him to Koura, a community in southwestern Mali with no electricity, running water, cars or health care, where translators had begun working on translating the Bible into the local Jowulu (or "Jo") language. There Telgmann became friends with a language helper named Mamadou Djilla, a Muslim who later became a Christian.

By 2009 the village had gone from having not a single Christian

to having a lively, committed church of about 70 worshippers. During a visit that year, "The elders approached me with their idea to have a health centre as a way that the church could show the love of God to their neighbours," says Telgmann. Besides the thousand villagers in Koura, there were several surrounding villages that expanded the catchment area to about 9,000 people.

Mali is one of the poorest countries in the world. The United Nations Human Development Index places it at 175 on the index (Canada is number six). The village didn't have the resources to build the clinic on their own, and the government could not afford to build them one.

Telgmann believed a Canadian organization would help build a bridge between Canada and Koura, as well as provide a means to raise money. With the support of friends in his hometown of Kingston, Ont., and other parts of Canada, Telgmann founded Friends of Koura in Canada, which became a regis-

Saskatoon Group Fights Human Trafficking

A new multi-denominational organization in Saskatoon is helping the Church understand the local and worldwide epidemic of human trafficking – and offering Christians an opportunity to take action.

Saskatoon ACTS is a group of Christian activists gathered together to fight sex trafficking by fostering communication and co-operation among the Christian community in their prairie city. Some of the churches involved include Cornerstone Church, Lawson Heights Alliance, Holy Covenant and City Centre Church.

Gil Klassen, ACTS founder and director of Saskatoon Youth for Christ, says he's seen God stirring many hearts for the victims of prostitution and human trafficking.

"We are living in a modern-day Good Samaritan scenario," Klassen says. He wonders if religious people will sidestep around the victims of prostitution, or help make a difference?

ACTS' first goal is education and awareness, and properly equipping Christians to act on this issue, Klassen explained. He believes better communication with the public and increased collaboration with the Church and government is key.

"We have to be educated and aware of all the issues before we act," he says.

The group meets on a monthly basis, listening to the stories of police, former prostitutes and others to get the facts straight, and relaying that information to their own church communities.

Klassen says a disturbing element to this story is the number of Christian men who are picking up girls on the streets.

"I really believe that to make a big impact on modern-day slavery and sex trafficking, we need the hearts of men to change, beginning in the Church," Klassen says. "We need more pastors to address both these issues openly and honestly. And we believe as we bring them into the light they will be



SUPPLIED PHOTOS

Ben Bernard of Saskatoon ACTS recently organized a Polar Dip to raise awareness and funding to fight human trafficking.

exposed and their power diminished....we need to address the log in our own eye."

Saskatoon ACTS is divided into three teams

– prayer, awareness and action.

"Sitting around and talking is good," says Ben Bernard, duty staff co-ordinator at Teen Challenge in Saskatoon (www.teenchallenge.ca) and co-ordinator of the action team. "But at some point you have to act."

Part of ACTS' action plan includes awareness events like a Polar Bear Dip fundraiser that saw eight people taking the plunge into the frigid waters of an outdoor pool, raising awareness and over \$2000 for International Justice Mission Canada (www.ijm.ca), an organization that fights human trafficking.

ACTS recently held a letter-writing to Members of Parliament campaign, encouraging them to crack down on human trafficking by creating provincial and federal laws protecting those at risk.

"We're letting people know we care about these issues," Bernard says. "That's powerful." **FT** –Steve Sukkau



PHOTO: JOHN TELGMANN

John Telgmann and Mamadou Djilla at the groundbreaking ceremony for the Koura medical clinic.

tered charity in March 2012.

The very next day there was a coup in Mali. The president was ousted and an interim president put in his place, but fortun-

ately with little effect of the overthrow on the clinic's progress other than delaying the transfer of money for a short time.

In August last year the clinic officially opened with two nurses, and work has now begun on constructing a nurses' residence. The next phase will be a maternity ward so mothers can give birth in a safe, clean environment with medical personnel present. The nurses have seen an average of 40 patients a week, treating snake bites and common diseases such as malaria.

Earlier this year when fighting in northern Mali intensified, there was fear Islamist radicals would take the country. "If the French hadn't gone in," says Telgmann, it would have put the clinic in jeopardy. French troops have been actively fighting in Mali since January, with Canada playing a lesser role of providing aircraft and equipment. Telgmann says the health centre needs about \$20,000 a year to maintain operation, with funds required to pay staff, furnish rooms, provide solar power, and purchase medical equipment, basic medical supplies and other necessities. **FT**

–Debra Fieguth

Thirty More Sermons You'd Never Hear in Church

Is your idea of a radical sermon a message that has two points instead of three? Geez magazine (www.geezmagazine.org), a publication that describes itself as “holy mischief in an age of fast faith,”

wants to push the envelope on preaching with a contest called “30 More Sermons You'd Never Hear in Church.”

Geez is a strong advocate

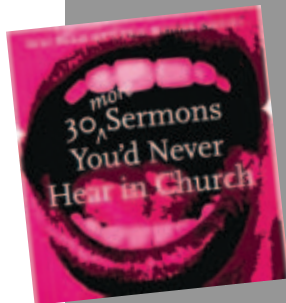
of social justice and a place that seeks to “explore the point at which word, action and image intersect, and then ignite.”

A part of this mission is to reach the “over-churched, out-churched, un-churched and maybe even the un-churchable” and give them a voice.

The current sermon contest, the second of its kind, is not looking for the best of traditional homiletics, nor is it looking for a slight twist on what is heard every Sunday. The emphasis of the contest is on social gospel, allowing the message to critique the powers of injustice in the tradition of the Old Testament prophets.

“We are looking for messages that compel readers to action, to challenge readers to reach out in love,” explains Aiden Enns, editor of *Geez*. “We are proud of the evangelical proclamation of the gospel, but we want Evangelicals to take what they have and keep going.”

Faith Today readers have the opportunity to be an evangelical voice to social justice and compete for prizes (\$500 for top place). Not to mention saying things they always wished their pastors had preached. **FT** —Stephen Bedard



Canada Plays Role in Pastors' Training Centre



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When the delegation from the Pan African School of Theology arrived in Mombasa to announce the opening of a centre there, it was greeted with a banner and delegation from AGC-Kenya.

The cheering reverberated off the tin walls of the small church in one of Mombasa's slums. Eighty leaders of Associated Gospel Churches (AGC) of Kenya had gathered to celebrate the establishment of a pastors' training centre. The centre, opened in February, is the first of three planned to open this year based on an agreement between AGC-Canada (www.agcofcanada.com), AGC-Kenya and the Pan African School of Theology (PAST) (www.paceministries.org).

“Around the developing world there are millions of independent struggling churches. Our [AGC-Canada] goal is to help them to organize themselves for the mutual benefit of the churches and for the kingdom in their part of the world,” says Bill Fietje, president of AGC-Canada. “Our main emphasis is pastoral training so that they will learn not only to be better pastors, but to work together for the benefit of all of their churches.”

About five years ago Pastor John Juma

Finding Mental Health Help

Mental Health Week is held each May to encourage people from all walks of life to learn, talk, reflect, and engage with others on all issues relating to mental health. *Faith Today* asked some trusted experts about how to start the process of finding help and about the value of Christian-informed therapy.

“Your family doctor can be an excellent place to start,” says Mark Vander Vennen, executive director of the Shalem Mental Health Network (www.shalemnetwork.org), “as they can help rule out any medical issues and often

have good referral networks.” He also suggests asking for referrals from your pastor or from a mental health professional in your congregation.

An increasing number of churches offer their members access to mental health professionals through programs such as the Congregational Assistance Plan offered by Shalem. Similar to an employee assistance program, church members can access support from a local certified Christian counsellor. The service is not intended to replace pastoral or spiritual care, but rather to complement it.

of Mombasa found the website for AGC-Canada and contacted Fietje asking for assistance. Fietje visited Kenya in 2011 and spoke to 180 pastors.

He learned that the need for formal pastoral training was the biggest obstacle for healthy, growing and transformative churches.

According to Juma most of the pastors he works with have finished high school, but have no more formal education. Many have taken correspondence courses, short-term seminars and isolated Bible school courses. "Higher education is the first need we have," says Juma.

Fietje agrees. "We observed [an] overall lack of understanding of use of Scripture in a way we would think of as transformational. Church is often an inspirational event on Sunday morning. Inspiration is great, but not much happens between Sunday services. We want to offer education in pastoral care, elder training, community, economic and family transformation."

How educational opportunities are offered is of primary importance. The schools have to go to the pastors, freeing them up to remain in their churches and with their families.

AGC-Canada then connected with PAST, an accredited distance learning seminary that also wanted to set up learning centres across Kenya. PAST is part of Pan-African Christian Exchange (PACE), an educational ministry operating in Kenya under the auspices of International Teams.

The needs of AGC and the goals of

PAST meshed perfectly.

"PAST is probably the best way to provide this education," Fietje says. Not only does it offer accredited courses, it does so in both English and Swahili.

In July 2012 PAST formally agreed to work with AGC churches to provide ac-

credited degrees and diplomas for church leaders in Kenya.

"The job now is to inform churches across Canada – AGC and otherwise – of the need and opportunity to invest in kingdom building in Kenya," Fietje says. **FT**

–David Donaldson

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

Faith-based Mental Health Resources

- www.paccc.ca – Website of the Professional Association of Canadian Christian Counsellors which includes a Find a Counsellor service for communities throughout Canada.
 - www.russellcounselling.com – Website of Don Russell, president of the Professional Association of Canadian Christian Counsellors. While in-person counselling services are offered in Manitoba, Dr. Russell and his associates make their services available through distance counselling offered via Skype or phone.
 - www.mariongoertz.com – Website of Marion Goertz, registrar for the Registry of Marriage and Family Therapists in Canada (www.marriageandfamily.ca). Self-help checkups on topics such as parenting in pressure-filled times, and also reading suggestions.
 - www.shalemnetwork.org – The Shalem Network provides individual, couple and family counselling. It also offers programs, including the Congregational Assistance Plan, to equip and support faith and other communities throughout Ontario. Use the search function to listen to a sermon by Mark Vander Vennen called "Where Is God When Mental Illness Strikes?"
 - www.cmha.ca – The Canadian Mental Health Association is an excellent source of information. Their website provides access to community health supports and easy-to-read documents that explain the nature of various mental illnesses. **FT**
- MLH

Editor's Note: Don't miss the related article, "The Faith Today Interview with Mark Vander Vennen," on p. 26.

So, when should someone seek assistance with their mental health? "When it's interfering with your day-to-day life," and "sooner rather than later" are Vander Vennen's immediate responses.

Marion Goertz, a Toronto-based registered marriage, family and sex therapist, agrees. "When life has become unmanageable or when you're not experiencing joy in a particular area of your life," she says, "think about talking to someone about that." Goertz believes we should not remain stuck in situations and circumstances that compromise our capacity to serve God. "Ask for support when you need it in order to be ready to give it when it's your turn to do so."

Goertz recommends considering a mental health professional's training, expertise, reputation, and your own sense of comfort with a particular therapist. There may also be value in seeking support from someone who holds Christian values. "If the professional clinician is also a person of faith," says Goertz, "you will not only have their solid background working for you but, ideally if they are Spirit-led, God-focused individuals, your care will be based on the components of wisdom, creativity, guidance, and grace afforded them by their heavenly Father."

What about the shame often associated with mental health struggles? "Stigma is absolutely out there still, but seeking

professional assistance with your mental health is not a shameful thing," says Don Russell, psychotherapist and president of the Professional Association of Canadian Christian Counsellors (www.paccc.ca). He believes the painful parts of our lives are "directly or indirectly a consequence of living outside the garden. It hurts," he says. "For one person it may be arthritic knees, while for another it's depression. All of us are on a journey to grow into the person we were meant to be," he says. "Sometimes that journey gets stuck or snagged along the way. Therapy is a skilled process of getting those obstacles out of the way so we can continue on the growth journey." **FT**

–Mary Lou Harrison



Afraid of Debate

Fear is the only thing preventing a parliamentary debate on abortion law.

Every May thousands of Canadians gather in front of Ottawa's Peace Tower. Every October, Life Chains form in Canadian cities. Every year polls indicate the majority of Canadians want new laws.

But in the House of Commons, designed for our representatives to debate substantive issues and bring forward legislation for the good of all – silence.

It's not that the hands of Parliament are tied by some Supreme Court ruling declaring "a woman's right to choose." Canada's abortion laws were struck down in 1988 because there was unequal access to abortion at various hospitals.

I was in the Supreme Court when a lawyer, in her arguments, referred to a woman's right to choose. She was interrupted by then chief justice Antonio Lamer who reminded her the Supreme Court had never said a woman had a right to choose.

There is no barrier to legislation that would place restrictions on abortion – in fact, Canada is one of only a few countries without laws on abortion.

It's not that no one wanted to fill the void left by the Supreme Court's 1988 decision. A bill was passed by the House of Commons, albeit by a narrow margin. However, it was then defeated by a tie vote in the Senate. Canadians and Parliament were deeply divided.

It's not that Canadians are content with the status quo and don't want Parliament to do something – again, look at the polls. The obstacle is that any party or Member of Parliament who tries to open the debate is critiqued and condemned.

We have no laws because Parliament is avoiding the issue out of fear.

This fear is bolstered by pundits, media personalities, and lobbyists who want to stop any debate before it gets started – often declaring the falsehood that there is a *Charter* right to choose. MPs and parties fear the negative political results of being seen as the ones who allowed the debate to begin.



Together for influence, impact and identity

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

Some also fear having the debate because it could mean losing the debate.

Parliament was designed precisely for such debates. The accent colour of the House of Commons is green, the colour of the people. It is where the people's concerns are to be brought by their elected representatives for debate.

Yes, the debate will be emotional and passionate on both sides. That's why there are rules and procedures about how debates must take place. There is a committee structure comprised of MPs from all parties. There are clerks, researchers and rules governing how witnesses come to appear before the committee, how long they have to present their views and how much time MPs have to question them. The committee can hold hearings in Ottawa or across the country.

There are even ways a committee can hold hearings without legislation being introduced. This dramatically lessens the otherwise partisan nature of committee hearings.

Consider the debate over laws regulating assisted human reproduction. It began with a committee considering draft legislation. This allowed MPs from the party in power freedom to agree or disagree with the legislation.

Or consider the debate on the definition of marriage. It was initiated by a committee conducting hearings based on a Justice Department paper that posed three options.

In both these debates the process ensured they were not partisan. MPs were better able to express their views and reflect those of Canadians – in particular those from their constituency.

On a matter which goes to the core of understanding the nature of our humanity, and upon what our dignity is affirmed and rights recognized; on who is afforded the protection of law and who is on the outside; of who is afforded personhood or deserving of even some protection in law; of any matter that Parliament should debate – these are precisely why Parliament was devised.

It's only fear that keeps the issue from being debated. Fear should not debilitate Parliament and silence MPs willing to see if they can persuade their peers and all Canadians on a path forward. Some have shown recently they are willing to confront fear, and take risks – even the risk of losing the debate and thus having the issue sidelined for another 20 years.

If convinced of the legitimacy of your position, you should not shun debate but welcome the opportunity to share the compelling reasons for your beliefs and convictions.

Some are willing to take the risk and welcome the challenge of an open and civil debate. May their numbers increase. **FT**

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

The EFC Speaks on Assisted Suicide

The EFC is readying its response to Quebec government plans to permit physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia. The EFC has previously been involved in similar battles in Parliament, defeating such legislative initiatives three times, and before the Supreme Court of Canada in the 1993 case *Rodriguez v. British Columbia*. In that case the court accepted the EFC's arguments asserting the unique dignity and sanctity of human life.

In March 2013 the British Columbia Court of Appeal heard arguments in *Carter v. Canada*, a case currently challenging Canada's laws prohibiting assisted suicide. The EFC's verbal presentation and its more formal written submission from December are available at www.theEFC.ca/carter.

The EFC Intervenes on Prostitution

The EFC filed an application in April to intervene before the Supreme Court of Canada in the case of *Bedford v. Canada* that proposes to strike down some of Canada's prostitution laws. Visit www.theEFC.ca/prostitution.

Conference on Religion and Public Discourse

EFC staff are helping organize (and will be presenting at) a multi-faith conference called Bridging the Secular Divide: Religion and Canadian Public Discourse being hosted at McGill University in Montreal, May 27-28. Speakers include EFC President Bruce J. Clemenger, Canada's Ambassador for Religious Freedom Andrew Bennett, Trinity Western University professor JanetEpp Buckingham, journalist/broadcaster Lorna Dueck and several current and former Members of Parliament. Visit www.bridgingthedivide.ca.

Anti-bullying Resource Revised

The EFC has responded to Manitoba's proposal of anti-bullying legislation, in its Bill 18, by reviewing the state of anti-bullying legislation across Canada as part of an update to the EFC paper *By the Numbers: Rates and Risk Factors for Bullying*, available at www.theEFC.ca/bullying2013.

Denominational Leaders Meet

EFC President Bruce J. Clemenger joined denominational leaders in April in Mississauga, Ont. Twice a year leaders from EFC affiliate denominations meet together in a peer-led gathering to discuss issues of common concern and pray together.

The Bible Is Not Hate Speech

The Supreme Court of Canada released its decision in March in the case of *Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission v. William Whatcott*. The EFC, which intervened over the issue of religious comment in a public policy dialogue, now offers a short explanation *What Does the Supreme Court of Canada's Decision Mean to You?* and other resources and blog posts at www.theEFC.ca/whatcott.

Parliament Rejects Homelessness Bill

The House of Commons split along party lines this spring to defeat a private members bill that called on the federal government to work with provincial and aboriginal leaders to establish a national housing strategy to combat homelessness in Canada. The EFC supported Bill C-400, which aimed to better meet the needs of the more than 300,000 Canadians who are homeless. Read more at www.theEFC.ca/ActivateCFPL (for example, the posting dated March 1).

Sex Selection Motion Set Aside

The EFC endorsed Parliamentary Motion M-408, condemning pregnancy terminations motivated by sex selection. The motion was blocked at several stages, including being initially deemed non-votable by a committee of MPs and rejected in an appeal to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. The motion's sponsor, MP Mark Warawa (Langley), decided in April not to request a final appeal to all sitting MPs, and so the motion was allowed to die. Read the EFC's latest media release and learn more at www.theEFC.ca/M408.


Congratulations to Catholics

EFC President Bruce J. Clemenger sent a letter to the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops responding to the election of Jorge Mario Bergoglio as Pope of the Roman Catholic Church. The EFC is the regional affiliate of the World Evangelical Alliance, and its secretary general, the Canadian Geoff Tunncliffe, attended the inauguration at the Vatican and also extended his congratulations. See www.theEFC.ca/letters.

Students Share About EFC Internships

In a recently released video at www.theEFC.ca/intership, last summer's EFC interns share about their experiences in Ottawa. Apply now for a position as an intern for fall 2013.

Gender Bill in Senate

The House of Commons voted in March to pass an amended version of private member's Bill C-279, which proposes to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act to include "gender identity" as a prohibited ground of discrimination and the Criminal Code to include "gender identity" as a ground in the hate crime provisions. These proposals add unnecessary – and thus legally dangerous – language to the law. Gender identity is already covered under the term "sexual orientation," which is already in the Act and the Code. The EFC sent an open letter to all MPs in December when the bill was previously scheduled for a vote, and the EFC's Don Hutchinson commented in a Nov. 21 post at www.theEFC.ca/ActivateCFPL. 

Prayer Alerts: Vietnam

The EFC's Religious Liberty Commission released two alerts in March and April requesting prayer for Christians in Vietnam. A recent update to Vietnam's highest law on religion *The Ordinance on Religion and Belief* (ND-92) presents a severe challenge to "unregistered" churches, particularly Vietnamese house churches. Read more and sign up for email alerts at www.theEFC.ca/alerts.

Q & A With Walter Fast

Walter Fast is lead pastor of the Steinbach Mennonite Brethren Church in Steinbach, Man. He returned to Canada in 2009 to minister to his current congregation after serving as a teacher and pastor in Germany for 19 years. He is also pursuing his DMin at Providence Theological Seminary.



SUPPLIED PHOTO

What is your greatest joy in ministry?

Experiencing and helping others to experience a deep satisfaction in the Lord, which emanates into a natural and vibrant involvement in Kingdom ventures, whether in the church or in the marketplace. Jesus put it this way: "...do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:20).

What has been your greatest struggle?

Having returned to Canada almost four years ago after 19 years of teaching and pastoral ministry in Germany, I find it a challenge to adapt my ministry to my current church and location in light of my personal biblical-theological convictions; my 25-year ministry experience in five different churches and a Bible College in Canada and Europe; and the resultant appreciation for people of many different denominational traditions I have developed. However, my greatest struggle remains being a consistent, reliable and contagious witness to the reality of Christ.

What Bible passage do you most connect with right now?

The book of Joshua, which I am preaching through for the first time. It is not easy to preach such a violent book, and in a Mennonite church at that! However, the key message of the book never ceases to amaze me, that total victory (as God's gift) and complete obedience (as my heartfelt faith-response) form a perfect unity under God's sovereign tutelage.

What are the best theological books you've read in the last year?

Depends what you consider theological. But these have challenged me as a Christian who is also a pastor and DMin candidate: *What Was God Doing on the Cross?* by Alister McGrath (Wipf & Stock, 2002) and *Making Room:*

Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition by Christine Pohl (Eerdmans, 1999). I just finished *Fasting* by Jentezen Franklin (Strang Communications, 2011), which I read as a personal challenge to "dethrone King Stomach!"

What is your best advice for those entering ministry today?

Glorify and enjoy God fully (Westminster Catechism), obey and teach His Word faithfully, watch your life and morals carefully, and stand your ground prophetically in a shifting culture.

What is your biggest concern for the Canadian Church?

If only our passion for Christ and His Church would match – even faintly – our love of sports and our pursuit of pleasure. If only we could quote the Word as well as we can quote the latest sitcom.

What are the specific challenges – and joys – you face doing ministry in Manitoba?

My wife and I love it here in southern Manitoba – the people, the climate (we really do!), my current church and especially the leadership team. The key challenge? How to be and do church in a small city of 13,000 with approximately 40 (!) churches, including one mega-church of 3,000+ people. That is a lot of churchgoers and a very blessed community as a result. But when belonging to a church is almost a part of the way of life, newcomers not connected with Christ or His Church yet can sense that to have influence of any kind, you must belong to a church. Is that good – or questionable? Many of my church members, including me, have little or no close contact with unbelievers. That too is a challenge when we discuss and implement evangelistic emphases such as the upcoming My Hope campaign (Billy Graham), which we will participate in. **FT**

What Do You Say? What Can You Say?

By Don Hutchinson

What does the Supreme Court decision in the Whatcott case mean for religious communication?

Several years ago, there was an urban legend circulating that a pastor was convicted and imprisoned by a human rights commission for his comments on “sin” in a sermon recorded without authorization by a visitor. One version said this happened in Windsor, another said Lethbridge.

While human rights commissions don’t have the power to convict anyone of a crime or imprison anyone, the damage was done. Most Canadians are not familiar with human rights tribunals or how to search the law to see if such a story is true. No doubt there were sermon writers who avoided potentially controversial issues as a result. Pastors don’t unnecessarily jeopardize their availability to shepherd their flock.

There were also real human rights complaints in many provinces about Christians preaching, teaching or writing about marriage as consisting of one woman and one man, with sexual behaviour outside that relationship considered “sinful.” Some Christians expressed these ideas about sex and marriage in contemporary, everyday language. Others used wording that echoed the 1611 King James Bible.

Few people were able to track the broader picture – that most of these complaints went nowhere. A few progressed, largely due to poorly reasoned human rights tribunal decisions, but most were later overturned by the real courts.

The urban legends added to the real – but mostly unsuccessful – complaints. Together they heightened general concerns, unjustly inflicted fear and induced a “chill” effect on free (religiously in-

formed) speech.

In response, some felt they needed to step forward, perhaps thinking of Peter and John before the Sanhedrin when they replied, “Do you think God wants us to obey you or to obey him? We cannot keep quiet about what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:19-20, CEV).

Unfortunately, not all of them heeded Jesus’ teaching to be “wise as serpents and harmless as doves” (Matthew 10:16, KJV). Or as the retired politician Preston Manning paraphrases it, avoid being vicious as snakes and stupid as pigeons.

What all this comes down to, of course, is whether wise or non-criminal harmful

words matter in our society – a constitutionally proclaimed “free and democratic society” with a *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* that guarantees “freedom of conscience and religion” and “freedom of expression.”

In the Whatcott decision released Feb. 27, the Supreme Court of Canada has again

answered “yes” to that question – the choice of words and the harm they cause do matter.

The court found the Bible itself cannot be accused of being harmful or hateful, except in the rarest of circumstance and context. But how we choose to express principles stated in or developed from the Scriptures – these may indeed be harmful or hateful.

The 6-0 decision in the *Whatcott* case (more details at www.theEFC.ca/whatcott) did not zero in on absolute truth, but




Don Hutchinson

on whether the expressions used could be objectively viewed as “detestation” and “vilification” of an identifiable group of people. Was the wording that caused the complaint indeed the language of condemnation?

All of us, regardless of religious tradition, know about condemning language,

don’t we? Even as children, when we defended ourselves by chanting, “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me,” we were usually doing so to cover up the hurt that someone’s unkind words had inflicted on us.

Hurt feelings are subjective and insufficient to trigger concern of the courts, but expressed hatred based on the characteristics of a group of people identified by those characteristics – whether religion, ethnicity, race or sexual orientation – may well cross the line to potential financial penalties.

The Apostle Paul offers good advice, “Be wise in the way you act toward others; make good use of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, choose your words carefully and be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks questions” (Colossians 4:5-6a, paraphrased). And similarly, “God’s Spirit makes us loving, happy, peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle, and self-controlled. There is no law against behaving in any of these ways” (Galatians 5:22-23, CEV). 

DON HUTCHINSON is vice-president and general legal counsel with The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada and director of the EFC’s Centre for Faith and Public Life.

The court found the Bible itself cannot be accused of being harmful or hateful, except in the rarest of circumstance and context.



Why is it so hard to talk

Canada is the only Western country without any laws regulating abortion. We also appear to be the only Western nation that can't seem to debate this topic. *Faith Today* senior writer **Alex Newman** delves into why that is so, and what can be done about it.

Tucked into a corner of McMaster University's Health Sciences Building in Hamilton, Ont., is one of many lecture halls with seats like bleachers stacked so high that by sitting there, you're at risk of vertigo.

In one of those halls on a Thursday evening in March, something unusual is taking place – a debate about abortion between Stephanie Gray, co-founder of Calgary's Canadian Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform (CCBR) (www.unmaskingchoice.ca), and a first-year health sciences student from McMaster's debating team.

The event is unusual, says Gray, because these days it's very hard to find anyone willing to debate her about abortion. As a topic, abortion is "too messy," says a debate team member, and that is why it is a subject rarely broached on the university debating circuit. Indeed, the debate only saw the light of day because Mac Med Students for Life lobbied for it.

The reluctance to debate abortion, however, as every Canadian knows, is not just at universities. It is something Canadians – in academia, on the street, in our parliament and even sometimes in our churches – have a hard time discussing. That is partly because our national personality doesn't like tackling "not nice topics," says Paul Malvern, an author and strategic communications consultant. Malvern is also the former principal speechwriter for Prime Minister Harper, and a frequent speaker on pro-life circuits.

Are Canadians Too Nice?

The reluctance of Canadians to debate abortion may also have something to do with how vocal Americans are about it, and a desire to distance ourselves from American fundamentalism. Why Americans are more prepared to debate has a lot to do with "the state of the law so plainly at variance with the moral view of so many of its citizens," says *National Post* managing editor Jonathan Kay, a columnist who has more than once weighed in

on abortion in the pages of the *Post*.

"The U.S. is an openly Christian country, and there is a vast difference between the religious nation and the liberal abortion law – even though the laws vary from state to state. And that tension drives the debate, the tension between the morality of the people and the law, and as long as the law doesn't reflect people's values, there will continue to be that tension," Kay explains.

Meanwhile in Canada, Kay adds, there is less "religious pressure" to ban abortion, making for less tension between reality and the laws. "If you asked most people who live in Toronto or Montreal to design an abortion law, they'd say we don't need one." Just this January an Angus Reid Public Opinion poll found 59 per cent of Canadians feel there is no point in re-opening the abortion debate, with 30 per cent feeling a debate is overdue.

“The internet has opened the discussion in a different forum, going over the heads of mainstream journalists who say that abortion is good, and the other side doesn't have anything worthwhile to say.”

Ordinary Canadians vs the Advocates

Véronique Bergeron is a parliamentary assistant who frequently blogs about pro-life topics. She says there's a marked difference between the position of regular Canadians and those immersed in the debate on a daily basis whose opinions are polarized.

Bergeron, a married lawyer with eight children – and a biomedical ethics degree – says, "In the science realm everyone knows that life begins at conception. Technology has allowed us to see what's developing in the womb at an early time. You'll hear people saying it's a clump of cells, but those are not solid debaters."

But within the movement the lines are drawn on two distinctly different premises – pro-life arguing that all abortion is a trauma against nature, and pro-choice arguing that every woman has the right to choose what happens to her body. And because the pro-choice position relies on law and the justice system, Bergeron adds, "They feel that the issue was settled over 20 years ago, and that the debate is closed."

Faytene Grasseschi, executive director of the Christian youth advocacy group 4MyCanada (www.4mycanada.ca).

about abortion in Canada?

In March, Stephanie Gray, co-founder of Calgary's Canadian Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform, took part in a debate with a first-year health sciences student from McMaster's debating team. This was an unusual event because it's very difficult to find anyone willing to debate or discuss abortion. The debate door may have opened just a crack.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY BIO-ETHICAL REFORM

ca), believes the debate was never really resolved. "In 1988, when Morgentaler won, even pro-choice advocate Bertha Wilson, who ruled in favour of Morgentaler, charged parliament to make a law to decide when the rights of the unborn become more important than the rights of the mother. But Canada has never completed that discussion...[and] no law was passed."

Don Hutchinson is general legal counsel for The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC). He believes that "we have been caught in this legal limbo in Canada, partly because abortion has become a sacrosanct topic. When a parliamentarian brings it up, there is inevitably effort to shut down debate," he says. "We know that there are members of parliament who are pro-life. These women and men are not trying to legislate freedom away [from] Canadian women, as they are often accused of doing. They desire, as does the EFC – and we think Canadians are capable of having – a healthy, respectful debate on this topic that is so important. The Supreme Court of Canada set the issue up for debate in the Morgentaler decision. Proposed legislation passed the House of Com-

mons and died on a tie vote at the last stage of approval in the Senate in 1991. Since then Canada has no legislation for, against or limiting abortion. It's very strong, almost irrational, feelings that seem to get in the way."

When Feelings Get in the Way of Facts

The majority of Canadians often base their views, Bergeron believes, on feelings. "The more you talk to people," she says, "the more you find have had abortions or know someone who has. Subjective feeling-based views, coupled with no formal training in logic or how to argue constructively, makes it very difficult to have a debate."

Nor are Canadians well informed about the facts. In that same January Angus Reid poll, only 23 per cent of those polled knew that a "woman can have an abortion at any time during her pregnancy, with no restrictions whatsoever." An incredible 77 per cent of respondents did not know Canada's abortion status quo, with 45 per cent certain a woman can only have an abortion in the first three months.

It's a personal brush with abortion that often leads to supporting it, especially for youth. Statistics on abortion



PHOTO: WWW.AMONGTHETRUTHERS.COM



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Protesters make their point at a March for Life event in Ottawa (left). The *National Post*'s Jonathan Kay (top right) does not view the debate in religious terms. Andrea Mrozek (lower right) says that showing very graphic images allows women to grapple with their feelings for the first time.

in Canada show that in 2010, 13.7 per cent of abortions in Canada were to girls under 19, and 25.8 per cent happened to women between 20 and 24 (www.abortionincanada.ca).

That is precisely why CCBR staff spend a lot of their time on sidewalks outside high schools where students congre-

gate at lunch hour. Gray is amazed at how candid teenagers can be about their sexual activity and the abortions they have had. Instead of debating right or wrong, she asks students why they believe what they do about abortion, and listens to their stories to see how they came to those views.

When Debate Is Shut Down in Canada's Highest Places

By Faye Sonier

In March, member of parliament Mark Warawa's (MP, Langley) motion M-408 was deemed non-votable by the committee responsible for assessing new private members' bills and motions. His motion, which called on Parliament to condemn sex-selective abortion by means of a public statement, could not proceed to the House of Commons for debate or vote.

Many were astounded by the committee's finding. M-408 was simple and straightforward: "That the House condemn discrimination against females



Faye Sonier

PHOTO: RYAN PARENT PHOTOGRAPHY

occurring through sex-selective pregnancy termination." The motion met the legal requirements to proceed as a private members' motion and be presented to the House.

Some observers believed the decision was the result of politicking at its worst. Most agreed it's a result of the aversion of many parliamentarians to discuss, debate or even consider Canada's abortion status quo. As we all know well, abortion in Canada is legal through all nine months of pregnancy, without restriction.

Sex-selective abortion, or gendercide,

is the killing through abortion of a child because of his or her gender. M-408 would condemn the practice. This is happening in Canada in cases where, for cultural or other reasons, men are valued more highly than women, thus boy babies are wanted more badly than girls. It is gender discrimination at its worst.

Warawa, surely aware of the political climate, introduced a motion that was, by all accounts, non-controversial. Members of all political parties had previously condemned this form of gendercide. The Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada (www.sogc.org) has condemned this practice. In a 2011 survey 92 per cent of Canadians polled said sex-selective abortion should be illegal. To be

The Socratic method of debate – asking questions – is most effective if pro-life activists first listen. Gray, like Bergeron, finds opinions about abortion have more to do with personal history. “One young man defended abortion, but later told me about his disappointment growing up being an only child, only later discovering that his mother had aborted a sibling when he was little. Because he cares about his mother, he wants to justify her choice,” says Gray.

Other stories cut deeper to the bone, such as the girl whose mother insisted on an abortion while keeping the pregnancy from her husband. “The rapist was a relative,” Gray says. “Rather than bring evil like that out in the open, people cover up it up with abortion.”

Rape and poverty are two common reasons why youth defend abortion, and while Gray does not deny those traumatic experiences, she asks questions intended to make them think. “Will an abortion unrape the woman, or take away the memory of rape?”

But CCBP also uses very graphic imagery of aborted fetuses for which Gray has been repeatedly criticized. Her rationale, however, is to speak truth loudly through visuals because most people, especially teenagers, really do not know what happens in an abortion. Andrea Mrozek, executive director of Ottawa’s Institute of Marriage and Family Canada (www.imfcanada.org) and founder of ProWoman-ProLife (www.prowomanprolife.org), defends CCBP’s strategy. “Seeing what actually happens allows women to

grapple with their feelings for the first time. More harmful is to experience silent guilt or shame, especially when someone is telling you [you] shouldn’t feel guilty.”

Youth, though, are also the ones “increasingly standing up and saying, ‘This doesn’t work for me,’” says pro-life speaker Paul Malvern. “They’ve figured out that the previous two generations mortgaged their future with their high standard of living, and there’s no one left to pay the bills and to clean up the mess, including abortion.”

And thanks to the technology youth were weaned on, they’ve got a very effective vehicle for debate. “The internet has opened the discussion in a different forum, going over the heads of mainstream journalists who say that abor-

tion is good, and the other side doesn’t have anything worthwhile to say,” says Malvern. In fact, a recent Environics poll, commissioned by pro-life group LifeCanada (www.lifecanada.org), reported a majority of young Canadians actually say abortion should not be legal after 12 weeks’ gestation. Almost 80 per cent of 18–29 year-olds polled opposed legal third trimester abortions. Among women, two-thirds opposed third trimester abortions and 49 per cent opposed second trimester abortions.

Having no abortion law at all in Canada actually places us on par with North Korea, and behind China with its law prohibiting revealing the sex of a fetus to prevent sex-selective abortion.

What Is Left to Debate?

The amount of recent press coverage about the abortion non-debate in Canada, and even the prime minister’s

clear, Warawa’s motion would not have prohibited sex-selective abortion. Its purpose was to send a message to Canadians – and the world – that gendercide has no place in our country. Yet, apparently even condemning gendercide is politically unpalatable.

This winter, when asked about abortion in Canada, a pro-choice MP stated that since a recent poll found 59 per cent of respondents did not want to open the abortion debate, there was no reason to do so.

But that is not exactly what the poll suggests. Participants were asked to choose one of two options. The first was, “There is no point in re-opening a debate about abortion in Canada right now,” and the second was, “A debate about abortion is long overdue in Canada, and the discussion should be re-opened.”

Given the heated political climate and

the fact our prime minister has repeatedly stated his party “will not initiate or support any effort to pass legislation restricting abortion in Canada,” even the most pro-life of advocates can become discouraged and feel “there is no point in re-opening a debate about abortion in Canada *right now*.”

I disagree. The abortion debate never ended. As a nation we have not stopped talking about it or debating the merits of legislation. There are a large number of MPs in Parliament, as well as innumerable more Canadians, open to the discussion. I know, because I have sat down with pro-life and pro-choice MPs and have participated in those conversations.

Despite the poll noted earlier, Canadians are largely more pro-life than they are pro-choice. Whereas the pro-choice lobby advocates for abortion on demand at any time for any reason, a January

2013 poll found only 35 per cent of Canadians share that perspective. Fifty-nine percent believe there should be some limits placed on abortion access. While many Canadians may feel disheartened about our political climate, most are convinced our current abortion legislative vacuum is unsatisfactory.

For those of us who feel abortion on demand is unconscionable, we need to continue to speak out. And we need to encourage those who are courageously doing so to continue, regardless if they are colleagues, friends or Members of Parliament. And we need to continue to do so regardless of the results of latest opinion polling. Because it is simply the right thing to do. **FT**

FAYE SONIER of Ottawa is legal counsel for The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.



Véronique Bergeron: In the science realm everyone knows that life begins at conception.

open refusal to discuss it, suggests there is actually still very much to debate about this issue. And with recently disclosed rates of sex-selective abortions in Canada – and the general feeling of disgust and dismay over its practice – the debate door may have opened just a crack.

Other topics might push open the door even further, such as demographics. “The fact that [there are] not enough workers in the Gen-X age range to support an aging population,” Grasseschi says. “Or how abortion has affected the mental health of our nation, what it does to women and how that will look 15 or 30 years down the road. Another discussion we need to have is why so many women feel as though they were forced to have an abortion by parents or boyfriends. That’s a human rights debate.”

Bergeron would like to explore what both sides could agree on, such as the notion that “women are shortchanged by childrearing, especially in today’s work environment. Spending 10 years at home caring for children counts for nothing in the workforce. That’s part of the pro-choice argument. And I agree with it, so the work that needs doing is equality, not abortion.”

Abortion is in some ways just the tip of the iceberg of much deeper issues, Bergeron feels, such as “our prevailing attitudes towards casual sex and the value of women. In some socio-economic classes your value as a woman is intimately linked to your sexual availability. If no man desires me sexually, then I am not beautiful. This is something that absolutely must be included in any debate on abortion,” she says. “It’s not enough for the pro-life side to say having kids is awesome, because when you’re 15, it’s not awesome. There needs to be a discussion of women’s sexuality, and the objectification of women. This is something that we could debate. Part of the pro-choice and feminist view is that women are sexual beings, and being sexually liberated is an accomplishment. My question on that would be [to] define liberation because women are not wired like men.”

What Will Help Open This Discussion in Canada?

When Bergeron is asked if she thinks pro-choice might be more willing to debate pro-life if criminalizing abortion were taken off the table, she says, “Plenty of pro-life people are against criminalizing abortion. The problem is when you suggest limits – prohibiting abortions after a certain gestation, for example – then you introduce an element of subjectivity into the debate. Many people have wondered why pro-choice does not oppose sex selection,

and the reason is if you admit that abortion is *not* always done for good reason, then you open the door for any reason not being good.”

That’s too much wiggle room for pro-choice, and why their position in any abortion debate always rests on a woman’s right to choose what happens to her body. Anything less is regarded as control, usually of the religious type. And being pro-life in a culture increasingly antagonistic to religion can be a “career buster,” says Paul Malvern, a self-described “former leftie” who says he came to a pro-life position by reason and logic long before he became a Christian.

While there’s a growing number of pro-life activists who are not people of faith, it’s inherently difficult to separate religion from a debate that revolves around the existential question of what it is to be human – because that is a religious question.

While the *National Post*’s Jonathan Kay admits many people he knows who are “militant pro-choicers are also harsh critics of organized religion, especially Christianity,” he does not view the debate in religious terms. Nor is he religious himself.

“I’m a policy guy and am intellectually engaged in policy, and it bothers me that we don’t have an abortion law,” Kay says. “You can view life in a purely scientific way and [still see] that it pollutes society morally to treat a fetus as a hunk of flesh.”

Having no abortion law at all in Canada actually places us on par with North Korea, and behind China with its law prohibiting revealing the sex of a fetus to prevent sex-selective abortion. The questionable company we are keeping is the very thing that makes Kay believe we’ll eventually get some kind of a law. “We [Canadians] love


to compare ourselves to others, but on this issue we’re an aberration. Sweden, Finland, and all the other socially liberal countries of Europe have laws limiting when abortion can be done. If I were a

politician campaigning for an abortion law, I’d take the U.S. out of the debate altogether, because Canadians love to take their cue from progressive countries in Europe.”

In Andrea Mrozek’s experience, most Canadians, whether pro-life or pro-choice, are in favour of setting *some* limits. But she also believes Canada does not need “coercive legislation in order for women one by one to realize that abortion is wrong because it is taking the lives of their children. As such, hearts will change, the culture will change...and then the law will change.”

But before a law comes, debate must surely happen more in Canada. As the first-year university student said in his opening statement at the McMaster debate, “What matters here, no matter the outcome, is to debate important topics such as this. It’s what makes for a healthy democracy.” **FT**

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



Church planter and pastor Narry Santos baptizes a new church member at Greenhills Christian Fellowship – Toronto.

SUPPLIED PHOTO

Training Immigrant Pastors

Many of Canada's fastest growing congregations come from immigrant communities, and older Canadian churches and seminaries are helping them manage growth with wisdom. *By Debra Fieguth*

Ministry in the Philippines was going beautifully for church planter Narry Santos, who had built a congregation of a thousand people at a church with a property that included a school for kindergarten to Grade 12. Then he was asked to uproot his family and move to Toronto.

"It didn't logically make sense, leaving the comfort of the ministry," he says. But his parent church, Greenhills Christian Fellowship, was anxious to send him to Canada to plant churches here. Because

"the Great Commission is nothing less than global," he and his family, including two daughters, arrived in April 2007. "We basically told people we were here in Canada by God's purpose, not because we [were seeking] a good future for our family."

The Canadian branch of Greenhills now has six churches, including three in the Toronto area and one each in Vancouver, Calgary and Winnipeg.

But with the rapid growth of the new churches came a new challenge. Although Santos has two PhDs – one in New Testa-

ment and one in Philippine Studies – the pastors and church planters leading the congregations were mostly laypeople in need of training.

They "either didn't have North American credentials for programs or were holding down other jobs," explains Brian Craig, director of leadership development for the Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec (CBOQ).

So Narry Santos teamed up with Brian Craig and Robert Cousins, director of the Tyndale Intercultural Ministries Centre in Toronto. The result is a program that



■ **Dedo Suwanda operates comfortably in both business and church ministry.**

allows lay pastors to study part-time and become equipped for pastoral work.

The New Canadian Church Planters' Forum now has 50 students in two cohorts, who will graduate with either a diploma or a certificate in ministry. A third group started classes in January.

"We don't ordain and we don't credential," explains Cousins, whose TIM Centre is part of Tyndale University College & Seminary. "We're delivering training for new Canadians that denominational partners will recognize for lay leadership in the church."

While many mainline and even evangelical churches are declining in membership, those focusing on immigrants and new Canadians are growing, Cousins points out.

Some churches with an ethnic base are already well established. In the CBOQ, "Our largest churches are Chinese," says Craig, and there are already many Chinese pastors well equipped to lead their congregations and plant new churches. "Within the CBOQ we have worship centres in 22 different languages. Many of them are becoming more culturally diverse."

Although so far only the CBOQ has participated as a denomination, Cousins sees the growth of the TIM Centre program as inevitable. "This is a huge, huge issue and a huge part of why I think there's an interest," he says. "A lot of new Canadians who come here want to get into church plants. But a lot of denominations don't know who they are."

The program is also an opportunity for newcomers and denominations to get to know each other.

Our country's cultural makeup is ever-changing. Canada's 2011 census figures show Tagalog, the main language of the Philippines, was the fastest growing language in Canada in the last five years, with a 64 per cent increase since 2006. Although the new Greenhills churches all hold services in English, and don't limit their outreach to the Filipino community, their growth is bolstered by the rapid

increase in immigration from the Philippines.

"Greenhills is becoming more multicultural," notes Craig, who calls the Canadian Greenhills leaders enthusiastic, thoughtful, and "very intentional" about outreach into the communities around them.

Greenhills now has an affiliation with CBOQ, which has provided scholarship money for the students to take courses. Fees are only about a quarter of those for regular Tyndale classes. The program also offers tutoring in English, and mentoring. A percentage of students who excel in the courses will be encouraged to go into full-time ministry, taking advanced academic training.

Of the 50 students taking the first round of classes at the TIM Centre, 12 are Filipino, another 10 are Iranians, including some converts from Islam, and others are mainly from countries in Asia and Africa.

Nimfa Guevarra, a Toronto nurse who has been in Canada since 1987, recalls how as a new Christian she studied the Bible as much as she could. Later, holding a leadership position in her church, "I wanted to pursue biblical knowledge," she says. "I got so hungry for it." She has now completed seven courses in the program. In mid-2011, with Cousins' urging and assistance, she started an outreach ministry at a publicly-funded housing complex inhabited mostly by immigrants from South-

east Asia, senior citizens, and people newly released from facilities for those with mental problems and chemical dependency.

Despite some initial harassment – Guevarra describes the complex as "a minefield" as well as "a gold mine" –

she has been leading weekly Bible studies there ever since. Her studies have given her knowledge as well as confidence. Courses on sharing her faith, especially among people of different cultures and beliefs, have equipped her to serve.

Several residents from Muslim backgrounds have since accepted Christ. And

While many mainline and even evangelical churches are declining in membership, those focusing on immigrants and new Canadians are growing.

SUPPLIED PHOTO

at a special Thanksgiving service in September, one of the residents confided that until recently, "We have never felt like people cared for us." For one man in his 80s, the Bible study in his own building was an answer to prayer.

The Bible study spawned a monthly Sunday service. "Now they want church every Sunday," says Guevarra, who also encourages attending other church services, including those at Greenhills. Gue-



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Nimfa Guevarra leads Bible study growth groups in her church

varra now leads Bible study growth groups in her church, and hopes she can retire early to spend more time in ministry.

The son of Buddhist parents but schooled in a Catholic setting, Dedo Suwanda came to Canada from Indonesia 30 years ago. With a PhD in engineering, he works as vice-president of a company, but also helps out in two churches, one of them Indonesian and the other a multi-cultural church plant begun by Koreans and affiliated with the Canadian National Baptist Convention. "I became more and more interested in teaching," he explains.

When he found out about the training at the TIM Centre, he began taking courses in biblical studies. The part-time study suits him, and he can afford it. "With family and work I would not have time for seminary courses," he points out.

For the moment, having completed four courses and looking forward to four more for the diploma, Suwanda operates comfortably in both business and church ministry. Besides teaching and leading Bible studies in the church setting, he has worked with Christian business groups and a marketplace chaplaincy, and so far has not decided on full-time, ordained ministry.

"I think I have a dual calling," he says. "God gave me a gift of doing business *and* engineering. Will I give up that calling or career? Maybe not. I am the one being sent out to the marketplace. I still have the urge to bring the gospel to the marketplace."

But now, equipped with more understanding of modern culture and how to respond to it, that Christian presence in business is even stronger. "At the end of



SUPPLIED PHOTO

We're delivering training for new Canadians: Robert Cousins.

the day, in the marketplace you have to show by your deeds, and you will get the opportunity to share afterwards." **FT**

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



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The Faith Today Inter



Mark Vander Vennen (MV) is executive director of Shalem Mental Health Network, a faith-based network providing mental health support and resources to individuals, families and communities. Vander Vennen spoke to senior editor Karen Stiller (FT) about what mental health means for a Christian, when to go for therapy, and how Christians can stop saying inappropriate things to each other during rough times. *By Karen Stiller*

FT: Mark, what is good mental health?

MV: My definition of good mental health is that we have a coherent autobiographical narrative. By that I mean we can access any time or event in our life for review and conversation, even the hard times and the traumas, without getting triggered by them. That says to me we've been able to work through the difficulties in our life, and they are not interfering with how we function now.

Good mental health is also very relational. It's about relationships. It's being able to have healthy ones where we can be honest with each other and express emotion safely. As humans we are hardwired for relationships. We need them as much as we need oxygen and food, it's that primal a need. That's how God has created us.

FT: When I think of relationships and mental health, I think right away of the family as a place where we are both hurt and healed.

MV: Families are definitely places of hurt and healing. If we've grown up in a family where abuse has happened, or we've been the victims or witnessed violence between our mom and dad, then the family is not such a great place of healing. Sometimes Christians and churches can put undue pressure on people to reconcile in those cases when that's just not in the cards and only causes more trauma.

On the other hand, families are places of healing, and that can happen even where those hard circumstances have happened. We learn how to do relationships in

family. It's how we learn how to deal with the other gender in some ways.

Families are places of healing, especially where parenting is attachment friendly or attachment focused, where a parent is attuned to their child's emotional status and need, and responds effectively to those needs. Where a parent can offer attunement and emotional presence combined with effective leadership, there's a family where healing can take place.

FT: I do believe there is still the idea we can/should have a "perfect Christian family."

MV: There's no such thing as a perfect family. A healthy family is one that knows how to repair harm that has been done and restore relationships. That means it's a place where hurtful things are said, where we're not afraid of intense emotions, we

are not afraid of anger. We don't suppress it, we find ways to have difficult conversations, and make ways for moving on and deepening our relationships.

FT: Is there still the idea out there that if we have accepted Christ, we should have our act together, or should pretend we do?

MV: That is very much a reality, and it makes mental health that much more difficult for Christians. Sometimes I hear, "If I'm saved and have new life in Christ, I should no longer be depressed. If I am depressed, given that I am saved and have new life in Christ, then I'm a double failure." That's a huge issue, and a huge misunderstanding of what new life in Christ is. Where does

“Families are places of healing, and that can happen even where hard circumstances have happened.”

view: Mental Health



PHOTO: CRAIG CRAVER / WWW.DESIGNPICS.COM

this notion come from, that once we are saved things are right with all aspects of our life, or that we can't present ourselves in all our imperfections, as Christ sees us and accepts us? That is an extra issue for some Christians in relation to mental health, that now things must be right, and if they're not, it's because we have a weakness in our faith.

FT: Presenting that façade keeps us from sharing our deepest and darkest with each other, which I'm guessing can actually increase our chances of making big mistakes when we don't have someone to speak to honestly about our struggles.

MV: We are very scared to do that. It's hard to admit our vulnerability to someone, even a good friend. We are afraid of rejection, of being judged. Meanwhile, it's the single best thing we could do for ourselves. Our tag line at Shalem is restoring hope. We're exploring hope by studying the psalms of lament, where it's clear that hope

emerges in the context of lament, of shared lament. When we can lament about what is happening in our lives with someone who can hold that with us, be together with it, in that context hope comes.

FT: When is it time to go beyond speaking with a friend and seek therapy?

MV: When something is persistently interfering with our life and our own resources are not enough to deal with it. Go sooner rather than later. It's so much easier to overcome something earlier. I see that with couples. They will delay and delay coming for help, and often when they get there, it is almost too late. If they had come earlier, they would have found it easier. When you become entrenched in the pattern and the hurt, it becomes harder and harder to be open to changing. We are afraid of change, even when it's healthy and positive. We become attached to our hurt and our pride, even though we experience them as awful and don't want them.

FT: Is there a way for the Church to combat that wrong idea of having it all together?

MV: I know this is extremely difficult for pastors, but a little more transparency from them about their struggles in their own lives could be a great way to model for parishioners that this is okay. But for some pastors it can sound like they're not functioning well in their jobs, so it's hard.

As church congregations, very seldom do we know how to have difficult conversations with each other in a safe way. Churches could focus on developing patterns of communication that make it safe for people to express their deepest feelings, even when there is disagreement.

FT: What would a difficult conversation in a church be about?

MV: Here is a common one – traditional versus contemporary worship. Rather than speak about it, people tend to caucus in their own group and write letters of complaint without speaking to the people they're opposed to. Whole conflicts can develop along those lines, and they can even

become polarizations along multi-generational lines if they're not dealt with. If we're a church where it is normal and routine to have those difficult conversations, then we can gather in a circle where no one gets interrupted, everyone can speak, and we find ways to hear each other. We talk about churches becoming conflict friendly. Conflict is welcomed as an invitation to deepen relationships with each other.

FT: What about the dopey things we say to each other when called upon to listen and offer some comfort? How can we be better friends in Christ?

MV: We want to come alongside and do a lot of listening. We don't want to offer snap advice. I think sometimes we're nervous when we come into a situation and respond by offering advice. Or we may say things like, "Well, things aren't that bad.

Have a stronger faith!" or "Give it up to God," as if the person is not already doing that.

We work with a lot of children who have attachment disorders. They have had horrific beginnings to their lives. They are immersed in a pool of shame. When finally they come out and say, "I am bad," or "I am worthless," the last thing you want to say is, "No, you're not." You want to say, "That must be awful that you are feeling that way. It must be

terrible to carry that." With good intentions we discredit their story and shut them down. We want to stay with them in their pain and be curious about it. Curiosity and empathy statements, as well as "I" statements are really good. "I know you're feeling this or that. Here's what I'm really curious about, here's what I'm wondering. Help me understand that."

“We talk about churches becoming conflict friendly. Conflict is welcomed as an invitation to deepen relationships with each other.”


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Our Sep/Oct 2013 issue will return to print and digital as usual.

It's about you trying to understand them rather than trying to set them on a certain course.

FT: We hear a lot about sexual addiction in particular these days. Can you help us understand that?

MV: Addiction is an aspect of mental health. There is controversy in the field about whether this is an actual addiction like alcohol or drugs. I believe it is because the same thing that happens in the brain with alcohol and drugs happens with sexual addiction.

FT: We seem to go a bit wonky about that subject in particular. Why is that?

MV: Any sexuality topic brings up our own sexual history, and all of us have checked sexual histories. We feel shame about it – sexuality is probably the most vulnerable aspect of our humanity. It kicks up our own stuff about sex. We all struggle in some way with our own sexuality, and so there too it's hard for us to have conversations in a way that we can disclose things. In speaking about sexual brokenness in relation to men, I often talk about "the missing community of men." Men will sometimes try and get all their needs met by women, whereas in fact many significant needs in men need to be met by other men. Older men who help younger men understand what it is to be male and grow into adulthood is one of the significant gaps in our time, and it plays into the awful trend of sexual addiction.

I think, as Evangelicals, we need to open up more broadly the conversation about mental health. I often hear the term "moral failure," for example, when someone has an affair. I'm not saying that an affair is not a moral failure, but the underlying assumption is that if we reimpose morality, we will have solved the problem. There is nothing there about what is going on with the couple, patterns they've learned from their families of origin, or the emotional needs and relational patterns that have created this hard circumstance. When we defer to morality, we sidestep most of the essential issues. I am issuing a plea to have a broader conversation that includes mental health and relational patterns. The implication is that if you just read the Bible with people, they'll get straight again. It's just not that simple.

FT: Thank you, Mark. FT

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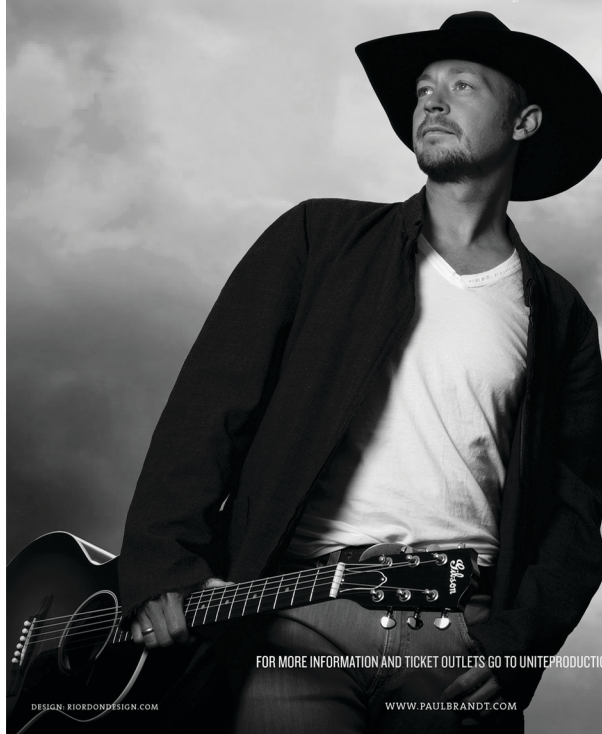


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Cases Challenge Limits

Expressing religiously informed beliefs can get complicated when they challenge contemporary assumptions about homosexuality and abortion.

By Stephen Bedard



In 2009 Tamil protesters brought Toronto to a standstill. When asked about how they would respond, one police official explained to a reporter, “This is what is great about Canada – we have the freedom to protest like this!” Surely many Canadians were encouraged by such an affirmation.

Unfortunately, for at least one woman watching the news that day, that statement did not ring true. Linda Gibbons was watching from behind bars, wearing her prison uniform. That day was only one of many she has spent in jail for protesting against abortion.

Her case is one of several causing people to question the limits of the freedom of expression so many Canadians take for granted.

Perhaps the most notorious of these recent cases is William Whatcott’s. In 2001 and 2002 he distributed fly-



ers in Regina and Saskatoon expressing his beliefs about homosexuality. He was later found to have contravened the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code, which prohibits material that “promotes hatred against individuals because of their sexual orientation.”

Although some Evangelicals objected to the content and tone of Whatcott’s flyers, the case raised clear questions concerning the limits to expressing personal religious beliefs. For this reason, The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) intervened in the long process of legal proceed-

to Free Exp

PHOTO: JARED WHITE, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT, ABBOTSFORD RIGHT TO LIFE

This example brings us back to Linda Gibbons, described in the *National Post* as “a peaceful but relentless anti-abortion picketer, who has spent nine years in jail over two decades for violating an 18-year-old injunction by waving signs outside abortion clinics.” The injunction is a court order against protesting within 150 metres of several Toronto abortion clinics. Gibbons’ most recent conviction for disobeying it stemmed from distributing leaflets while picketing. In her picketing she often carries signs that read “Why Mom?” or “Pray to end abortion.”

The validity of these concerns was demonstrated in another recent controversy surrounding Crossroads Communications (www.crossroads.ca), the ministry that operates CTS-TV as well as humanitarian efforts such as

I Linda Gibbons has spent ten of the last 20 years in jail for her attempts at expression.



PHOTO: RIGHT TO LIFE

Gibbons sees a difference in the treatment of abortion protesters compared to animal rights activists or environmentalists. In her words: "All protesters are equal, but some protesters are more equal than others." Although she was recently released from jail, she knows she won't stay free for long if she expresses her views near an abortion clinic.

So why is Canada going through such struggles over freedom of expression?

Some think a misunderstanding of tolerance is part of the problem. The EFC's Don Hutchison explains, "Tolerance is recognizing that we have differences with other people and still being accepting of the other person as an equal, without being required to agree with them."

David Koyzis, a professor of political science at Redeemer University College, explains, "Many people erroneously treat tolerance as a final state – a near utopia characterized by harmony and absence of disagreement."

He suggests that popular mistake will "have a detrimental impact on constitutional government, which requires the continuation, and not the curtailment, of the ongoing conversation in the public square."

While tolerance is good, our ultimate goal should not be complete protection against offence. John Stackhouse, a professor of theology and culture at Regent College, explains: "Risking offence is the price of encountering important difference, and it's a price one has to pay in a grown-up world. It's a price worth paying, too, because by remaining vulnerable to ideas I initially find upsetting, I might find a radically better way of seeing something."

Janet Epp Buckingham, an associate professor of political studies and history at Trinity Western University, explains why abortion

and homosexuality have become the battlegrounds. These issues "seem to have special rules. This is likely because they were once illegal and so are seen as needing special status. Consequently, any public debate, even about their special status, is seen to be trying to re-criminalize them." Christians seeking to express views on these subjects must be aware of the underlying fears.

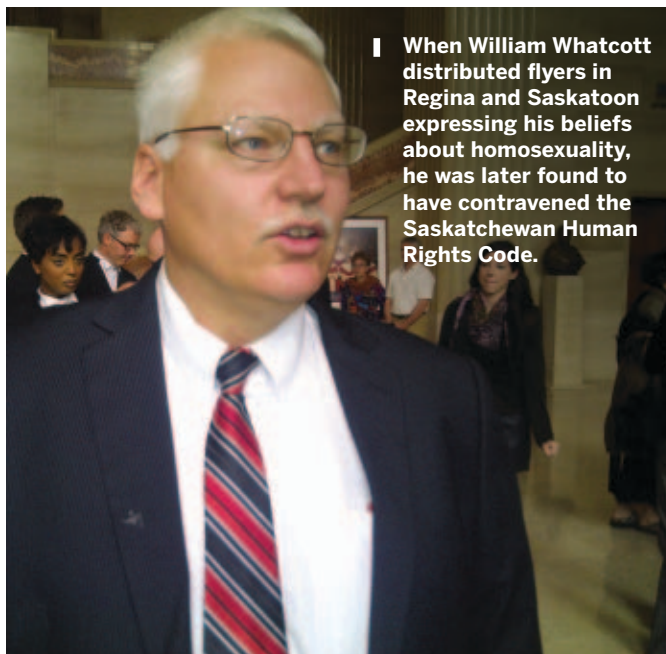
For those who grew up understanding Canada as a mosaic, the current situation may seem baffling. Shouldn't there be room in a mosaic for those who support traditional marriage and those who support same-sex marriage, for pro-life and pro-choice?

Epp Buckingham states, "Since the 1970s Canada has been officially multicultural. This means that people in Canada are supposed to be able to maintain multiple identities, such as Greek-Canadian for example. This requires an acceptance of diversity in our society. However, this tolerance seems to be breaking down. People in Canada are increasingly looking to courts and human rights tribunals to force people to hold certain views when they should just engage them in conversation."

Canada could be at a turning point as it struggles with how to maintain the delicate balance of worldviews. As Bruce Clemenger, president of the EFC, states: "Freedom of expression is one of our most basic freedoms. It is closely related to freedom of religion. We should steward it wisely."

That stewardship includes a careful mix of boldness and meekness. The Apostle Paul in Acts 16 stands up for his rights as a Roman citizen, and even receives an apology after those rights are broken. Freedom of expression is also a tremendous responsibility. As Epp Buckingham states, "Christians should not retreat from the public square but can contribute their views in a respectful way."

Or to paraphrase some familiar Bible phrases, let us stand up for the truth, but let us express that truth in love. **FT**



I When William Whatcott distributed flyers in Regina and Saskatoon expressing his beliefs about homosexuality, he was later found to have contravened the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code.

PHOTO: WWW.CANADA.COM

STEPHEN BEDARD is a freelance writer in Cambridge, Ont.



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School of Business
School of Education
School of Human Kinetics
School of Nursing
School of Graduate Studies

Institutes and Centres:

Religion in Canada Institute
John Williams Wevers Institute for Septuagint Studies
Dead Sea Scrolls Institute
Gender Studies Institute
Centre for Spiritual Formation in Higher Education
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Education. Transformation. **IMPACT.**

Trinity Western University transforms lives through Christ-centred higher education.

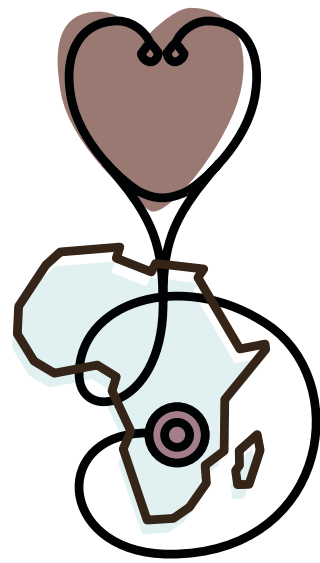
Our faculty members unite faith and reason through exceptional scholarship, and they pass on their love for discovering God's truth to their students. TWU is a place where many students discover, for the first time, their potential to be—the men and women God intended them to be—skilled servant leaders committed to making a positive difference in the lives of others.

Whether providing care in third-world hospitals, working through legislation to end human trafficking, serving in the Canadian Parliamentary system, or making a difference in their local communities, TWU alumni recognize and respond to the world's deepest needs.

Our goal is to glorify God in everything we do. The following pages share a glimpse of how the TWU community is fulfilling its mission as a Christian university.

HEALING HANDS

Rigorous training and Christ-centred compassion converge in TWU's School of Nursing



In the children's ward at the Salvation Army Hospital at Chikankata Mission in rural Zambia, a five-year-old burn victim cries in pain as his wound dressing is changed. Around an old iron bed in the sparsely furnished ward, several TWU nursing students blow bubbles and sing silly songs to help take his mind off his discomfort. The boy's eyes wrinkle at the corners, his tears stop, and his mouth curves into a smile. Soon, he's laughing at the antics of the strangers from Canada.

Distraction, or play therapy, is often used in conjunction with pharmaceutical treatments for pain management in North America. But in Zambia, where resources—including pain medications—are scarce, the technique proved a valuable tool for the group of 19 students who, along with, assistant professors Heather Meyerhoff, MSN, and Darlane Pankratz, MSN, were able to demonstrate its effectiveness to Zambian nursing students during their travel study trip.

TWU's nursing program is the only faith-based program in Canada.

For Kelly Schooten, who participated in the trip as a nursing student, the three-week course was an incredible opportunity. "I learned a great deal about community development, stewardship of resources, and joy in serving the Lord," she says.

In addition to serving at the hospital, students assisted in rural areas, where they helped with immunization clinics, and facilitated educational clinics on HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, simple first-aid, and pre- and neo-natal care. A number volunteered at Muka Buumi Clinic—Chikankata's HIV/AIDS outpatient clinic.

In many countries, including Zambia, there is a stigma attached to HIV/AIDS patients. "They receive only the most basic care," says Pankratz. "But we teach our students to

regard each human being as God's creation, and make a covenant to care for patients—mind, body, and spirit—as Jesus would."

GOD'S SCHOOL

Since its inception in 1993, TWU's nursing program has turned out well-rounded, caring graduates—highly sought after by employers.

"This is the Lord's school," says nursing professor Landa Terblanche, Ph.D., "and the fulfillment of the long-term dream of many people. The School houses TWU's undergraduate and graduate nursing degrees, with several Ph.D.-prepared faculty who teach at both levels."

The only faith-based program in Canada, the Master of Science in Nursing program emphasizes spiritual-intellectual integration, offers a mixed-delivery format—two campus-based courses followed by online courses, and includes a one-week health policy course at TWU's Laurentian Leadership Centre in Ottawa.

Exciting programs, coupled with the sense of community and vision for excellence in education and scholarship, draw not only quality students but also top-notch faculty members to the University. "Faculty members often feel a sense of calling to this place—that there's something they can uniquely contribute," says Sonya Grypma, Ph.D., Dean of the School of Nursing.

In addition to quality instruction, students benefit from early clinical placements—typically in the second semester of the first year—through which they gain valuable, hands-on experience in a number of settings, from hospitals to schools, to an innovative opportunity with the Kwantlen First Nation Reserve. These early placements result in students who are confident in a variety of clinical settings.

"Employers of our graduates often say, 'I don't know what you're doing at TWU, but whatever it is, keep doing it,'" says Terblanche. "With our small class sizes, we're able to focus on students."



Students are encouraged to integrate all aspects of faith with their nursing studies for a truly transformative life experience.

SPIRITUAL CARE

In the first of two rooms set up for a Widow's Tea, students serve tea and scones to a Zambian woman burdened by the loss of her spouse. In the second, a student soaks and massages another woman's cracked, calloused feet and hands, then paints her fingernails bright red. At another station, several more women listen intently as students teach on hypertension, diabetes, and stress-management. In all, 27 women from the Naomi Group—a community support group for widows—participated. “What we prepared was pretty simple,” says Meyerhoff, “but these women were incredibly grateful for it. At the end, many of them shared with us that they felt loved in a way they hadn't since the loss of their husbands. The connection between the young nursing students and these older women crossed cultures and generations in a profound way.”

No student remains unchanged after an experience such as this. “Transformational learning occurs during these travel studies,” says Pankratz. “The learning opportunity isn't limited to the hours spent in the hospital or community—it's in the lived experience, walking alongside a people group who demonstrate courage and resiliency in the midst of minimal resources and great challenges.”

Through unique experiences—in classrooms, clinical placements, and international settings—TWU's nursing students learn more than just excellent nursing skills. “We teach covenantal care,” says Terblanche. “That's our philosophy—and our privilege.”

Learn more about TWU's nursing programs at twu.ca/nursing.

Profile

KIERRA OBZURA | FIFTH-YEAR NURSING MAJOR

"With various options for a post-secondary education, I pursued my calling at TWU. Although I wasn't initially accepted into the nursing program, I received the support from the University I needed to succeed. The experience made me stronger—and led me to where I am today. I'm proud to be part of the wonderful TWU community!"





Making Room

Fully university and fully Christian

I appreciate the tremendous freedom we have at TWU — far more freedom than at many other North American universities.

This is my 39th year in higher education. As a doctoral student at the University of Kentucky, I taught my first university course in the spring of 1974. In my own experience as a lecturer and a professor at large state universities in the US, my freedom as a researcher and scholar was significantly constrained. In those settings, if one wished to be promoted and achieve tenure, one kept one's head down and was careful — especially in the area of Christian faith. In my first 16 years, the universities in which I served were not necessarily places of freedom for a Christian scholar or for Christian students.

In the past 22 years, however, I've been privileged and comparatively much freer to integrate my faith with my scholarship. Christian university settings truly are more free and open. In interviewing faculty members for tenure and promotion, I have heard this same sentiment expressed over and over. It is a principal reason why faculty seek positions here at TWU. We strive to be a community of reason, faith, and charity that brings about understanding and learning through research, scholarship, and open dialogue. Trinity Western University is fully university and fully Christian. It is not more of a university or less; it is a particular university devoted to the high calling of developing godly leaders in a way that makes room for differing ideas as an act of hospitality.

In her classic book *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*, Christiane Pohl of Asbury Seminary states, "For most of church history, hospitality was central to Christian identity." That is our tradition at TWU as well. In exercising hospitality, we make room for the other even when the other's research, scholarship, writings, and lectures are troubling or occasion dissonance — and even when they tap away at the underpinnings of our orthodoxy.

As a university centred in Christ, we will live out our essence as outlined in our 2008 *Strategic Directions* document: "pursuing truth with grace and assertiveness, promoting self-criticism and showing generosity to others, treating all ideas with charity and respect, holding a confident place in the diverse intellectual life of society, and promoting a holistic and interpretive role for understanding truth, worldview, and faith." We celebrate our freedom and our love for one another in ways that make room for others. This we do by striving to be like Christ. This we do in our respect for one another — not only for our competencies in our fields of inquiry, but especially for our character after the likeness of Christ, who always makes room for us.

An old Danish proverb states, "If there is room in the heart, there is room in the house." The problem with the Pharisees in Jesus' day was with their hearts when, as recorded in Luke 5:30, they complained under their breaths, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" The Pharisees were not inclined to make room as Jesus did. There was no law requiring hospitality. They forgot to love their neighbours. Their hearts were not in it, and they missed the joy and hope of making room for others. Henri Nouwen once said, "If there is any concept worth restoring to its original depth and evocative potential, it is the concept of hospitality."

In 2012, TWU celebrated its 50th anniversary. We celebrated the wonderful mission we have been blessed with as a Christian university, to be a place of open dialogue where there is room for Christ to enter in. We say boldly: the essence of Trinity Western University is Jesus Christ, and our mission is to develop godly Christian leaders.



Jonathan S. Raymond, Ph.D., is a cross-cultural social psychologist and President and Acting Chancellor of Trinity Western University.

Live and Learn in Canada's Capital



In the heart of Canada's capital city, Trinity Western University offers third- and fourth-year and graduate students the unique opportunity to live, work, and study at the Laurentian Leadership Centre (LLC) in Ottawa.

Each semester, 20 students call the 103-year-old historic Booth Mansion home, and immerse themselves in downtown Ottawa's political life—just nine blocks from Parliament Hill. The program's goal is to develop students' leadership abilities. This involves classroom work that covers leadership, public policy, ethics and contemporary culture. In addition, students are placed in internships that provide hands-on experience in a wide range of disciplines.

Originally geared toward political science, business, and communications majors, now students studying music, art, religious studies, and English are finding their place at the LLC.

"Most of the class content and internship opportunities are geared toward the political realm, yet we spend just as much time discussing philosophy, communications, rhetoric, social sciences and theology," says fourth-year student and LLC alumnus Clayton Andres, who did his internship with *Ottawa Life* Magazine. "As an English major, I felt

challenged in working outside of my major, yet I felt that all the knowledge I brought with me from that area of study was still relevant."

This past October, the LLC program celebrated its tenth anniversary with a gala that welcomed local LLC alumni, several Members of Parliament, and TWU President Jonathan S. Raymond, Ph.D.

Over the past decade, LLC students have interned for Members of Parliament, national media outlets, foreign embassies, and local sports teams. These unique opportunities have allowed students to network with national leaders and prepared them for the challenge of integrating their faith in a secular society.

"We are developing godly Christian leaders for the next generation in politics, government, professions, and other marketplaces of life," says LLC Director Janet Epp Buckingham, LLB, LL.D. "The success of this program is really shown through our LLC alumni, who form a strong network of leaders in Canada and in the world."

Learn more about the LLC at twu.ca/llc.



Profile

KAT GRABOWSKI '12 | ART + DESIGN MAJOR, LLC ALUMNA

"My TWU experience challenged me academically, spiritually, and creatively. The close community of people I lived and worked alongside at the LLC inspired me to see a multitude of new opportunities for using my talents and skills."



Healing Power

Science and faith integrate to reveal the human side of cancer

Albert Einstein once said, “Science without religion is lame. Religion without science is blind.” At TWU, faith and science are intertwined in a cutting-edge biology class that examines the effects of cancer on patients and their families.

Taught by Professor of Biology and Canada Research Chair in Developmental Genetics and Disease, Eve Stringham, Ph.D., the class brings together an intimate group of biology and nursing students to study the cell biology and immunology of tumor cells, genetic predisposition, and treatment strategies. In addition to the hard science they learn, students are paired with a cancer patient to pray for during the semester.

“The class totally changed my life. I’m just speechless when it comes to this little boy,” says biology major Carol Tadrous about the patient she was paired with. “He was so full of hope and joy. I even included my experience with him in my application for medical school.”

Tadrous and the boy soon became fast friends. And from a class unit about ‘healing of spirit,’ she applied theory that she learned to her relationship with him. “As an aspiring Christian doctor, I would really like to incorporate the love of Jesus and His healing power—to use that with the patients I serve,” she says.

For biology major Arend Strikwerda, praying for

terminally ill patients came naturally. “A part of who we are is to engage in each other’s suffering,” he says. “It’s natural to pray for someone and to empathize. I feel like that’s a really important part of what it is to be human.” He felt some trepidation when asking personal questions of his prayer patient — a middle-aged man with a tumour on his tongue. But the man and his wife surprised Strikwerda with their openness; they added him to their email list, and for nearly a year he read twice-a-week email updates from them.

“I think I get it now from the personal point of view,” says Strikwerda. “It’s easy to be lost in the scientific knowledge, but I really learned how to relate to people on their level. I’m excited about how that will affect my relationships with patients in the future.”

Biology major Justin Baerg says the class had a greater impact on him than any other. “True humanity and true love come out when you are able to pray for a patient,” he says. “We are graduating from TWU with a Christian education, so we have this conflict between science and faith,” says Baerg. “But here we embrace that and understand the benefits that come from having a spiritual connection with another person. To be able to pray for a patient is the highest level of care I can see in a doctor. We know the science behind it, but God is still in control.”

Daughter of Our Community

One professor combines faith and academics to touch lives in Kenya



Cross-Cultural and Leadership Communication professor Ruth Anaya, D Litt et Phil (cand.), has cultivated a strong relationship with the people of Muhanda, Kenya, earning herself the nickname “Daughter of Our Community.” Now, through TWU’s travel studies program, she gives students unheard of access to the developing East African nation.

Muhanda is one of the poorest areas of Kenya. Children go barefoot and mothers struggle to feed their families one meal of maize porridge a day.

Ruth and her husband, Petra, a native Kenyan, founded Hands-On Development Initiatives International Society (HODI Int’l). Their work includes the establishment the MUKEMA Education Fund Group, a medical and maternity clinic, a community centre, and a water project.

At TWU, Ruth teaches a range of courses including linguistics, cultural anthropology, and economics. Each summer, she leads a three-week travel study program to Kenya with students from as many as 11 different majors. Incorporating each student’s skill set, she equips them to perform ethnographic research of local culture with the aim of improving the area’s living conditions.

The trust earned by Ruth and Petra is extended to the students who come to Muhanda. “It was like going into the community as a local,” says Sarah Abbott, a past travel studies participant. “Ruth has a great way of acknowledging the culture you were brought up in and opening your eyes to another way of living.”

These travel studies have produced several successful projects. To contribute to the community’s economic viability, Ruth’s family had started a bakery. One team of TWU students looked at the bakery’s products to find ways of adding value and nutrition. “People there don’t eat much fruit or vegetables and, with meat being a luxury, they survive mostly on starches and local greens,” explains Ruth. Observing the area’s many bananas, the team introduced the idea of selling banana bread. They researched pricing structures and developed marketing plans to increase profits. A novelty in the region, the banana bread was a hit. It was

picked up by a local government official and promoted in the capital. Further batches were taken to nearby cities and sold at hotels and inns.

Another group of students identified that 70 per cent of illnesses in the area were water-borne and that women spent up to five hours a day travelling to collect water. The community sectioned off an area for the water tank, collected the water and purified it. Implementing water meters made the project sustainable. Nominal monthly fees supported maintenance costs and provided water to those who couldn’t afford metered water to their homes. Once completed, the project distributed purified water to over 5,000 people. With the project as a successful model, Ruth and Petra mentored additional communities to implement effective water systems.

Ruth’s dream for Kenya has proven infectious, with four of her travel studies participants remaining in the country for long-term projects. Her own passion for the land and people of Kenya only grows stronger with time. “The dignity and generosity of the people continually amaze me,” she says, “and every time I go, I am surprised by the sky. It feels like you can see the whole universe and God is only a hand’s breadth away.”





Complete Champions



twu's Spartans teams have garnered national acclaim, winning a remarkable seven national championship titles since joining the Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS) in 2000. But Spartan Athletics is about more than just winning on the court or the field; the organization's cornerstone—which helps athletes realize their full, God-given potential—is the Complete Champion Approach™.

Five key development components—academic, athletic, leadership, personal, and spiritual—help student athletes become champions in all areas of their lives. The defining foundation of these components is spiritual development, on

which all the other components are built.

The Complete Champion Approach helps student athletes use their talent and intellect to live lives of significance, experience personal success, and influence their communities for the glory of God.

Winning Streak on the Road

Spartans' most important road trips come in the off-season

In the summer of 2011, in partnership with GAIN (Global Aid Network) the men's soccer team spent two weeks in the West African nation of Benin building wells, running soccer clinics, and helping construct a church. The team helped build four wells, each providing approximately 1,000 people with clean water.

The trip also helped each team member to enrich his view of the world. "I know it will have a long-lasting affect for the team, for the program and for the guys," coach Pat Rohla says. "There's a really strong bond in a lot of different ways, both on the field and off."

CIS Gold

Spartans men's and women's teams have won no less than seven national championships since joining the CIS:

- 🏐 Men's Volleyball (2006, 2011, 2012)
- ⚽ Women's Soccer (2004, 2008, 2009, 2012)

Back on the Ball

Women's basketball team in New Orleans

In Spring 2012, the Spartans Women's Basketball team embarked on an off-season missions trip. Working in New Orleans, they joined Camp Restore—an organization that aids the still-suffering victims of the devastating 2005 hurricane.

The team took on tasks like improving community gardens and cleaning up yards, helping with children in a nursery, working at a rescue horse ranch, and seemingly everything in between.

It was a chance for to build relationships with the people of New Orleans, but also to strengthen the bonds between fellow Spartans. "I think you're able to fight for the person standing next to you because you know them better and shared a common experience," says Cheryl Jean-Paul "I'm excited to see where this takes us."



Profile

JARVIS AMBAKA | THIRD-YEAR HUMAN KINETICS MAJOR, SPARTANS MEN'S SOCCER FORWARD

"At TWU, I'm not only getting the degree that I wanted, but I'm also growing in my faith. When I complete my degree, I plan to return to Kenya to share this wonderful blessing that God has brought me to Canada to learn."

Walking the Talk

In collaboration with TWU's Aboriginal Partnership Council, the University hires its first *Siya:m*



As if being a pastor at Chilliwack Native Pentecostal Church and a graduate student in TWU's MA Leadership program weren't enough, Patti Victor was recently appointed the University's first-ever *Siya:m*. A *Sto:lo* First Nation word, *Siya:m* (pronounced see-YAHM) describes a leader who is

recognized for wisdom, integrity, and knowledge.

"God has called me to lead others to become leaders," says Victor. "I chose TWU's MA Leadership program because it offers the foundational principles of Transformational Servant Leadership."

One of Victor's primary responsibilities as *Siya:m* is to serve as learning coach and a spiritual and personal mentor to aboriginal students. "Some students need help learning life skills," she says. "Others need someone to hear, encourage, and pray for them."

Victor also meets with non-aboriginal students; her goal is to break down stereotypes and help facilitate a greater understanding and respect between the cultures.

Cultural respect and sensitivity are precisely what Victor hopes to help foster, both on and off campus, in her new role. "Becoming the *Siya:m* was an open door from God to encourage me to broaden my own vision," she says. "I already have an opportunity for influence in my church—but this opportunity can reach more, and impact more, for Jesus."

In addition to the Master of Arts in Leadership, TWU also offers the following graduate degree programs:

- Master of Arts in Biblical Studies
- Master of Business Administration
- Master of Arts in Counselling Psychology
- Master of Arts in Educational Leadership
- Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Humanities
- Master of Arts in Linguistics
- Master of Science in Nursing
- Master of Arts in TESOL

ACTS Seminars:

- Master of Arts in Cross Cultural Ministry
- Master of Applied Linguistics and Exegesis
- Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Therapy
- Master of Theological Studies
- Master of Theology
- Master of Arts in Christian Studies
- Doctor of Ministry

For more information on these programs, visit twu.ca/graduate.

Christian Art in a Secular World

Throughout history, the relationship between the arts and ethics is one Christians have wrestled with. Do artists have an ethical obligation toward their viewers? Are artists responsible for the effect their art has on the viewer? How does a Christian artist take creative risks while holding to a personal ethic.

Verge is a conference presented by TWU's School of the Arts, Media and Culture (SAMC) that provides a platform for students and professionals—from the University, the local art community, and larger international academic community—to discuss the topics that affect Christian artists in today's secular world. Previous *Verge* keynote speakers include Juno Award-winning composer Christos Hatzis, painter Chris Anderson, and other professionals and academics from around the world.

"*Verge* is a space where all the artistic disciplines can get together and talk about the big issues," says conference



organizer Jeff Warren, Ph.D., "Each year's topic relates to a social issue and how art relates to the human condition."

Verge conferences have tackled topics such as

the arts and ethics, the arts and social action, and the arts and Genesis. These topics are also discussed beyond the conference in SAMC's *Verge* Journal—which features articles by faculty members and outside contributors reflecting on the impact of these topics on their personal faith and their art, whether visual art, theatre, music, or writing.

Learn more about SAMC at twu.ca/samc.

ALUMNI AT LARGE

TWU grads make a difference worldwide



DR. MAGNIFIQUE NZARAMBA



KARA PECKNOLD '93

Kara Pecknold '93

After Kara Pecknold graduated from TWU in 1993 with a degree in English literature, she pursued a number of career options. Those experiences unearthed an ongoing fascination with language and design—and the global impacts of each. This led her to pursue a master's degree in Applied Arts. As part of her thesis, Pecknold immersed herself in the opportunities for development through design. "In the name of charity, a lot of money gets put into projects that can't be sustained," she says. "It made me wonder how we could, under the complex process that is the development

arena, make better things for people in a manner that allows them to be part of it, and to use resources they can actually sustain." Her solution to provide simple branding to a cooperative group of weavers that she worked with in Rwanda called Covaga. The branding, which was created through a collaboration with the Rwandan weavers, gave them an identity that helps them stand out in their own market and trade shows around the country. Pecknold plans to continue to create designs that impact social systems.



WENDY DELAMONT LEE



HAPPY STUDENTS AT CZSC

Alman Chan '85

Alman Chan graduated from TWU in 1985 with a degree in Chemistry and a heart for inspiring students—like the professors who inspired him. Growing up in Hong Kong, then relocating to Canada, Chan started university feeling lost and unmotivated. The consideration and passion he saw in his professors made a lasting impact on him and changed his attitude toward school and life. Returning to Hong Kong, Chan got involved with a drug rehab program for

youth, Christian Zheng Sheng College. He strove to provide more than just physical recovery—but also an education, self-esteem, and positive relationships. “We treat these kids as people, in the image of God,” Chan says, “just like [my] professors treated me like a person.” Now Principal of the College, Chan would like to see it continue to grow and become more specialized to teach its students teamwork and leadership through sports.



LEIGH WITH IMAGINE1DAY SCHOLARSHIP STUDENTS (IMAGE PROPERTY OF IMAGINE1DAY)

Leigh Boyle '09

The Lipstick Project is a non-profit society that provides pampering services to hospital and hospice patients who are in recovery or approaching the end of their life. TWU Communications alumna Leigh Boyle founded the project during her time in Ethiopia as a Communications Officer for imagine1day, an organization with the goal of ensuring all Ethiopians have access to quality education. As a side project, she began working with a woman recovering from a childbirth injury called obstetric fistula. Boyle recognized the need to rekindle a sense of dignity in the lives of women suffering from not only their physical ailment, but also from social rejection and insecurities. Her solution was to bring nail polish and make-up into

the hospital to pamper the women. The experience helped Leigh cross cultural barriers and build relationships with the women she served. Upon returning to Canada, Boyle found that the need for her ministry spanned cultures and that she could continue on with The Lipstick Project just as effectively in her hometown as she could on the other side of the world. The project now has four full-time team members, a growing number of volunteers, and partners with hospitals and hospices around the world. Boyle has re-enrolled at TWU to complete her prerequisites for medical school and plans to become a doctor to further develop and expand her ministry.

Leading-edge research at Canada's Christian university

Introducing TWU's Canada Research Chairs

The Canada Research Chairs (CRC) program funds professorships for the nation's top researchers and scholars. Meet TWU's own CRC recipients and find out what they're working on.

DECIPHERING THE SCROLLS



The discovery of 2,000-year-old parchments, now known as the Dead Sea Scrolls, in a cave in Qumran in 1947 remains one of the most significant archaeological discoveries of the 20th century. Previously, modern translations of the Bible had been based on a Hebrew manuscript less than 1,000 years old. Now, scholars who examine these documents are gaining fresh insight into the ancient roots of both rabbinic Judaism and early Christianity.

Peter Flint, Ph.D., Canada Research Chair in Dead Sea Scrolls Studies, belongs to a group of international scholars in the process of publishing the Dead Sea Scrolls and interpreting their significance for Judaism and early Christianity. His work is advancing the study and interpretation of scripture and ensuring that Canada's Dead Sea Scrolls Institute at TWU continues to be a leading international centre for Dead Sea Scrolls research.

DEEP ANSWERS FROM LITTLE WORMS



Roughly 70 per cent of the mutated genes that cause human diseases are also found in the simple worm *Caenorhabditis elegans* (*C. elegans*), making this animal an ideal model for research. **Eve Stringham, Ph.D., Canada Research Chair in Developmental Genetics and Disease**, is studying cell signaling (the mechanism by which cells detect and respond to environmental stimuli) in *C. elegans* to uncover knowledge that could lead to treatments for diseases such as cancer and diabetes.

"As a Christian, I find the process of discovery is very much a form of worship," says Stringham. "When you discover something new, that hasn't been recorded in literature yet, it's such a privilege. It feels like you're been entrusted with a little secret that God has about how the world was created."

A COMMON HUMANITY



The philosophical climate of our times is encouraging a return to religion as the ethical and spiritual foundation of human culture. At the same time, there is an emerging interest in the idea of a common humanity. In post-Christian Western culture, what is the role of religion in providing ethical guidelines for and understandings of our essential humanity? **Jens Zimmermann, Ph.D., Canada Research Chair in Interpretation, Religion and Culture**, is tackling this question in his research by examining the role of theories of interpretation in assessing the interrelation of religion and culture. Zimmermann's research is providing insights into the process of assessing the viability of religiously rooted humanism(s) for the reshaping of the Western cultural ethos.

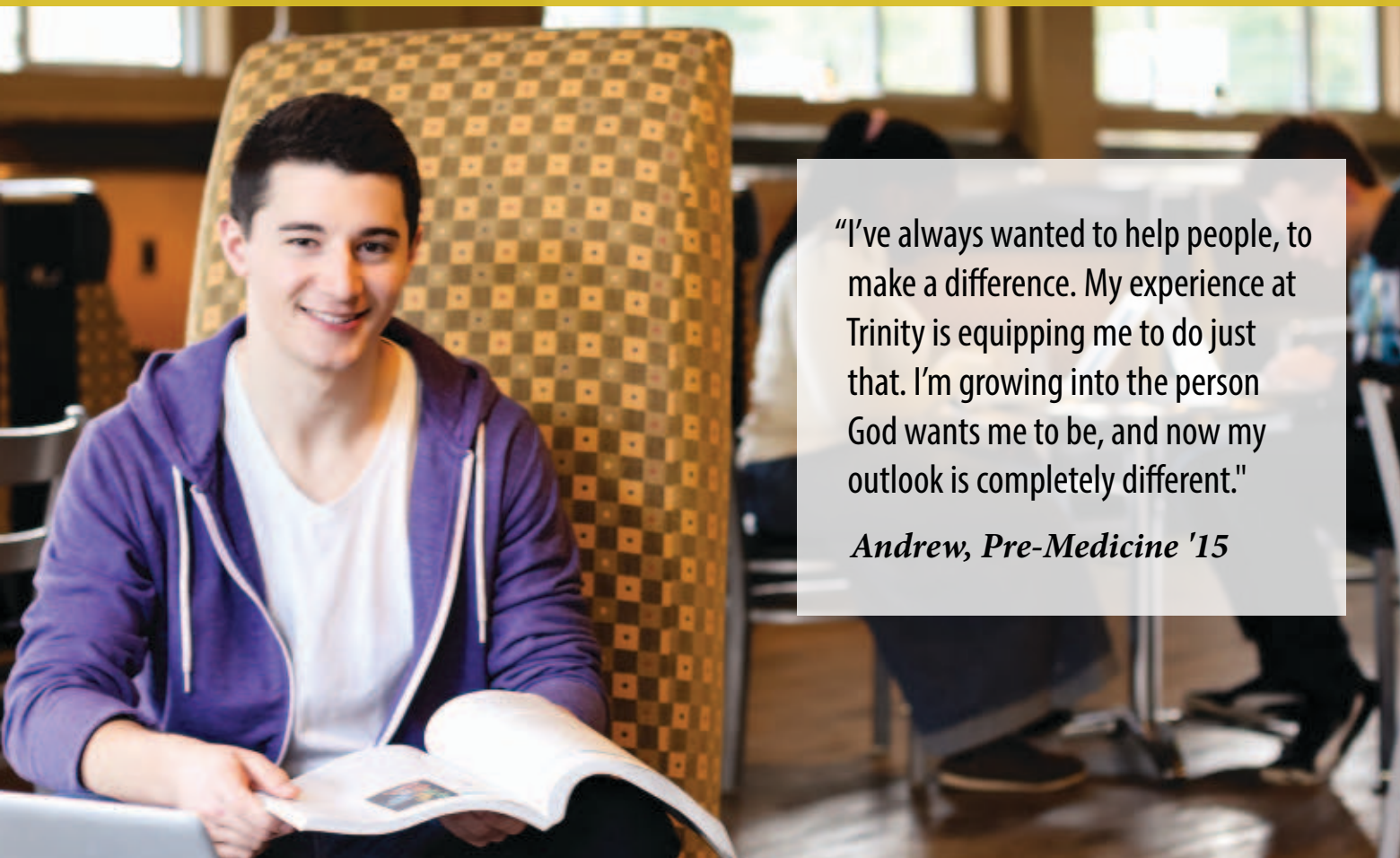
Learn more about TWU's Canada Research Chairs at twu.ca/crc.

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"I've always wanted to help people, to make a difference. My experience at Trinity is equipping me to do just that. I'm growing into the person God wants me to be, and now my outlook is completely different."

Andrew, Pre-Medicine '15

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Encouraging Youth to Experience God

By Karen Stiller

Young adults say “experiencing God” is key to whether or not they keep attending church. What does it mean to experience God? What can the Church do about it?

You can't bottle up an experience with God. If you could, church leaders across Canada would be the first in line to put a cork in it.

They would offer it by the cartful to youth who, according to the recent study *Hemorrhaging Faith: Why and When Canadian Young Adults are Leaving, Staying and Returning to Church*, leave the Church because they have not experienced God.

“Experienced God” is one of four reasons why youth say they remain in the Church, according to the report (www.hemorrhagingfaith.com), along with three others, namely spiritually engaged parents, vibrant community and empowering teaching and beliefs. Most youth who remain enjoy all four. Youth who drop out usually lack them.

“We found almost all young adults who have left the Church are saying the same thing about God,” says James Penner, researcher and co-author of the report. “They don't feel they are experiencing God personally or that God answers their prayers.”

David Guretzki is professor of theology, church and public life at Briercrest College and Seminary in Carleton Place, Ont. He consulted on the Hemorrhaging Faith project and recently hosted a think-tank about the report at Briercrest.

“Students who remain engaged with the Church will have experienced God. That's not a surprise from a theological perspective,” says Guretzki. But if someone has experiences of God without a church community around to help make sense of them, those experiences alone are not necessarily going to lead them to church.

“I suspect that the more overlapping circles of drivers, the higher the correlation of extended involvement in the Church,” says Guretzki.

What he's driving at is that all four drivers work together for good for those who experience them. If a youth we will call Sarah feels God has shown Himself active, present and tangible in some way in her life – that can be a significant driver for her to keep the faith.

But if Sarah has that experience of God along with spiritually engaged parents, a vibrant community and empowering teachings and beliefs, then that experience of God becomes even richer.

Its driveability quotient just got kicked into a higher gear.

“It's good to analyze the drivers and separate them out,” says Guretzki, “but you can't say, ‘All I have to do is help students create experiences of God. You can't manufacture that.’ ”

If only we could.

“Of all the information in the report, this [“experiencing God”] one grabs me as almost dangerous,” says Iona Snair, the Abbotsford, B.C.-based associate director of Lifeteams for Youth Unlimited, and a member of the EFC's Youth and Young Adult Ministry Roundtable.

Snair says it would be a mistake to focus on a question like: What programs do we have to put in place to help young people experience God?

“Rather than this being an item on a to-do list that directs us to a new program, it can be a wake-up call to the Church to say that we have an opportunity to actually invite children into our corporate experiencing of God, that as we are experiencing Him, they are exposed to that and grow up with us.”

That approach, says Snair, is not a “time-limited programmatic answer. It's how we experience God together.”

And that is exactly as easy as “grasping at fog,” says Ryan Matchett, pastor of community groups and a school of discipleship at River of Life in Lethbridge, Alta. “How *do* we do it? We're



not looking for something that can be grasped in a moment, but building for a lifetime. We're setting a direction, not arriving at a destination," says Matchett, who has also been a youth pastor. "I believe the real work is how do we centre on the gospel? In experiencing God, what did Jesus do to make that possible? Then we put our faith in that, we create a community on that point."

Lee Young is youth pastor at Salem Church in Waldheim, Sask. "We are talking about something a little nebulous when we talk about experiencing God. It would be easy to say we can't control that, so we can just pray about it."

But he thinks adults can do more



PHOTO: NEWS.MENNONITECHURCH.CA

Iona Snair: It's how we experience God together.

than pray – they can also focus more on experiencing God themselves and sharing that with young adults. "Then that's contagious, that's the gospel," he says. "That's how Acts reads over and over again. There was a whole group of people living weird and different. People asked why."

So, what follows is not a to-do list nor a how-to list, since neither seems possible for this topic. Let's call it a what-if list.

- **What if we spent more time teaching our youth?** Answered prayer, or its perceived opposite, unanswered prayer, is filed under "experienced God" in the report. We can't force God's hand, but we can teach our youth better about what prayer does and who God is. "Good theology about God and how God works is crucial – and with it,

what do we do when bad things happen to us," says James Penner. "Teaching becomes so important." Penner and his wife have hosted weekend seminars with youth. They go deep on single topics such as: What do I do when bad things happen to me? "It's good teaching on suffering for an entire weekend," says Penner. "Part of the answer is really putting people in touch with people who have experienced horrific pain and yet trust deeply in God."

- **What if each youth had a mentor?** Another aspect of experiencing God in the report is youth's "experience with a genuine, mature person who had been with Jesus," says Guretzki. Honest, dependable relationships with mature, older Christians are essential for youth. At Salem Church in Waldheim, Sask., "We are talking to each kid and making sure they have a significant adult in their life," says Lee Young. He cautions against charging ahead with an official mentoring program. "It feels like as soon as you program something like this, it dies." Rather, encourage kids to select their own mentor, and offer to help them make that connection. "It's not supposed to be a formal teaching time, but it's getting a coffee and saying, 'How's life?'"
- **What if we included pre-teens and teenagers in more adult church activities?** "Young people don't see us worshipping God or don't hear adults reporting what Jesus is doing inside of them. They have a Sunday School teacher, but how often do they get to hear adults talk?" asks Iona Snair. "One of the drivers to stay within the faith was that they saw a living faith that went beyond the structure of the Church, that is experiencing God. Maybe the experiencing God thing is not about putting them in [special] places where they will [be likely to experience God], but instead including them in the body life [of the church community] to experience God together."
- **What if we nurtured authenticity at every level of the church?** "Authenticity keeps jumping out at me as one of those big red flags," says Young. "They want authentic parents. They want us to be

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authentic in our joys and struggles about Christianity.” At River of Life in Lethbridge the pastoral team makes time in the service to ask people what Jesus is doing in their hearts. “We engage with the deep stuff. No sin is too great, no story is too graphic. It all comes out there,” says Ryan Matchett. “It’s a real sense of equality because our young adults are in the services, along with the seniors. It’s an equal playing field and it says we are all human.”



SUPPLIED PHOTO

David Guretzki: We can't make right changes until we understand and own the problems.

- **What if we talked together about the Hemorrhaging Faith report?** “It is strategically using it and dialoguing about it that will be how the Church starts to own this issue,” says David Guretzki. “We can’t make right changes until we understand and own the problems.” Include youth in

that conversation. Ask them what they think of the drivers, the barriers and

how deeply they feel part of the church. “Young adults who are engagers need to take on their role as being part of the community of Christ. We don’t want young people to say [to older Christians], ‘We’ve told you, [now] go fix it and come back with a better product,’” says Iona Snair. “We want them to know we have heard them and then invite them to find the solution

with us. We need to include them in what is going to change.” **FT**

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



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Redeemed to Resc



■ Cindy Luu with one of the male residents at “Jesus’ House,” a home that shelters the elderly.

A woman from Vietnam, sponsored by Kamloops Alliance Church and trained at Prairie Bible College, has now been ministering in the name of Christ in Ho Chi Minh City for 14 years. *By Deborah Meroff*

Cindy Luu lay crammed among 700 others in the bottom of a 32-foot boat. Only the very desperate attempted to escape Vietnam’s Communist regime in the late 1970s. In the South China Sea they ran into pirates who robbed them and raped some of the women. The ship was able to continue towards Malaysia, its occupants suffering increasingly from exposure, hunger and thirst.

Then a navy ship approached and everyone cheered, hoping for rescue. But the sailors towed their small craft further out to sea and cut it loose, directing the occupants to keep going.

They eventually made it to Indonesia. At a refugee camp, Luu managed to make contact with members of her family who had

previously made it safely to Canada.

Kamloops Alliance Church in British Columbia agreed to sponsor her. She was put on a plane that stopped on the way at a Montreal army immigration centre. She still remembers the humiliation of having her old clothing taken away and being hosed down like an animal. But in British Columbia she was finally reunited with her mother and sisters, and given a warm welcome by the church.

In Saigon the Luu family had made a living by selling Buddhist idols. In Canada Cindy Luu was exposed to Christianity for the first time. After many months a Cantonese-speaking student, visiting from Regina Bible School, showed her the way to a new life in Jesus.

Luu worked hard and sold her old car to attend Prairie Bible

cue Others

College. She graduated from the Alberta school in 1992, and then signed up for two years of mission service on OM International's ship the *Doulos*.

She was convinced she had been rescued to rescue others. When an opportunity came through another mission in 1999 to return to the land of her birth, she took it. Seeing Saigon once more, or Ho Chi Minh City as it was now called, she was gripped by compassion for the plight of the very young and very old.

In the past, Asian families routinely cared for their elderly in their homes. Today, younger people are caught up in the frantic business of survival, with too little time, space or money. The old and infirm often find themselves shunted off to Buddhist temples to finish their days, dependent on the mercy of monks and nuns for basic necessities.

Ironically, the Vietnamese call Christianity "the religion that throws away their grandparents." Determined to show the difference true faith in Christ can make, Luu opened a small house with 20 beds to shelter the elderly.

Later, a Christian couple donated a piece of land so she could build a proper facility. She raised the funds and in 2004 began welcoming residents into what they called "Jesus' House."

Mrs. P was typical, with a son who abused and beat her whenever he was drunk. When the elderly woman's two Buddhist daughters arranged for her to go to the home, she was at first so terrified of being found by her son that she hid under the bed most of the time.

Nobody knew how old Mrs. Y was when she came to Jesus' House. Born in China, she was taken to Vietnam at the age of eight and sold to work for a family. She never had a chance for schooling and when she eventually married, her gambler husband failed to support their children. She was forced to leave them to work long, brutal hours as a water carrier. Three little ones died in her absence – how, she never found out. The years broke this woman in body and spirit.

When she first arrived at the home, Mrs. Y could only shuffle around on her knees, unable to stand. Her spirit was full of bitterness and she was so unhappy that Luu was afraid she would commit suicide. But with the passage of time and much prayer, Mrs. Y started absorbing the message of God's love. She accepted Jesus, and as her spirit healed, so did her body so she was able to walk upright.

So far, 82 elderly residents have found a safe, loving and happy home through Luu's efforts, and 60 of them have put their faith in Christ. Relationships have also been built and maintained with residents' families, many of whom are among the very poor.

In 2011 God answered Luu's prayers to expand this ministry. A Christian family offered a free parcel of land, and a building project is now underway.

Another deep concern of Cindy's is the lack of facilities for

the terminally ill. In many Vietnamese hospitals the wards set aside for the dying offer only minimum care, in less than hygienic conditions. Patients must depend on relatives to stay with them and tend to their needs, fetch medicines and so forth. She continues to meet with many people to find out where, when and with whom a hospice ministry might be started. So far, no door has opened, but the burden remains.

After first moving back to Ho Chi Minh City, Luu used her house to reach out to small children in her area, some of whom were living on the streets with their parents. Her "Happy Kids" daycare centre provided a safe and loving environment, giving them healthy snacks, songs and basic education. In the evenings she taught English classes to adults in the community. After a few months the police began to harass her, however, and she was forced to move the daycare to another location.

Over the last five years, this initiative has nurtured and cared for 48 children from destitute families, often headed by a single parent. Sunday school attendance has been incorporated into the program, and 90 per cent of the students participate. In fact, so good is the centre's reputation that children are on a waiting list to attend. So far, they have not encountered further police interference.

For a few years Luu and friends also tried to run a Meals on Wheels program for the needy in her neighbourhood. At first, they just sold inexpensive lunch boxes with Bible verses tucked in. When the police shut down this operation, Luu's team began delivering lunches to patients in three different hospitals in the city. This opened the door for church members to visit and pray with hundreds of patients, and a number came to faith as a result.

During Christmas 2011 she and her coworkers handed out 2,000 lunch boxes on the streets, inviting recipients to celebrate the life of Jesus. So far this year they have handed out 1,500 more care packages.

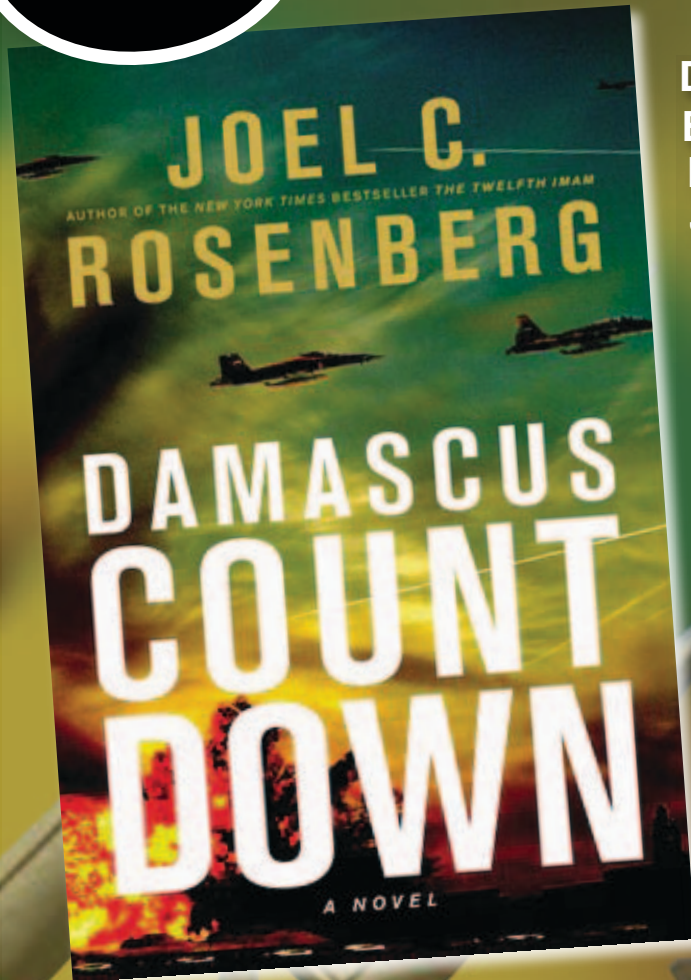
Luu says she is encouraged by the help Canadian friends have given to her projects in Vietnam over the past 14 years. "The gospel advances in big and small ways, bringing hope and healing to those who are often considered 'the least' by society. It's worth all the effort if just one of them comes to faith in Christ! Pray with me that I won't ever let numbness take over when it comes to caring about people." **FT**

DEBORAH MEROFF of Maine, USA, and based in London, UK, has travelled to 110 countries during her 25 years as a journalist for OM International. Earlier versions of this story were published in Meroff's book *True Grit: Women Taking on the World, for God's Sake* (Authentic, 2004) and by Calgary's *City Light News* (February 2012). Her most recent book is *Europe: Restoring Hope* (VTR Publication, 2011).

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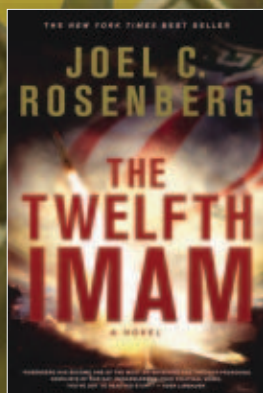


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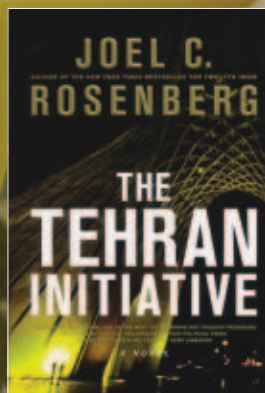
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Pursuing business with excellence is an important and biblical calling.

Some time ago Billy Graham stated, “I believe one of the next great movements of God is going to be through the believers in the workplace.” He went on to encourage those at the conference where he was speaking to go home and start marketplace ministries. Corpath Business Forums, the marketplace ministry I serve, was born of that challenge.

For many years Corpath existed as an arm of the Christian Business Ministries of Canada. In 2010 when I joined Corpath, the general business market was being well served by Corpath as well as a number of other excellent ministries – apparently Graham was right!

But as we examined how Corpath fit into the mix, we realized the upper level of business leaders was being underserved – CEOs, vice-presidents, managing directors and entrepreneurial business owners with ten employees or more.

That realization prompted us to take action. Corpath launched into independence from CBMC, sharpened our established four-hour monthly Forum meeting process, and narrowed our focus to serve this unique subgroup of leaders.

As I visit our Corpath members today, I am struck by a common theme. Many rightly see their businesses as a calling from God whereby they minister to employees, suppliers and customers, and provide goods and services to the community. But they struggle with the feeling their calling is not viewed by traditional church people as equivalent to a teaching or preaching ministry.

They feel diminished when church leaders, rather than honouring their unique kingdom ministry, only engage them on the level of supplying money for the “real ministry” of the institutional church or traditional missionary activity.

As I reflected on this gap in understanding, I gained insight from Romans 12.

For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of

us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; . . . if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently....” (Romans 12:4-6,8a)

Some NIV translations note the phrase “to lead” could be rendered “to provide for others.” When you see a verse being translated in different ways, it usually means two things: the Greek term is rare, and the cultural concept may not have a direct equivalent in our modern language. Sure enough, in the case of Roman 12:8, the relevant word *proistamenos* (the one who provides) occurs only a few times in the New Testament. So what of the cultural difficulty? I believe this gift named in Romans 12:8 refers to the work of business people.

First-century speakers did not refer to business people as a group. Rather, they described them by what they did. For example, there’s Lydia, “the seller of purple cloth” in Acts 16, or Paul, sometimes described in Acts as a

“tentmaker.” If you wanted to refer to this entire class of people, the phrase “those who provide for others” covered it. The same term appears in Titus 3:14, translated as “those who provide for daily necessities.”

This phrase should be a point of encouragement to business leaders today. If you lead a business and provide the necessities of life for employees and others, you are mentioned in Paul’s lists of gifts given to the Church.

As you follow your giftedness, do so in the knowledge you follow a high calling from God essential to His plan for humanity. As you engage in business, do so with diligence – and the confidence you are following your God-given giftedness and calling.

As I share this verse within Corpath, I have been delighted to see the motivation and encouragement it brings.

Corpath’s goal is to help our business leaders pursue excellence in business, personal and family life, and in their spiritual walk with God. I believe this excellence cannot be achieved alone. One of our theme verses is Proverbs 27:17: “As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.”

If you are a business leader and have been saying to yourself, “I really need to get serious about joining a marketplace ministry forum to learn from and be encouraged by my business peers,” may I suggest you put a red star beside that item on your to-do list? One of the comments I hear a lot from Corpath members is they wish they had joined earlier. **ET**

As you engage
in business, do
so with diligence –
and the confidence
you are following
your God-given
giftedness and calling.

JOHN WISEMAN of Calgary is president of Corpath Business Forums (www.corpath.ca).



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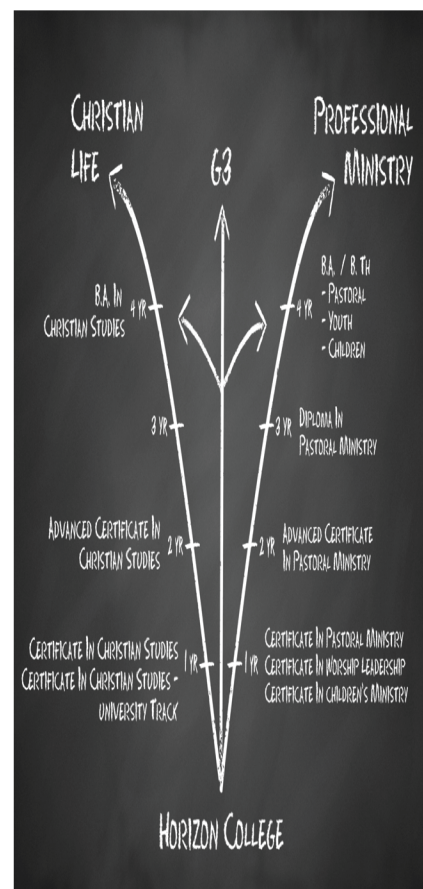
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Visit www.rosebudschoolofthearts.com.

Where is God going to take you? Tyndale University College & Seminary

Arleen Gomez has always loved serving people and taking an active involvement in contributing value. Before coming to Tyndale to pursue her MDiv, she was heavily involved in church ministry and volunteering and was beginning to feel the effects of burnout. "I think I've always been passionate about serving the community," she said. "I am the type of person who has to be involved.... I hate apathy." Yet when Gomez first came to Tyndale, she was faced with the di-

lemma of putting her passions on hold to fully surrender in obedience to God.

She felt God tell her to take a step back and didn't know how to deal with not doing anything. "I kept hearing God say don't get involved."

She felt that God was teaching her about how to look after herself and how to do ministry differently. "Something I learned [during that year] was ... doing organic versus formal ministry.... Just because you're not in a formal position doesn't mean you're not doing ministry; it doesn't mean you're not serving people."

After graduating with an MDiv from Tyndale in 2002, Daniel Leung began working in a large church where he felt comfortable and could grow.

A few years later Leung and his wife were inspired by the book *Holy Conversations* to begin a small discussion group with church and non-church people. "This group here really challenged me," Leung said. "In my heart I was thinking, 'church can be simple.'... I felt like I was supposed to leave [my

home church]."

The decision to leave was difficult. Leung went on a silent retreat and prayed. "I got a very clear statement ... to start a small, simple church for the unchurched that focuses on discipleship through word, deed and community, and I knew at that point I don't think of these things by myself."

Leung knew God was calling him to work in the community and with small groups. He hopes to begin a "small, simple" house church while working in a position that became available in his father-in-law's business. Leung observed, "We open ourselves to where God leads us and you can choose to follow it or not ... but sometimes ... you're kicking and screaming because you don't want to ... but you find out that's really where your heart is."

Wherever God takes you, be prepared. Begin your preparation now with a course in Tyndale's flexible and thought-provoking spring/summer program. Visit www.tyndale.ca/summer for more information. ■



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More Than a Gravestone

Faith Today's new history column introduces us to Canada's colourful evangelical history.

In Hampton, New Hampshire, not far from the windy beaches of the Atlantic Ocean, there is a worn gravestone bearing the words “the apostle of Nova Scotia.” Despite the American location of his grave, the man described by these words is Henry Alline, one of Canada's first evangelical leaders.

Although born in Rhode Island in 1748, Alline moved with his family to Nova Scotia in 1760 as part of a wave of settlers invited by the British government. The pioneer life was hard for Alline and his siblings as they helped their parents coax a living out of the fields and forests. It was also a life of faith. Alline's parents were devout believers who led the family in prayers and Bible reading at home, and on Sundays worshipped at a Congregationalist church.

In these godly surroundings few noticed Alline's inner struggles. He grew up hearing about God's promise of salvation in the gospel. But like Martin Luther hundreds of years earlier, Alline was deeply conscious of his sin and feared he would not be saved. How could he know God would accept him? These soul-wrenching battles with doubt and despair were so intense at times that he even considered taking his own life.

One night in March 1776 these struggles came to a head. Alline was too troubled to pay attention while his father led the family prayers. Instead he pored over the Psalms looking for some kind of relief. Alline then retreated to his bedroom where he cried out to God for help. He later wrote that suddenly, “Redeeming love broke into my soul with repeated scriptures with such power that my whole soul seemed to be melted down with love; the burden of guilt and condemnation was gone.” Finally convinced God's grace had freed him, Alline spent the rest of the night rejoicing, and the next morning shared his news with his surprised parents.

As was the case with his contemporary, the English evangelist John Wesley, Alline's experience of the assurance of God's grace was shortly followed by his sense God was calling him to preach. Though he was young (27) and untrained, Alline almost immediately set off to proclaim the gospel. Between 1776 and 1783 he crisscrossed

Nova Scotia and New Brunswick with the message that salvation was available to anyone who would repent and believe. Travelling from village to village, Alline preached to whoever would listen, often attracting large crowds. Using scripture, emotional language, vivid word pictures and songs he composed himself, Alline preached at the heart, imploring his listeners to turn to Christ for the forgiveness of their sins.

The young preacher's message and methods sometimes provoked controversy. He severely criticized the Calvinist theology held by most believers in Nova Scotia. He ignored denominational concerns and provoked protests from local ministers upset about his unorthodox and “disorderly” methods.

But by the time Alline travelled to New England in 1784, where he died of tuberculosis at the young age of 35, he had kindled a spiritual fire that burned throughout the region.

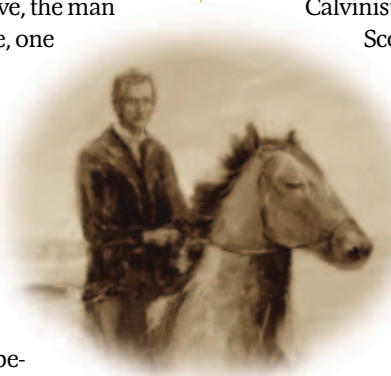
Although most of his followers eventually became Baptists (the beginning of the strong Baptist presence in the Maritimes),

Alline's work led to a revival of evangelical faith among people of various denominations. Indeed, these Maritime revivals were part of a series of 18th-century awakenings in Britain and North America that gave rise to modern evangelicalism.

The questions Alline's ministry raised at the time among serious Christians have remained tough questions for Canadian Evangelicals in other ages. Does God's call on a pastor's life outweigh the need for formal education? Are denominations important channels of faith or obstacles to the gospel? How do we avoid “putting out the Spirit's fire” (1 Thessalonians 5:19) while ensuring everything is done “in a fitting and orderly way” (1 Corinthians 14:40)?

Alline's message also stressed themes that have always united Canadian Evangelicals. Our focus on the cross – and the forgiveness it makes possible – is a good example, as is our belief in the need for a personal encounter with Jesus. A desire to spread the gospel by any means available – whether the open-air preaching and homespun songs of Alline's day, or the radio and internet ministries of later eras – is also a living part of our heritage.

Two and a half centuries later, the legacy of the “apostle of Nova Scotia” lives on in more than a gravestone inscription. **FT**



KEVIN FLATT is assistant professor of history at Redeemer University College in Hamilton, Ont.

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Mercies in Disguise

Reminding ourselves of the love and power of God diminishes worry.

Have you worried yet today? If you're like most women you are probably thinking, *Who hasn't worried today?*

Women are natural worriers. We worry about those we love and things we value. Our minds knot together past, present and future.

By worrying we seek a sense of accomplishment and control. If we don't worry, we feel terrible things are more likely to happen. We candy-coat fear with words like "concern" and "care" too often, justifying our overly imaginative thought life.

The truth is that with every worry, we sin. If we are honest, worry is our way of trying to take back control of our lives from God. Worry is something we cling to for comfort as we walk through each uncertain day.

But when we dwell and spin, stew and sin, we are far from experiencing "life to the full."

Worry isn't just a problem in today's fast-paced world. In Matthew 6:25 and 27, Jesus addressed the crowds on this very issue. "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? . . . Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?"

We say we trust the Lord. We know God is sovereign over all things. But do we live as though these are truths? Or possibilities?

Scripture reminds us in Matthew 6:33 to seek first the kingdom of God. When we deliberately focus on God and biblical truth, our minds are no longer free to spiral out of control. By seeking God's help to overcome worry and becoming intentional about our thought life, we can be set free from fear.

Let's ensure we always have scripture close at hand so we can turn to it, whether we are waiting in line at the grocery store or lying awake in bed at night.

Another good trick is to set certain triggers to remind us to pray and recall memorized Bible verses throughout the day. For example, we can think on the words "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10) each time we stop at a red light.

When we catch ourselves anxious about our singleness,

marriage, parents, kids, home, job – let's turn our thoughts to God and His Word instead of our worries.

Ceasing to worry is easier said than done, but we are not waging the battle against sin alone. "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us" (Romans 8:37).

What really happens when we get distracted with worry? We are forgetting the love and power of God. Imagine how life could change by surrendering our fears to Him and trusting His plan!

Ultimately, as Revelation 21:4 reminds us, God "will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

But in the meantime, as Laura Story's song "Blessings" beautifully asks:

What if Your blessings come through rain drops?
What if Your healing comes through tears?
What if a thousand sleepless nights are what it takes
to know You're near?...

What if trials of this life are Your mercies in disguise?

God seems to have created women to be compassionate nurturers. As such, the temptation to worry is always hovering over our shoulders, ready to rob us of our peace and destroy our joy. We need to remind ourselves that worrying doesn't really prevent bad things from happening. When we put aside worry, we are not somehow allowing worst-case scenarios to come to pass.

We can choose to live in fear or we can choose to trust God. As it says in Romans 8:28, "We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."

And what if our worst fear does come to pass? It wouldn't be easy or without pain, but God would be with us each step of the way. He may never require it of us, but if He doesn't prevent it, then He will give us the faith and strength we need to endure.

Be assured God won't bring us *to* what He won't bring us *through*. No, dear sister. In fact, our greatest fear coming true could be the way God will be most glorified in us. **FT**

God seems to have created women to be compassionate nurturers.

MICHELLE ARTHUR is a pastor's wife, mother and executive director of Women Alive. Find more of these columns at www.theEFC.ca/WomenAliveFT.



PHOTO: ANDREA JOHNSTONE

■ A cafe-style outreach meal at Blackburn campus. Each campus tailors its outreach strategy to the unique needs of its community and the local congregation.

Lifecentre in Ottawa, Ont.

Jason Boucher “studied culture, discovered grace, and decided to become part of the solution,” he says.

Now 39, he serves as lead pastor of three Lifecentre congregations in Greater Ottawa. He grew up in the oldest of the three (then pastored by his father), went through a period of disillusionment during his university years, but accepted the torch of leadership in 2007.

“Everything God is doing today” at Lifecentre, says Boucher, “is a result of the last 32 years of ministry” by his parents.

Thus the challenge at this growing multisite church of 1,400 people is to build on a foundation already rooted in love.

Jesus and Others

“Growing people with Jesus and others” is the strategic passion of each Lifecentre campus. Fifty-three nations represent ethnic diversity across all locations. Honouring each generation is a core value.

Michel Castilloux didn’t realize his need of a Saviour until after university when neither his career nor his lifestyle satisfied. He came to Lifecentre in 1999. Ten years later he and his wife Viviane lead a core team of 12, gathering at Lifecentre-Blackburn, just east of Ottawa.

A storefront location provides neighbourhood presence. Newcomers comment on the warm café style of worship. It’s very engaging. They are surprised this is a church campus. “It’s a joy to see people become amazed at Jesus’ story,” says Castilloux. This active congregation of 70 launched a second service in fall 2012.

“Growth to 1,400 [including all three campuses] is a God thing” says Boucher. “Our response has been obedience.” He loves the mosaic of denominational backgrounds worshipping together in this nondenominational family of God. He admits, “Most members wouldn’t even understand denominational differences.”

Boucher, ordained with the Pentecostal Assemblies of Can-



PHOTO: ANDREA JOHNSTONE

■ **At Lifecentre Food Bank, more than just food is distributed, such as these children's backpacks.**

ada, co-pastors with his wife Lori. Together they share a zeal to be salt and light in Ottawa. "In a city of one million, the vast majority don't connect with God," he says.

Lifecentre-Kanata, southwest of Ottawa, launched in September 2012. Lifecentre-Orleans is east of Ottawa, about four kilometres from Lifecentre-Blackburn. Each campus pastor tailors his strategy to the community and the local congregation.

Church on Demand

The church's video streaming service, Church on Demand (at www.lifecentre.org), constitutes a fourth "campus" where 400 people access Sunday sermons online. A LifeBlog and congregational polls connect the audience and encourage participation via texting, Twitter and Facebook.

Both Boucher and Castilloux wrestle with the question "What constitutes the church?" When life gets in the way and some can't attend church regularly, Lifecentre's virtual church provides an option. It also allows a non-threatening approach to come alongside those who are seeking the Saviour.

"The vast majority process [spirituality] layer by layer. We respect their journey. We don't water down the gospel, but we allow them to push back with questions," says Boucher. He loves the fact that this enables him to gain insights into the real needs in his community.

Yet he quickly adds, "Many acknowledge they took their first step because someone invited them." LifeStart, a discipleship journey where newcomers explore faith, begins hesitantly for most. Many move from disenfranchisement to become fully engaged.

Life Connected

One single mom found her entry point in an after-school program, operated through a partnership with Algonquin College. Her seven-year-old daughter struggled in school, but daily tutoring improved her grades. Four years after "trying church," this mom is a very active volunteer with LifeKids.

Celebrate Recovery is a program that addresses every type of habit and hang-up. A participant named Rick says he struggled for many years, feeling trapped without a reason for existing. He read books and cried many nights, asking God for answers.

"God used Celebrate Recovery," says Rick, "to answer questions I had been asking for 45 years. I discovered I was living in fear – not trust. God was patiently waiting for me to put my faith in Him. I learned the true meaning of Proverbs 3:5-6" ("Trust in the Lord with all your heart . . . and He will make your paths straight").

Destiny Adoption is a comprehensive program operating on three levels – advocating in Parliament to overcome adoption hurdles, working with pregnancy care centres to offer solutions, and assisting people at Lifecentre navigate the tricky waters of adoption.

For 25 years Claude and Lison wanted a little girl of their own, but were not able to conceive. They were skeptical and afraid of public adoption. Then Kim Sabourin, their "generation pastor," explained she had the blessing of a birth mother to help select parents for her unborn daughter. Claude and Lison knew right away God

was answering their heart's desire. Lison says, "I was stunned that God would do this, but seven weeks later Sophie came home to be ours forever. It's nothing short of a miracle!"

Boucher isn't afraid to tackle real issues like abortion and euthanasia in his sermons. A series called "Grey Matter" in the video sermon archive encourages the virtual audience to consider how to make biblical decisions that matter when the outcome is not black and white.

Outreach and Service

"By grace we represent Christ in the community," says Castilloux. At Lifecentre, that translates to a willingness to partner with secular organizations. "Just look for commonalities," he says. "We care about the same issues – justice, equality, rights of women and children." The motivation may be different, but the vision is the same. Lifecentre's goal is the health and prosperity of their city.

Lifecentre Food Bank, co-operating with the Ottawa Food Bank, invites people to the Blackburn campus to receive monthly hampers. Blackburn congregants maintain stock with Sunday donations. Eastern Ottawa Resource Centre informs Lifecentre of its monthly activities to invite food bank clientele. It's a four-way partnership!

The key challenge is a balance of grace and truth. Boucher says, "It's easy to be all grace" and not address sin. And "It's easy to be all truth – very judgemental." A balance "to honour people's growth makes church messy, but lifelike," he says.

"It's frequently stated that God's church has a mission. But more accurately God's mission has a church," Boucher says. Lifecentre invests in people who want to make a difference in their community. They want to be there for their children's children – they want to leave a legacy that will extend into eternity. **FT**

CHARLENE DE HAAN, a freelance writer in Toronto, is also executive director of Camino Global in Canada and founder of StepUp Transitions Consulting.

Find more of these columns at www.theEFC.ca/aChurchYouShouldKnow.



A Few Good Friends

True companions add meaning to life.

The art of true friendship is something of a mystery. Anne Morrow Lindbergh famously observed how “men kick friendship around like a football, but it doesn’t seem to crack. Women treat it like glass and it goes to pieces.”

A lot of us men will connect with that image. We’ve seen our wives, girlfriends and daughters have conniptions over seemingly innocuous comments and small glances. Meanwhile, some of us will head out for brotherly beers on a Friday night with the grinder who an hour earlier was rubbing our face along the boards.

But male friendship harbours its own mysteries, not least the strange ability of many men to keep relationships at surface levels. Many of us never actually acknowledge the hurts and slights our “friends” inflict on us. We shuck off the wounds of unkind words or thoughtless actions as if they don’t matter at all. We fail to respond gently to an upset friend. We have learned to suck it up and sail on.

By guarding ourselves this way, we settle for lesser forms of friendship. And the truth is we can’t be best friends with everybody. Our capacity for relationship has natural limits.

The level of friendly relationship with your regular barista or bus driver, for example, is different from your potential for deep camaraderie with a boyhood buddy who attends your church. A Facebook “friend” can be anybody. A *real* friend is a man who gets where you’re coming from, and hangs with you through thick and thin.

Another natural limiting factor is time. While it’s generally true that so-called “quality time” requires at least some measure of “quantity time,” it is possible to cut through the clutter and connect without devoting a great deal of time to the relationship.

But that takes trust, which doesn’t come easy for many men. In his classic 1965 hit “I Am a Rock,” Paul Simon explores the theme of the loner who spurns friendship of any sort to protect his emotions – “And a rock feels no pain / And an island never cries.” His point is, of course, ironic.

Friendship is necessary, even though it creates opportunities for grief to take hold. Poet John Donne put it eloquently when he wrote, “No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main.”

Isolation can prevent certain types of hurts, but it creates larger problems. Our very DNA calls out for connec-

tion. We cannot go it alone. The possibility of pain that any relationship produces is part of what it means to be human.

In fact, real friendship flourishes in the soil of vulnerability. When we are weak and still feel loved, the bonds of relationship grow strong. When we risk rejection and find ourselves accepted, we discover joys we never knew existed. We learn love is better than safety.

At the end of His public ministry, Jesus was required to take a long, lonesome walk to a cruel death. To prove His divine love, He had to experience the absolute outposts of human alienation. By experiencing for himself the worst of our anguish, He was able to identify with the nastiest of human situations. And He had to do it alone.

Yet even the most admirable and selfless man who ever lived found it necessary to surround himself with a circle of friends. During His lifetime Jesus sought authentic human connection naturally. And He formed networks of relationships that rippled out in concentric circles.

At the outer fringes were the crowds who heard Him speak and paused to consider His words. In a much closer circle were those who chose to follow Him, the 70 He sent on mission trips (Luke 10). Closer yet were the men and women who knew Him as friend as well as teacher, people such as Mary Magdalene and the siblings Mary, Martha and Lazarus.

And, of course, Jesus chose 12 disciples who shared a deep level of direct relationship with Him. Even within that small group, Jesus relied on a tighter inner circle of close, close friends with whom to share His most tender and private moments. Peter, James and John had special relationships with the master. Jesus looked to them when He most needed human support. In His darkest hour He yearned for their companionship.

For many men today the circle of acquaintances is large, but the inner circle is missing. Many of us believe that demonstrations of individual competency and emotional control will attract the kind of friends we truly want. Wrong! The rewards of authentic friendship are realized in risk. Vulnerability awakens compassion and connection in ways strength cannot comprehend. Suffering together forges the solidarity we seek.

The U.S. Marines used to advertise that they were looking for a few good men. It’s a good line, something each of us should consider. Find a few good men who can take your worst – and give them your best. **FT**

Doug Koop is a Winnipeg-based freelance writer and spiritual care provider. Find more of these columns at www.theEFC.ca/BlessedIsTheMan.



Lebanon: It Matters Who Shows Up

Bible readers may remember the “cedars of Lebanon” used by Solomon for the temple and by Nehemiah to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

This spring I travelled to Lebanon to meet Christian leaders. I also visited camps of refugees who have fled from the Syrian civil war to Lebanon’s Beqaa Valley.

Ancient Lebanon was marked by several ancient empires, including Persian and Roman. In the 1st century AD it was central to the spread of the gospel, and a Christian minority has hung on ever since, despite being overrun by Muslim Arabs in the 7th century.

In the 20th century European powers carved new borders, shifting the



On Our Knees

For basic facts about Lebanon and suggestions to incorporate in your prayers, visit www.operationworld.org and www.persecution.net.

population balance from predominantly Christian (Maronites) to predominantly Muslim. The modern Lebanese constitution divided political powers between the two religious groups, resulting in a disastrous sectarianism

that soon blossomed into civil war.

Today, surviving war and the ongoing many rumours of war, flooded by refugees from Syria and elsewhere, Lebanese people speak in quiet tones, wondering what listening ears from Syria or its minions – Hezbollah in the south – might be plotting next.

Refugee camps east of Beirut are the

uncertain home of some 300,000. Another two million Syrians are displaced within Syria itself.

At the camps I met Syrian refugees (and a few from Iran) and spoke to them as they gathered outside their shacks. I asked about their needs, then about their views of what is needed back in Syria.

I also asked if I could pray. You should have seen their faces light up. It was as if I had given them a priceless gift. I told them I was a Christian and would pray in the name of Jesus. I reminded them who Jesus is as noted in the Qur’an. In the prayer I reminded them that He too was a refugee, fleeing with His parents to Egypt. This resonated.

I asked the camp leader to step into the centre for a special blessing. Afterward he asked us into his shack for tea, a common sign of hospitality. He explained he was

a dentist from Damascus. And he began asking about Jesus.

A young man I was with from a local ministry called Heart for Lebanon (www.heartforlebanon.org) responded with gentleness and care, taking the conversation only as far as appropriate, then said he would be back in a few days with a Bible.

I asked who else was helping the refugees. They only knew of Heart for Lebanon and World Vision.

“No Muslim organizations?” I asked.

One turned his head and spit. “We’ve seen no one. No one has come here. Only Christians.” **FT**

BRIAN C. STILLER of Newmarket, Ont., is the global ambassador for The World Evangelical Alliance.

Canadian Connections

- World Renew is working through Lebanese partners to provide food, stoves and other essential items to families fleeing to Lebanon to escape the Syrian conflict. They struggle to find housing, food and jobs. www.worldrenew.net.
- World Vision has helped more than 75,000 people who have fled the violence that began in Syria in 2011 by providing refugee families in Lebanon with food vouchers, hygiene kits and stove, blankets and fuel. It also contributes in education, water and sanitation. www.worldvision.ca

For more about how EFC affiliates are working in Lebanon, visit www.theEFC.ca/globalvillage



The Contours of Faith

Let's rest our faith on what we see, and not be put off by what others can't.

Faith is not always a reliable companion. This past April 19 marked the 20th anniversary of the fiery deaths of 76 Branch Davidian members at their group site in Waco, Texas. The story of government agencies' actions against David Koresh and his followers is complicated and controversial. In spite of that the tragedy of Waco is ultimately a case of bad, misguided and irrational faith in Koresh by his devotees. Their faith held them to him even as group members set the fires that eventually consumed their bodies.

So, faith and trust can be foolhardy, stubbornly so, even fatally so. In the Waco case the FBI warned about tank attacks just before 6 a.m. on the 19th. Branch Davidians had a full six hours to consider surrendering, but most chose to stay to the bitter end. I have met surviving Davidians who wish they could have been there that day to remain inside while the fires raged.

That same blind faith led the followers of Jim Jones to their death in Guyana's jungle on November 18, 1978. They should have seen trouble coming. Many members knew very well of their pastor's wild temper, his bisexual adulteries, his paranoid theories and his wild grandiosity. Jones even led members in a mock suicide drill while they were in their San Francisco church. Some left, but most kept their blind faith intact until they drank the poisonous Kool-Aid on that November evening.

Although most religions do not involve immediate life and death choices, all humans should keep their eyes wide open as choices are made about where or in whom faith and trust is placed.

What makes this problematic is that everyone thinks their own religion or spirituality or philosophy is the best place for faith and trust. Buddhists advise following the path of Gautama (the Buddha), Hindus favour Krishna, Muslims advocate for Allah, orthodox Jews stress Jehovah, Torah and Talmud, Scientologists focus on L. Ron Hubbard, Witches promote ancient deities, Christians witness to Jesus, and so on.

Since people of other faiths, or of no faith, are often just as convinced of their perspective as Christians are, how should those of us who are Jesus followers share our faith? Let me mention three pivotal principles which have become increasingly dominant in my interaction with others.

First, a positive presentation of Jesus is far more im-

portant and effective than a negative critique of another person's beliefs. Yes, there is a place for correction, but only when necessary. I regret wasting various witnessing opportunities over the years by focusing on this or that critique instead of concentrating on the tremendous case for God, the Bible and Jesus Christ. One time I got a Scientology member really angry by telling him about the latest book against Hubbard. He stormed up the street while I pondered the reality that I had not even shared the basics of Jesus with him.

Second, it helps in witnessing to remember how other people view Christian faith from their perspective. Don Wiebe, former Mennonite Evangelical and prominent atheist scholar of religion at Trinity College (Toronto), does not lie awake at night and ponder his eternal destiny. He believes death ends all. Yvette Shank, president of the Church of Scientology in Canada, claims that nothing in Jesus contradicts L. Ron Hubbard's teachings. She wants you to keep your Christian faith and get auditing from Scientologists. Shelley Rabinovitch, an award-winning professor at the University of Ottawa, is sometimes a bit wary of Christians because of false theories we push about witchcraft, her chosen path. No, she does not kill cats on Halloween or any other time.

Third, we should remember to rest our faith on what we see and not be put off by what others can't. I recently had two wonderful leaders of Christian Science in a class I teach. They believe Mary Baker Eddy offers the best understanding of the gospel of Jesus. As a result they told students sickness and death are not real, but only seem real. They also denied the deity of Jesus as God and the cross as payment for sin. They are absolutely sure their faith in Eddy is true, right and good. This should make no dent on authentic Christian faith.

Thinking of true faith brings to mind my friendship with Pam Radunsky. Pam is the sister of Kristen French, one of the teens kidnapped and killed in the infamous Paul Bernardo-Karla Homolka string of murders in Ontario in 1992. Pam knows all too well the utter horrors of evil and death. She and her husband Bill also lost a son (Josh) to a climbing accident a few years ago. I asked her recently why she still trusts God. She said ultimately her only source of comfort in the midst of darkness is to trust God and His gift of eternal life in Jesus. **FT**

JAMES BEVERLEY is professor of Christian thought and ethics at Tyndale Seminary in Toronto and author of the new book *Mormon Crisis: Anatomy of a Failing Religion* (www.mormoncrisis.com). Find more of these columns at www.theEFC.ca/ReligionWatch.

Revealing the Early Renaissance

Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, March 16 – June 16, 2013. \$25 adult admission

PAINTING: THE J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM, LOS ANGELES



I The Virgin Mary with Saints Thomas Aquinas and Paul, by Florentine artist Bernardo Daddi, about 1280 - 1348. Tempera and gold leaf on panel, 121.6 x 113 cm.

The Art Gallery of Ontario is currently exhibiting an exquisite collection of paintings that invites the viewer into the world of early Renaissance spirituality in Florence between 1300 and 1350. The economic and cultural life of the city-state (Italy as we know it today didn't exist then) was flourishing, and artists such as Dante and Giotto were active.

The exhibition (those outside the Toronto region can have a look at www.ago.net) is characterized by pre-Reformation Catholic sensibilities, but it rewards all viewers for the effort of careful attention to these artistic treasures. The panel paintings and illuminated manuscripts now on display tell clear stories, often biblical ones or narratives about one of the saints.

The 1300s was a time of

extraordinary prosperity in Florence, the result of rapid development in both industry and agriculture. The citizens of the time, steeped as they were in church tradition, recognized the spiritual dilemma they faced between the draw of affluence and the obligations of personal piety.

A highlight of the exhibition is a group of two dozen illustrations from a handwritten manuscript of praise songs, the *Laudario* of Sant'Agnese.

At that time, professionals in the merchant classes joined associations to perform charitable work and pray and sing together. The *Laudario*, commissioned by one such "confraternity," included beautifully illustrated images of the Annunciation, Crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension and

Pentecost. The result is clear evidence of a people who lived their lives grounded in religious belief. The contrast with our own time and place is thought-provoking.

For the past 60 years art has kept its distance from religion. This exhibition is a reminder that it has not always been so. It is an exceptional show – well worth a visit. *–John Franklin*

Dear Deb: A Woman With Cancer, a Friend With Secrets, and the Letters That Became Their Miracle

Author: Margaret Terry
Thomas Nelson, 2012.
227 pages. \$16.99

Little did Deb (who had inoperable lung cancer) know, when she asked for encouragement and help to believe in a miracle, that her request held the seed of a book. Margaret Terry's *Dear Deb* is that book – a volume whose autobiographical stories are rivalled only by the story of how it came about.

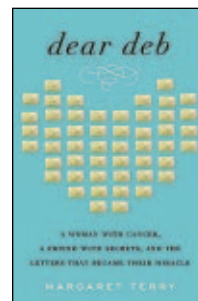
Terry didn't know Deb well. Her first emails of "Pollyanna snippets" reflected that. But the day she found out brain cancer had been added to Deb's earlier diagnosis, Terry put herself in Deb's place. "I didn't know how it felt to have cancer, but I know about fear," she says in the introduction. "So I began to tell her."

She told of her mom's mental illness. She told of the day her husband announced – out of the blue – that he was leaving. She told of bringing up her sons solo, getting caught for shoplifting, returning to church and her own Christmas miracle. The stories are honest, heart-wrenching and glow with God's grace in

the midst of a painful, messy life. Fifty-five of Terry's 102 letters to Deb are included in the book.

Terry's storytelling is warm, full of heart and ranks with the best creative non-fiction. It's no wonder Deb wrote her, "No matter how sick I feel, your letters give me something to look forward to." The Bible verse that ends each chapter captures the story's insight and weights it with spiritual significance.

Dear Deb is not only a captivating tale of God's wooing, but also an unspoken challenge. Will we recognize the heroes and heroines among us? Will we see God's grace in the midst of our own lives? Will we share that grace by whatever means we can? That just might be the route to our own miracle. *–Violet Nesdoly*



Shaping a Digital World: Faith, Culture and Computer Technology

Author: Derek C. Schuurman
InterVarsity Press Academic, 2013.
144 pages. \$18.99

Computer technology is here to stay. Only those whose heads are buried in the sand would think otherwise. In the words of Derek Schuurman, an assistant professor of computer science at Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ont., "Computer technology has become a requirement to function in our society."

In *Shaping a Digital World* he sets out to determine the re-

relationship between his faith and his work as an electrical engineer. Or, to paraphrase the Church Father Tertullian, "What does Silicon Valley have to do with Jerusalem?"



All of life may indeed fall under the lordship of Jesus Christ, but does this include computer technology which, as Schuurman notes, is a "value-laden cultural activity?" And if so, how, precisely?

The author stands in the Reformed/Presbyterian Christian tradition informed by the biblical themes of creation, fall, redemption and restoration. These themes make up the burden of Schuurman's book. Along the way he engages critically with the work of scholars Jacques Ellul, Neil Postman and Marshall McLuhan, among others.

There are four possible Christian responses to the digital world. Some reject it outright. Others are indifferent to it, seeing no connection between bytes and beliefs. Still

others simply embrace it with little thought or reflection. The best response, Schuurman suggests, is cultivating responsible technology. "A worldview informed by these biblical themes can

help guide Christians who seek to honour God in the area of computer technology."

Shaping a Digital World is ideal as a textbook for computer science courses, but it should also appeal to science and technology readers from any Christian tradition.

The book's usefulness is enhanced by a list of discussion questions for each chapter, and an extensive bibliography for those who wish to do further study.

—Burton K. Janes

Monstrance

Author: Sarah Klassen
Turnstone Press, 2012.
100 pages. \$17

Winnipeg poet Sarah Klassen has received many acknowledgements in the Canadian literary

scene, including the Gerald Lampert Memorial Award for her first collection *Journey to Yalta* (1988) and the Canadian Authors Association Award for her sixth, *A Curious Beatitude* (2007).

Even so, poet George Amabile has said of her new collection, "*Monstrance* is Sarah Klassen's best book to date." And I have to agree.

The poems are consistently stronger – clearly she's been developing her craft for many years. Her most important themes find an ideal balance here between the universal abstract and the personal particular. Even as she deals with big truths and conundrums, we see Sarah Klassen's heart.

She writes of hearing a soprano singing an aria by Handel – and wanting the woman to believe what she's singing ("Credo"). She's honest enough, like David, to question God – "What were you thinking, leaving us in charge, / giving us dominion, as if we were fit" ("In the Gar-

den"). And she mourns with those who mourn – "Today I prayed for the young woman / whose husband after difficult illness died" ("Prayer for the Widow of a Nature Lover") or "We buried the woman in a frozen portion of the planet / and drove home" ("Stars to Steer by").

In "Pileated Woodpecker" she juxtaposes one scene where "children shout Hosannas, / wave exuberant palm fronds at the altar, / down the

aisle" with another showing a magnificent woodpecker on a broken oak. In the second scene she says, "Most of us don't recognize / the amazing creature clamped to its wounded tree,"

which intentionally carries my thoughts to a similar image of Christ.

The word "monstrance" means "to show," and that's what Sarah Klassen does in this book. She shows us the world through her eyes – and shows her mind and her heart.

—D.S. Martin



The End Is Where We Begin

Artist: Thousand Foot Krutch
TFK Music (www.thousandfootkrutch.com). \$10

Thousand Foot Krutch is a Canadian Christian band known for an urgent rock style and sometimes mixing rap into its lyrics. They parted ways with Tooth and Nail Records in 2011, and for their sixth album decided to try moving ahead on their own by inviting fans to each donate a small amount in a "kickstarter" campaign. If this new album is any indication, it was the right move for the band.

The End Is Where We Begin is reminiscent of the band's roots, with lead vocalist Trevor McNeven's return to rapping in many of the songs. The album boasts several adrenaline pumping anthems ("Let the Sparks Fly," "We Are," "Down") mixed in with serious ballads ("All I Need to Know," "So Far Gone," "Be Somebody"). While the American Christian band Skillet has made a name for itself combining an orchestra



with heavy guitars and drums, Thousand Foot Krutch has mastered it on songs such as "Courtesy Call," the interlude "This Is a Warning," as well as the album's first track "The Introduction."

From start to finish the lyrics are coated with themes of faith, following Christ and finding light in the darkness. "War of Change" calls out, "I want to live like I know I'm dying / Take up my cross, not be afraid," while "I Get Wicked" declares, "I am not afraid of this mountain in my way / You can push me to my knees, I believe / And I am now awake / Uncontrolled and not ashamed."

Fans of the band's recent albums *Set It Off* or *Welcome to the Masquerade* will love this album. If you like rock but have never picked up an album from Thousand Foot Krutch, *The End Is Where We Begin* is a good place to start.

—Kristen McNulty

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Catching Up to the New Diversity

Working with people who don't have faith.

In my political career I have always found it easier to work with people of faith, since all religions share basic moral principles. I've been a leader in my Anglican church, and I know that such principles, such as the Golden Rule, don't actually appear in the Bible, but we still believe in them: 'Don't do unto others what you would not have them do to you.' People who don't have faith – well, I don't know how to work with them.”

With that pronouncement a Canadian senator resumed her seat. She had spoken out in a public forum on religion and public life in Canada. Apparently confident she had set things straight, she had instead demonstrated attitudes common to many of our leaders, particularly of a certain age.

First, she divided the world into two kinds of people – those “of faith” (whom we used to call “religious people” or “believers”) and those who don't have faith.

The initial problem here is that a number of life philosophies we are used to calling “religions” do not, in fact, require faith. The ancient form of Buddhism known as Theravada expects self-discipline, not faith. The foundational form of Hinduism, Dharma Marga, is the “way of duty,” not faith. Confucianism and Daoism in their “higher” or “philosophical” forms do not require faith. So being “of faith” is simply not synonymous with practising a major religion, as any first-year university religion course will teach you.

Another problem is that a lot of people in religions that do teach faith don't practise it. Instead, they are mystics or moralists, people who believe and act as if goodness will come to them if they just do the right things. That's not trusting God. That's relying on yourself.

Second, the senator implies all people of faith share the same moral outlook, while people not “of faith” do not. That's why she says she can work well with the former and not the latter.

Let's note just briefly that her self-proclaimed leadership in an Anglican church has not translated into basic Bible knowledge. The Golden Rule is, of course, in the Bible: Luke 6:31. And it is much more demanding than the Silver Rule she confuses with it, since the *Golden Rule* is positive: *Do to others*, rather than just *Don't do to others*. The Silver Rule seems Canadian enough – “Leave other people alone.” But

the Golden Rule is Canadian too. We have worked with each other, and for each other, all along.

More importantly, though, it isn't just “people of faith” who defend other people's rights and co-operate in the common good. Indeed, on any given issue, I might well find my political allies among atheists, and my political opponents among “people of faith,” even my own.

Defending the human rights of women, homosexuals, transsexuals and transgendered people, I might well be allied with secular humanists against certain Sikhs, Jews, Hindus and even my fellow Christians. Resisting polygamy, I will find allies among atheists while doing battle with certain Muslims and Mormons – even as *other* Muslims and Mormons line up with me.

In fact, we should use the plural form “atheisms.” Buddhist atheism, Confucianist atheism, Daoist atheism, Zen atheism, New Age atheism, nature religion, Communist atheism, scientific atheism, secular humanism, Nietzschean atheism, Randian atheism – the list goes on and on. We Christians should be grateful there are many atheists whose convictions re-

semble ours in many respects. I sometimes refer to “Christian atheists” or “Jewish atheists” because clearly they have been formed by the norms of this (predominately Christian) culture. But there are a number of key moral values also in Confucianism, Daoism, and some forms of atheism that coincide with Christian ones, so we can make common cause with devotees of those outlooks as well.

The senator's remarks reflect an age now past in which Christianity still provided the general matrix of Canadian culture, but in a shadowy way.

“Everyone” could be presumed to be both monotheistic and moral (in a semi-Christian sense), but that period lasted for all of one generation in Canada – from the mid-1960s to about the mid-1990s.

It's gone, and it's time we all adjusted to the new diversity, to the new politics which is not easily divisible into one side or the other, to the new challenges that require us to become more politically astute, nimble and pragmatic.

Why?

So we can do unto others what we would have them do unto us. **ET**

A number of life philosophies we are used to calling “religions” do not, in fact, require faith.

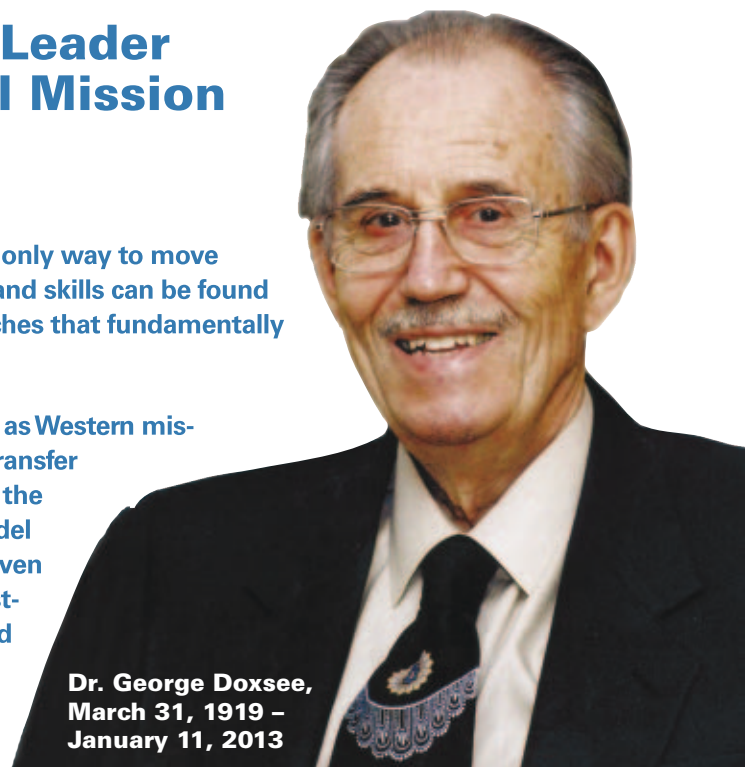
JOHN STACKHOUSE teaches theology and culture at Regent College, and is the author of *Making the Best of It: Following Christ in the Real World* (Oxford, 2008). Find more of these columns at www.theEFC.ca/ChristAndCulture.

Remembering the Visionary Leader Behind Holistic International Mission

By Brent Mitchell, President, Partners International Canada

In today's globalized world, partnership is viewed as the only way to move ahead. It is easily recognized that good ideas, products and skills can be found in most regions. Innovation and entrepreneurial approaches that fundamentally change the landscape are accepted as the way things are.

In World Mission, this has also been increasingly the reality as Western missionary numbers dwindle, and strategic partnerships and transfer of responsibility has been ongoing for two decades. But, in the 1960s this was not the case. At that point the accepted model was to send missionaries from the West to the non-West. Even though many countries and sectors were closing in the post-colonial era, it was generally thought that the Gospel would go from "here" to "there". It took extraordinary insight to understand that Tectonic geo-political shifts were occurring and that therein lay opportunity for World Mission.



Dr. George Doxsee,
March 31, 1919 –
January 11, 2013

George Doxsee was a person with this kind of insight. After a successful chiropractic career, George poured himself into various Christian initiatives such as showing Moody Science films at Man and His World. Exposed to the idea of empowering Christian ministries, led locally by non-western "sent missionaries" as a way of expanding mission impact in closed and challenging places, he quickly became convinced and then, involved.

In some ways, George's journey was similar to others. When the door for missionaries to work in China was closed, a group of American businessmen caught the vision of a returned Scottish missionary, Fred Savage. Savage felt that there were exceptionally gifted and committed Chinese who would take the mission task forward. He encouraged these Americans to not give up on the Chinese situation but to invest in these people and mobilize them to do more. And so a new mission was born, in some ways far ahead of its time.

The idea of the leveraged elements connected to this concept of empowering local ministry was quickly grasped by people with a business mind-set. Business people are used to facing nerve-jangling challenges by looking for innovative ways to overcome the obstacles. Business people appreciate cost effectiveness and clear goals. But, they did not always anticipate what George discovered; God was raising up exceptionally gifted and committed people with whom we could have a relationship.

One of George's earliest connections from Partners International's group of international ministry partners was with Gus Maweih, a Liberian with an unusual personal journey. Living in the interior of Liberia's jungles, Gus heard through the "talk-

ing drums" that there was a god who loved people. To find out more, he walked for one month, emerging as a 10 year old boy, without any clothing at a girls' orphanage in one of the larger towns. The missionary ladies dressed him in what they had – a dress, which is what he wore for the first couple of months. His journey eventually led him to work towards and achieve a Masters degree from Berkley, University of California. He was rated at the time as among one of the top UC students in the past 100 years. His goal, which he ultimately achieved, was to return to Liberia, working in the rural areas to bring transformation there through effective mission work.

George poured his life into people like Gus. Part of beginning Partners International Canada in 1963, he worked as a volunteer President until 1982. During that time, George and his wife Eileen traveled the world many times over, learning of the powerful things that God was doing through dedicated and visionary indigenous-led Christian ministries. George approached this like he did everything, with a tireless and unrelenting passion. Traversing Canada he talked to "any and all" who would listen about how they could be involved. A tireless advocate, a passionate believer in the ministry leaders he knew and a frugal and sharp eye on organizational costs have all made their mark on who we as Partners International Canada are today. We are thankful for George's life and ministry.

The Board of Directors and the staff of Partners International Canada wish to honour the life and ministry of George Doxsee.



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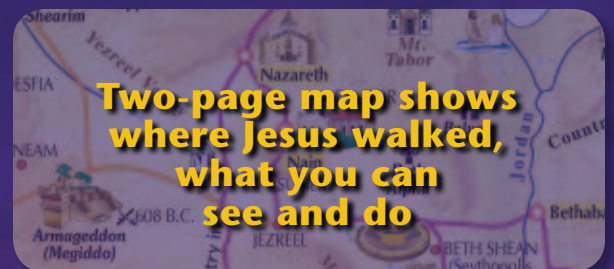
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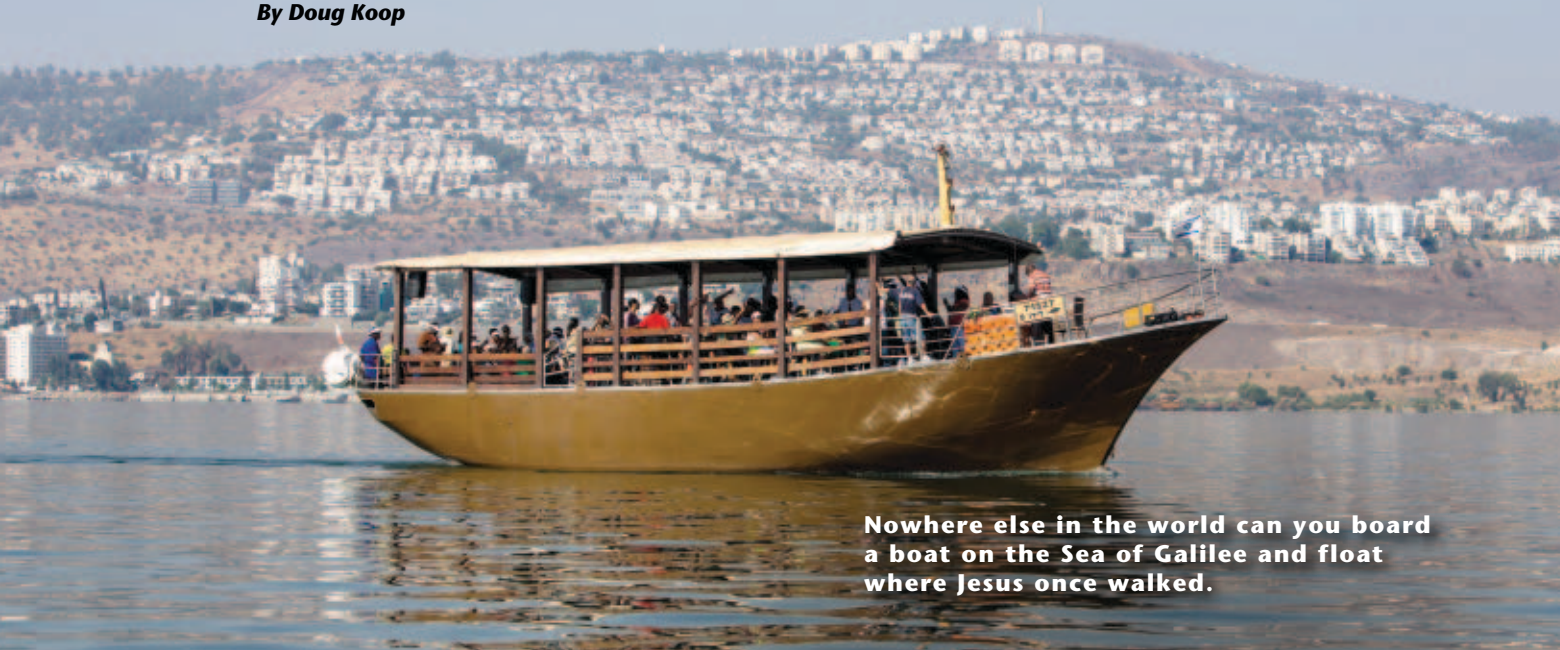
- Experience the tastes, sounds and smells of the Holy Land
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- Interview with Canadian leader Geoff Tunnicliffe of the World Evangelical Alliance



Why Go? What's

Some common-sense reasons to visit the Holy Land.

By Doug Koop



Nowhere else in the world can you board a boat on the Sea of Galilee and float where Jesus once walked.

The Holy Land is fascinating and people from every generation flock to it as surely as water flows to a low spot.

What is it that makes this part of the globe so alluring? Is it the palpable presence of important history that pervades the place? Yes indeed. Is it the sense of spirituality that seems to saturate the very soil in this land that hosted the birth of three of the world's great religions? For many visitors that's the main point.

Is it because past, present and future seem to coalesce in some special way in this spot? That is true as well.

While the charm of the Mediterranean Middle East may seem to focus on ancient times, the experience of travelling in biblical lands is very much a matter of the here and now. It offers a smorgasbord of sensations that serves to connect the inspiring events of days gone by with a wide range of the beliefs and aspirations of people today.

And for North Americans it's rather exotic, a whole lot of fun and surprisingly safe.

So what's it like to be a visitor in the country that stands squarely in the crossroads of civilizations?

Let's begin with a sampling of sounds and smells. You will become very aware of the sounds of the street. The cities of Israel are bustling places where shiny new vehicles jostle with more ancient conveyances, where buses and

taxis ferry crowds of pedestrians in an unrelenting cacophony of markets and movement, and where prayer calls from mosques and the chanting of pilgrims will make it evident you're not in Calgary anymore.

As you get around the country, you'll also notice how the heady buzz of the cities evaporates in the deep silence of the desert or the gentle sloshing of the waves on the shores of Galilee.

Senses Awakened

Your nostrils will be awakened as well. At one moment you may be breathing in the serenity of the Garden Tomb, an oasis of green space just outside the city wall of Old Jerusalem. In the next you will re-enter the commotion of a diesel-fumed bus stop.

The scents of incense and spices permeate the marketplaces. You can savour the sweet tang of citrus in groves found throughout the country, and sniff the musty and dusty odours of camels, sheep and donkeys crowding the roadsides.

Bring your appetite along. Middle Eastern fare is a delight to the palate. Healthy breakfast buffets piled with yogourts, fruits, cheeses and breads offer an excellent start to the day. St. Peter's Fish (tilapia) is a staple in the Galilee region. Shawarma and falafel, kebabs, olives and more make for quick and tasty lunches.

It Like?

A huge variety of upscale restaurants present world class dinners. The Eucalyptus in Jerusalem, for example, offers “biblical food,” crafting a menu using foods indigenous to the land of Israel (www.the-eucalyptus.com). And sometime during the visit every visitor should try the widely available “mixed grill.”

Significant Sites

While the tastes, sounds and smells are the inevitable backdrop to any visit to any country, the sights – the sites – located in biblical lands are the primary attraction.

Nowhere else in the world can you board a boat on the Sea of Galilee and float where Jesus once walked, or climb the hillside where He delivered the Sermon on the Mount. Nowhere else can you visit His hometown of Nazareth or nearby Sepphoris, the place where He very likely honed His carpenter skills.

In no other country can you cast your gaze from the Mount of Olives across the valley where the temple built by Herod the Great once stood in majestic splendour on the possible site of Mount Moriah, the place where Abraham was prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac.

From this very hillside you can pause at the lovely chapel of Dominus Flevit to weep with Jesus over the city of Jerusalem, and stroll amid the ancient olive trees in the Garden of Gethsemane. In this holy city you can join throngs of worshipers and pilgrims at the Western Wall, the foundation of the great temple. And you can wade in dark confines through Hezekiah’s tunnel (www.bibleplaces.com/heztunnel.htm).

And that’s just the beginning. Practically every inch of this ancient land has a story to tell. There’s the road to Jericho, the setting for the parable of the Good Samaritan. There’s Abu Gosh, a possible site of Emmaus. The ancient fortress of Megiddo overlooks the plains of Jezrael (or Jezreel), a place where King Ahab stabled his horses and where the apocalyptic literature of the Bible says the final battle will take place.

Land of Hope

Christian visitors to biblical lands are never quite sure if they are students honing their understanding of the Bible, tourists enjoying the pleasures of travel, or pilgrims on some personal devotional quest. For most it’s

a blend of all three.

Everyone can expect to experience some exceptional sensations. (There’s certainly no feeling quite like bobbing weightless in the buoyant mineral-laden waters of the Dead Sea.)

But travelling as a modern in the lands where Jesus lived His life and carried out His ministry causes a person to feel both the ordinary and the extraordinary. Israel is home to about 8 million people. Most citizens live and love, buy and sell, eat, work and play like people anywhere. It’s normal.

But something more seems to be in the air. This is a place where the everyday affairs of a modern nation are layered with religious and political conflicts both past and present.

The land itself seems to bear the burden of its much-storied history, both sacred and mundane. An ancient sycamore tree in Jericho brings Zacchaeus to life. A trek to the Jordan River evokes the piercing prophecies of John the Baptist. A walk down a *wadi* (a dry riverbed) makes the fugitive David more than a character in a storybook. These are the very places where great figures lived and momentous events occurred. Right here.

In these biblical lands you also feel the sorrows of centuries. The sense of global and spiritual significance weighs heavily and, in museums like Yad Vashem, you can’t escape the reality of evil as seen in the horrors of the Holocaust.

The hopes and fears of all the years are strangely met in this wonderful, intriguing place. ■

Doug Koop is a Winnipeg-based writer and spiritual care provider who considers his visits to the Middle East highlights in his life.



From top: the Western Wall; the chapel of Dominus Flevit where travellers can weep with Jesus; and ancient olive trees in the Garden of Gethsemane.

PHOTO: ITAMAR GRINBERG / IGTO

PHOTOS: DOUG KOOP

Skeptic No More

When you're irritated by all those people who recommend a trip.

By David Daniels

I never really considered going to Israel, and even admit to being irritated whenever someone just returning from a Holy Land tour would say, "You have to go. It will change forever the way you read the Bible." I dismissed it as an overly exuberant, romanticized view of Israel.

But in 2008, when the ministry I was leading wanted to partner with an Israeli-based publishing ministry, I enjoyed an incredible 20-day visit to the Holy Land, organized in part by a knowledgeable friend, Israel Turner. I met some amazing people and found out those overly exuberant Holy Land romantics are right – visiting Israel has changed forever the way I read the Bible.

Two of the people I met are John and Judy Pex, who for nearly three decades have welcomed Israelis and international visitors to The Shelter Hostel In Israel's southernmost city of Eilat, a fun-in-the-sun tropical resort on the shores of the Red Sea. Vibrant Christian believers, John

and Judy offer a no-obligation-to-attend daily Bible study, along with a public Friday night worship service.

John and Judy, avid hikers, have walked the 600-mile Israel National Trail from the Egyptian border to Mount Hermon and the Lebanese border in the north. Judy describes their amazing 42-day trek in *Walk the Land: A Journey on Foot Through Israel*, available in print and on Kindle through Amazon. Reading it may lure you into planning your own Israeli hiking holiday.

The kaleidoscope of ways in which my Bible reading has changed – deeper and richer than ever before – is too extensive to fully recount here. As you might ex-

pect, I now visualize the towns and villages, hills and valleys, lakes and streams mentioned in Holy Scripture. I can imagine Jesus standing on the shores of Galilee.

But there have been unexpected changes also. Now when I read about ancient Beersheba, I visualize the 21st-century desert city of Be'er Sheva. I can still see Lily standing in the kitchen area of her tiny apartment. A humble senior with meagre resources, she insisted on feeding us a hot meal late on the evening of our first night with food she really couldn't afford to give away. I also remember worshipping with the vibrant congregation of Israeli believers there.


Having travelled the length and breadth of the land, and met many people like John and Judy Pex, I marvel at the rock solid truth of God's promise: only if the created order ceases to exist will the "descendants of Israel ever cease to be a nation before me" (Jeremiah 31:36). ■

David Daniels pastors Grace Baptist Church in Richmond Hill, Ont.





Eilat is a fun-in-the-sun tropical resort on the Red Sea. Inset: David Daniels heading south into the Negev.

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Why Go This Year?

Patricia Paddey, a senior writer at *Faith Today*, joined her peers from a number of other Canadian Christian periodicals to visit the Holy Land together March 4-10, 2013. Here are their fresh reports.

The Place of God's Own Choosing

There is a special power in story. Maybe that's why God chose to reveal Himself to us through words. Maybe that's why the Word Incarnate was a storyteller. But stories told about far off places and times take on a new potency when the story's setting surrounds you. When you sail on the Sea of Galilee and remember that Jesus stilled those very waters with a word. When you visit Jerusalem and your guide says, "Daniel was born here." Here. You realize that history took place in *this* place. It's the place of God's own choosing. It's the land where our faith began. And when I saw it, when I lived and breathed and walked there, my understanding of the story to end all stories was deepened. And my faith was enriched.

—Patricia Paddey, senior writer, *Faith Today*

The Most Spiritual and Endearing Place

It is now obvious to me that God knew what He was doing when He chose the mosaic of Israel as His canvas for the Alpha and Omega. In my experience, this is the most spiritual and endearing place on earth. I am blessed with a powerful photographic image of this pilgrimage: a Hebrew man walking down a long path from the Mount of Beatitudes to the Sea of Galilee. This image captures creation, without the bricks and mortar of man. No buildings, towers or stained glass windows. No holy men with incense. No politics, tolls or guards blocking the path with commercial license to eternity. This is a path of promise for all people, simple, free and clear. This, is my Israel.

—Brian Philip Koldyk, publisher, *ChristianWeek*

Where God Became Man

Visiting the Holy Land drives home for us the mystery of the Incarnation. As we walk where Jesus walked, we remember that our God is not a God who stays up in heaven, disconnected from the world He has created. Instead, He comes down in grace and meets with real people – real sinners – where they are. To see the place where God became Man, where "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us," to see the place where He died on the cross for our sins and the tomb from which He rose again three days later, these are precious experiences.

—Mathew Block, editor, *The Canadian Lutheran*

Fused Beliefs to a Place

A trip to the Holy Land was not on my bucket list; faith does not require a Christian to make such a pilgrimage. But when the opportunity arose I took it, and now I am grateful. It fused what I believe to a place and brought the Old and New Testaments not only alive, but integrated them as happening in the same space, creating all sorts of wonderful connections. It was awesome. I'd go again.

—Marion Hollinger, editor-in-chief, *Tapestry* (Lutheran Women's Missionary League)

Geography of Revelation

Being there, touching the soil, walking the paths and streets, and experiencing the sites put my faith into a geographical context and helped change "Bible stories" into "Bible fact" in a concrete way. As Father Pierre Batista Pizaballa, the head of the Franciscan Custody

in the Holy Land, explained during our visit, "The Christian faith is not just an idea but first and foremost history. If there is a history of revelation, then there is a geography of revelation."

—Ian Adnams, former editor, *The Canadian Lutheran*

Enriched Work and Spiritual Life

As a Christian writer and editor, I constantly reflect on stories of the Old and New Testaments and how they impact our lives as followers of God. Experiencing Israel first hand, the land where these stories unfolded, has brought a new level of meaning and significance not only to my work, but to my spiritual life as well.

—Pamela Richardson, news editor, copy editor and production co-ordinator, The Salvation Army

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The “Wonder and Complexity” of a Study Tour

Travelling with a group led by a Christian professor has many benefits.

By Patricia Paddey

At the end of one of many study tours Professor Gordon Matties has led to Israel, a retired history professor on the trip paid Matties a high compliment. “He congratulated me on an excellent tour,” Matties recalls, “by saying, ‘You’ve thoroughly confused me. I thought I knew my history. I thought I understood the contemporary Middle East. But now everything has become so much more complex.’”

In telling the story Matties insists he’s not extolling the virtues of confusing people. As professor of biblical and theological studies at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg, his job is to guide students into gaining clarity and insight on challenging subjects.

But when it comes to taking a group

on tour to the land of the Bible, he’s more interested in helping people “discover for themselves both the wonder and the complexity” there. So he exposes people to more than just ancient sites.

They do a lot of hiking to “encounter the land in its beauty and in its geographical, historical and topographical complexity,” and they visit with a lot of locals – whom Matties refers to as “living stones,” in order “to hear their stories.”

When people do those things, Matties says, they experience “the challenges faced both by our biblical ancestors and by our brothers and sisters today.”

Paul Spilsbury, vice-president of academic affairs at Ambrose University College in Calgary, agrees: When it comes to touring the lands of the Bible, leaving with a little confusion can be a good thing.

“If you’re not bewildered and over-

whelmed, you probably haven’t thought about it very much,” says Spilsbury.

Those considering a tour may want to explore the difference between a typical Christian tourist-whirlwind sort of affair (Matties jokingly tells of a friend who “ran where Jesus walked”) with a slower-paced, academic-led study tour that includes lectures, readings and opportunities to engage with locals of all religious and political perspectives.

Spilsbury says the real value of the latter is that you get to see the bigger picture. “You get to see history in the context of what’s happening now, and to reflect on how it all fits together.”

Spilsbury has a good sense of that. For more than a decade he has co-led such study tours, or participated as a lecturer on tours led by fellow Ambrose professor Charles Nienkirchen. Last year Spilsbury and his family lived on the outskirts of Jerusalem for five months during a research sabbatical. “It’s complicated there,” he says.

That’s an understatement.

Modern-day Israel is a tiny country, not quite as big as Vancouver Island. Yet it’s been called the most disputed strip of real estate on the planet. Many Western Christians equate the contemporary nation with biblical Israel, and approach it with a sense of theological and political certainty. So it’s not surprising many tours are designed to maximize that certainty, ignoring contemporary political realities altogether. But that’s a mistake, says Matties.

As Christians our allegiance shouldn’t be to a political ideology, he believes, but to God who cares passionately about reconciliation, peace and justice.

Matties points out that small strip of land has rarely been free of conflict. “The whole Bible is a story of the formation of a

Gordon Matties on Jebel Musa, the traditional site of Mt. Sinai.



SUPPLIED PHOTO (INSET: JOEL ROSS)



SUPPLIED PHOTOS

Paul Spilsbury helps people to see the bigger picture. “You get to see history in the context of what’s happening now, and to reflect on how it all fits together.”

people in contexts of poverty, oppression and injustice,” he says.

When you grasp that reality, not only does the Bible *really* come to life, but you’re on the road to a new understanding of what’s going on in Israel and surrounding areas today.

Perhaps that’s one reason study tours seem to be increasing in popularity. “I think it’s kind of a growth industry at the moment,” says Spilsbury, who describes “great benefits” to having a professor and students together in such a setting. “You talk way beyond lecture material. You talk about personal things, social realities that don’t necessarily come up in a lecture setting.”

He’s seen some students experience a crisis of faith when exposed to the harsh truths of the land. “They might go there thinking, ‘It’s all the Jews’ fault’ or ‘It’s all the Muslims’ fault,’ but when they get there, they realize the Christians are as implicated as anyone else.”

For his part Spilsbury says such trips

have loosened his grip on some “cherished certainties about how God works in the world,” while Matties concedes his big lesson has been “there is no such thing as a disembodied spirituality, or a faith that isn’t grounded in the everyday.”

It’s reassuring to think even scholars, who regularly plumb deep mysteries and tend to feel comfortable swimming in unanswered questions, have had to come to terms with letting go of a few certainties of their own.

But when it comes to helping other people come to grips with complexity, be it of the biblical, political, geographical, archeological or spiritual sort – well, that’s all in a day’s work.

“For me it’s essential to open up the rather romantic and spiritualized notion of the Holy Land that so many people have in their minds,” says Matties, who prefers to describe the land of the Bible as “holy but troubled.”

“I tell people they’ll experience my tours in three ways,” says Matties. “As

a student, as a tourist and as a pilgrim. Students listen and learn. Tourists experience and take. Pilgrims enter the biblical story and allow that story to draw them into prayer. Of course, that can be done anywhere. But a study tour allows for the unique intersection of place and story.”

Both Matties and Spilsbury say academic tours are not necessarily only for academics. People shouldn’t be nervous about taking a trip with a scholar, nor should they think such trips are only for those interested in some sort of higher-level learning. What the best study tours strive to offer is balance and a well-rounded perspective.

To benefit from that kind of tour, the professors explain, the most important thing is to be open to new ideas. To listen. To ask questions. And to accept some ambiguity. ■

Patricia Paddey of Mississauga is a senior writer at Faith Today.

Recommended Places to Visit

Listed in the order of a possible tour. By Debra Fieguth

CENTRAL COAST

Jaffa – Now incorporated into Tel Aviv, this is the place where Jonah lived and Peter raised a Tabitha from the dead. Old Jaffa provides a scenic view of the Mediterranean Sea.

NORTH

Caesarea – The headquarters of Roman rule in Israel, this is where St. Paul was taken in chains and tried for heresy, and where Cornelius lived.

Nazareth – The Basilica of the Annunciation, Mary's Well, and Nazareth Village (www.nazarethvillage.com), which recreates a 2,000-year-old Israeli town, are among the highlights. The Gospel Trail also starts here.

Cana – Jesus performed His first miracle, turning water into wine, at a wedding feast in Cana. Although the site isn't certain, in Kafar Kana, an Arab village near Nazareth, churches commemorate the event.

Mount Tabor – Reached by bus, car or on foot, the summit of Mount Tabor is where Jesus' Transfiguration took place, while Peter, James and John watched in awe as He spoke with Moses and Elijah.

Galilee – Has at least three stops. The Church of the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes in **Tabgha** houses an ancient mosaic depicting Jesus feeding the 5,000. The **Mount of Beatitudes**, where Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount, has a great view of the Sea of Galilee. In **Capernaum** see the home of Peter and Andrew, and the spot where Jesus asked His disciples to "follow me." Ruins of an ancient synagogue stand here.

Mount Carmel – The place where Elijah defeated the prophets of Baal is now Israel's largest national park (www.parks.org.il). Pre-historic remains, nature reserves, a Druze village and the first Carmelite monastery are all found in the region.

SOUTH

Dead Sea – The lowest point on earth and

A Christian's Map of the Holy Land



worth a float in the buoyant water. Be sure to see both **Qumran**, some ruins near the caves in which a shepherd found the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947, and **Masada**, where in 66 AD a band of Jewish patriots overtook the mountain palace of King Herod. Seven years later, as the Romans approached, the 900 remaining Jews committed suicide.

Be'er Sheva – The traditional site of Abraham's Well where he watered his flocks thousands of years ago.

Ein Gedi – The place where David fled to escape King Saul, Ein Gedi has one of Israel's most important archaeological sites, which includes the mosaic floor of a 6th-century synagogue.

WEST BANK

Bethlehem – A spot deep inside the Church of the Nativity is believed to be the cave where Mary gave birth to Jesus. Though the church is quite ornate, it can only be entered through a small, nondescript door, symbolic of humbling oneself to approach the Christ Child.

Jericho – The place Joshua conquered after a seven-day march around the walls, Jericho is also known as the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world. There are lots of ruins from various eras of Jericho's 12,000-year history. Don't miss the Greek Orthodox **St. George's Monastery** on a nearby mountain. The prophet Elijah is said to have lived in one of the nearby caves.

CENTRAL

Bethany – The home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus, this is where you can enter what was purportedly Lazarus' tomb. You can also see a house that may have belonged to the siblings.

Bet Guvrin / Maresha – The remains of a Crusader castle and 800 bell-shaped caves believed to have been excavated for chalk, Bet Guvrin features Byzantine and Roman ruins.

Jerusalem – Includes an amazing number of sites. The **Tower of David Museum** houses art and history exhibits and offers great views of Jerusalem (www.towerofdavid.org). Take an early morning walk on the ramparts of the **Old City Walls**, a 4-km tour above the Old City, including the Muslim, Christian, Jewish and Armenian quarters,

Continued on next page



Recommended Places

Continued from previous page

and the Temple Mount. At **Mount Zion** in a building above King David's Tomb is the Coenaculum, the probable site of the Last Supper. The **Western Wall** is the iconic spot where Jews go to pray and, traditionally, mourn the loss of the temple. The **Temple Mount**, although now under Muslim control, is the traditional site of both Solomon's temple and where Abraham was prepared to sacrifice Isaac. The spectacular Dome of the Rock mosque is built over it. The **Pool of Siloam** is where Jesus healed the man blind from birth. It was rediscovered by archaeologists in 2004. The **Pool of Bethesda** is where Jesus is believed to have healed a paralytic. The **Via Dolorosa** ("way of grief") is the route Jesus travelled on the way to His crucifixion. It begins near St. Stephen's Gate and stops at 14 stations, ending inside the **Church of the Holy Sepulchre**, a massive and complex church divided among the six oldest Christian branches; it includes what traditionalists believe were the very places of Jesus' crucifixion and burial. However, many Christians find the serene setting of the **Garden Tomb** (www.gardentomb.com) more evocative of what the Gospels describe. A nearby skull-shaped rock fits the description of "Place of the Skull." The **Mount of Olives** includes a series of six churches, beginning with the Chapel of the Ascension (now under Muslim control), that mark the way down the mountain to the **Garden of Gethsemane**, where you'll find ancient olive trees on the spot where Jesus prayed all night, knowing the fate that was before Him, while His closest disciples slept.

Ein Kerem – The Church of St. John the Baptist at the centre of this ancient village marks John the Baptist's birthplace. Nearby is the Church of the Visitation named for Mary's visit to her cousin Elizabeth.

Yad Vashem – High on a hillside outside Jerusalem, this memorial and Holocaust museum (www.yadvashem.org) is a sobering reminder of the Nazis' inhumane treatment of European Jews. Outside is the Avenue of the Righteous Among the Nations, lined with trees honouring gentiles including Corrie ten Boom, who helped save Jews from the Nazis.

Sources: Frommer's *Israel* (6th ed., 2010), White Star Guides' *The Holy Land* (2007) and personal experience. Map courtesy of Blustein Maps & More (www.mapotveod.com) and the Israel Ministry of Tourism.

Travelling on You can do it

By Ben Volman

My favourite way to do morning devotions in Israel is to open the Gospels and start reading the words of Yeshua (Jesus) by the Sea of Galilee. As dawn gives way to a brilliant morning you can pick out sites along the shoreline: Capernaum, the Mount of Beatitudes, and the chapel of Tabgha with its ancient mosaic of the loaves and fishes miracle. Welcome to Yeshua's neighbourhood.

I prefer to do this while lingering over morning coffee – a rare luxury on a tour when time is at a premium. Friends have told me how they were just starting to soak up the atmosphere of a place as the bus drove away to the next "must see" location.

So why not go to Israel on your own? The Hebrew language may seem intimidating, but if you've been there once, you know major routes are marked in English, Hebrew and Arabic. Many Israelis are happy to practise English with you. If you're well prepared (www.GoIsrael.ca offers many planning tools), flexible and can put up with occasional aggravation – some predictable, some unexpected – there are extraordinary blessings.

After three trips to Israel on my own, I returned with my wife and son (Sue and Jon) last year. I have extended family in Israel and speak some Hebrew (just enough to get into trouble). While we connected with family we spent most of the time on the road. Sue did most of the planning with extensive enquiries to friends and relatives about places to prioritize.

I'm also glad I took my laptop with me. Israel is wi-fi friendly (Tel Aviv-Jaffa will have free wi-fi citywide by fall 2013) and it's the best way to stay in touch with home.

Our departure was mid-December and return date early January. The country is small with lots to see. We travelled the length and breadth of the country, from Jerusalem to Eilat in the far south with a side trip to Petra, Jordan, and then via Tel Aviv to Galilee, and finally Haifa in the north on New Year's Eve.

Our verdict on the trip? Fantastic.

One memorable experience was a desert hike through the Ein Gedi nature reserve by the Dead Sea. David hid there from King Saul, and the high cliffs with mysterious caves and picturesque waterfalls bring the stories vividly to life. The trip was led by a volunteer from the local kibbutz.

Two key rentals on this side of the Atlantic definitely helped. The first was two cell phones we took on loan through a Judaica store in Toronto. The rental plan offered real savings and a lot of convenience. I also pre-arranged the car rental which guide books correctly warn you will be a major savings when done from North America.

But you don't need to rent a car. On previous trips I've travelled extensively with buses, taxis and by minibus (a big taxi with multiple passengers called a *Sherut*). Take note – your Israeli long-distance bus ticket buys a particular seat like on a plane, so you don't have to line up early to ensure your spot.

Still, there are complications. There's little or no bus service on Shabbat (Saturday). Also, the weekend is Friday and Saturday. On Sunday, with the conclusion of the Sabbath, city buses are back in service. Expect longer than normal wait times and likely a rush to get a seat, if you're lucky.

Our family went south to Eilat by bus after we were cautioned about that

Your Own in Israel?



Tourists explore the ruins at Masada (an ancient fortress in the south). Inset: Driving in Israel is easy.

PHOTO: IGTO (INSET: SUPPLIED PHOTO)

highway. Service was fast and pleasant. We left Jerusalem at 7 a.m. and by mid-afternoon Sue was fulfilling her dream of snorkelling in the coral reef of Eilat with our son who came out of the water saying, “Awesome.”

My good friend Janice Beurling is a well-seasoned international traveller (England, Europe and Australia) and has been on a few tours of Israel. Recently she went with her parents and younger sister, renting an apartment in Jerusalem, taking day trips with a rented car. She’s a fan of vacation apartment rentals, which offered great savings to four travellers.

Yes, like anywhere else, there were minor complications. The apartment stove didn’t work – that and other problems were handled promptly. The rental car, however, broke down. Twice. They went through three cars in two weeks. Fortunately, they had cell phones which were literally a lifesaver. Overall, they were pleased.

She found lots of Israeli tourist help online. “I couldn’t always find the information that I wanted. It was often in Hebrew, so I had to hunt,” she said. For example, she found a single pass with access to all national parks. But getting individual tickets for popular sites like the Rabbis’ Tunnel in Jerusalem was harder.

“It was so easy to drive from location

to location,” she said, although driving in Jerusalem had a few difficult moments.

“There were so many places you want to stop and see.” A happily spontaneous moment came when they stopped at Belvoir (a crusader castle in the north) and walked to their hearts’ content around the ramparts of Masada (an ancient fortress in the south). Local tourist signs often helped take them to their destination.

My family’s rental car experience was less complicated. However, it was the rainy season in northern Israel and the roads were very steep. If it were my own car, I’d have replaced those tires. Also, Israeli drivers are temperamental. You have to drive defensively.

My car rental company offered (as a paid option) a GPS for Israel. There

Connecting With Local Christians and Short-Term Missions

There are at least two congregations in Jerusalem where Canadian Evangelicals will feel at ease and meet other Christian visitors and local believers. The first, Christ Church, offers Saturday and Sunday services literally across the street from David's Tomb in the Old City (www.cmj-israel.org and look under "Christ Church"). The second, King of Kings, is in the centre of Jerusalem, and is led by Wayne Hilsden, a well-known Canadian pastor (www.kkcj.org).

Chosen People Ministries maintains two Israeli ministry centres where you can visit or volunteer. Doing short-term mission work is exciting and life-changing for many young people. Justin Kron, a Chicago-based staff member, leads eXperience Israel, a two-week

program for young adults (age 18-35) "who want to walk in the footsteps of Jesus and serve in them." They visit biblical sites, study God's Word on location and do volunteer service. Canadians are welcome. There's also a missions program for the same age group led by Israeli-based staff called Outreach Israel. See www.chosen-people.ca and www.chosenpeople.com for more details.

The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem also accepts volunteer applications at www.ca.icej.org. Its network reaches 80 nations, including a registered charity in Toronto, all seeking to "support Israel, educate the Church and promote justice," including humanitarian work across Israel. ■

—BV and Bill Fledderus

were some challenges using it, but we always double-checked using good maps purchased in Israel. Janice pre-ordered hers through www.carta.co.il. Filling up at the self-serve pump was an enigma the first time. One call on the speaker phone quickly brought assistance. I had no problems the second.

Like any major city, there are neigh-

borhoods tourists shouldn't venture into. At one point, after a failed attempt to see the Mount of Olives, the Beurlings made a wrong turn, and were quickly redirected by locals to turn back. "You have to be mindful," Janice said, "but I never felt afraid." On that note, if you are thinking about taking your car outside Israeli territory, be sure to discuss that with the car

company first.

What about the language barriers? You will manage. For example, many retail clerks are helpful, though local bus drivers have little English. Even there helpful passengers often intervene. Handling currency is not a problem. The NIS (new Israeli shekels) are well marked with English.

Of course, the most important reason to go is to meet people and sample the culture. Israelis are very welcoming. Every Hannukah evening, from restaurants to hotels, lighting the hannukiah (holiday lamp) was always a lively event and we were encouraged to feel part of the fun.

Then there was the enthusiastic archaeologist we met in Capernaum who insisted we join a local dig at a site near Tiberias. (Yes, we went and had an amazing experience.) It's not just learning about ancient Israel, but the Israelis of our own time who are still the family of Yeshua.

Janice echoes those sentiments. "Most Christians don't grasp the fact that it is a living, breathing, modern country," she said. "They get stuck in the biblical history and miss a real understanding that God is at work today. It didn't stop with Malachi or the last chapter of Acts." ■

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Ben Volman directs the Toronto Messianic Centre of Chosen People Ministries Canada.

Canadian Connections

Canadian churches and humanitarian agencies in the Holy Land.

By Alex Newman

Israel's largest church offers some great examples of how Canadian Evangelicals are living and ministering in the Middle East.

The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada planted a house church in a Jerusalem apartment in 1983. Today, King of Kings Assembly is a leading evangelical church with weekly English- and Hebrew-speaking services.

Wayne Hilsden, its Canadian pastor, has seen many changes over the 30 years he and his wife Ann have been in Israel. For one, there's greater Jewish openness to knowing what Christians believe about Jesus. He credits changing Christian attitudes, especially "repentance for Christian-Jewish history and



ICEJ's annual civic Jerusalem March where participants hand out Canadian flags and pins. ICEJ stands with the Jewish people by speaking out against hatred and anti-Semitism.

the way the Jews have been treated over the centuries."

That has created greater opportunities for relationship building. "More in

the scholarly community are now openly saying that Jesus was a good Jew, rabbi and teacher, that He was part and parcel of the Jewish faith, and that early dis-

Travel Details

Planning a Trip: Visit www.goisrael.ca or contact the Israel Government Tourist Office (IGTO) at info@igto.ca or 416-964-3784. Feel free to ask about accessibility for physically challenged visitors. Many sites have been made accessible in recent years.

Passports and Visas: Visitors to Israel must hold a passport valid for at least six months from their departure date. Canadians automatically receive a 30-day visa upon entry at no cost. Visitors are entitled to remain in Israel up to three months, in accordance with the conditions of their visa. Visitors intending to work in Israel must submit a request to the Ministry of the Interior for a special visa. It's recom-

mended to ask the clerk not to stamp your passport if you intend to travel to Arab countries (except Egypt and Jordan) after visiting Israel.

Temperatures: Average temperatures are around 15 degrees Celsius from November to March, in the 20s for April to June (and October), and 30 for July, August and September. Regional conditions vary considerably, especially in terms of humidity and precipitation.

Reading Up Before You Go: The link to "online booklets" at www.goisrael.ca offers PDF versions of several excellent guides, including *Biblical Sites for Christian Visitors*. A 350-page printed book, *Facts About Israel* (Israel Ministry of Foreign

Affairs, 2010) is available from the IGTO (and www.mfa.gov.il).

Some Hebrew, Just for Fun:

Hello/Goodbye: *Shalom*

Please: *Behvakasha*

Thank you: *Toda raba*

You're welcome: *Allo davaar*

Yes: *Ken*

No: *Lo*

Excuse me: *S'leeha*

Good morning: *Boker tov*

Good evening: *Erev tov*

Good night: *Laila tov*

How much does it cost? *Kama ze ole?*

Where's the bathroom? *Ayfoha-sherutim?* ■

— IGTO and Bill Fledderus

ciples of Jesus were a segment within Judaism itself," Hilsden says.

Hilsden figures in the 1980s local born-again believers numbered roughly 1,200 Jewish, 4,000 Arab and 1,000 international residents. Today the numbers have jumped to about 15,000 Jewish believers, 5,000 Arab, and 2,000 international. (These are born-again figures and don't include the wider Christian community that includes Orthodox and Catholic.)

The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada has now planted two additional congregations and also established the Israel College of the Bible.

What accounts for the increase, says Hilsden, is partly biological (children born to Christian families), and partly increased population with the late 1980s immigration of a million Russian Jews, some Christian already, others with no Christian roots at all.

Given the potential for conflict over the country's geopolitical and religious situation, most Christian groups in Israel

are very gentle in their outreach.

The approach taken by International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ), founded by Evangelicals in 1980, is best summed up by Isaiah 40:1 – "Comfort ye my people and speak tenderly to Jerusalem," explains Canadian director Donna Holbrook.

Now represented in over 70 nations, ICEJ aims to stand with the Jewish people by speaking out against hatred and anti-Semitism, communicating truth through news feeds and a monthly Christian edition of the *Jerusalem Post*, and promoting justice by offering aid to those most in need.

They also hold the biggest tourist draw in the country – their annual Feast of Tabernacles attracts thousands

of Christians from all over the world to celebrate for a week, kicked off by a night on the Dead Sea shore.

In the areas of the West Bank and Gaza that are now exclusively under Palestinian Authority administration, Christian outreach looks different.

The Christian & Missionary Alliance (C&MA) has a long history of humanitarian outreach in these regions working with Christian and Muslim Arabs. One of its newer initiatives, the

North West Bank Relief Project, is only a few years old.

"When we went in to help, [the local] people were amazed," says Roger Elbel, the C&MA's field director in Israel. "They would ask, 'Why? If you had trouble, we wouldn't care for you.'"

Others asked the openly Christian aid workers what they believed. "It was a tremendous opportunity to share the love of Christ," says Elbel.

Such sharing, while it has great potential, is difficult, since Muslim Arabs have been "tutored in their faith since birth." Communicating biblical truths about Jesus is "difficult for them to comprehend, and more difficult for them to accept," says Elbel.

But this approach may be the only hope for future peace, says Franklin Pyles, former head of C&MA Canada.

"God is moving among Arab people in what some say is an astonishing way [thanks to] this kind of opportunity to share Christ and our faith, standing in the place where these things happened and offering your hand in help." ■



PHOTO: WWW.CHOSENPEOPLE.CA

Wayne Hilsden



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

Be a Wise Visitor, Says Geoff Tunncliffe

The Canadian leader of the World Evangelical Alliance has visited Israel four times. **By Peter Fleck**

A “full-orbed” trip to the Holy Land should not only include historical places, but also the people who live there today.

That’s the advice of Geoff Tunncliffe, secretary general of the World Evangelical Alliance, an organization representing 600 million Christians. Tunncliffe, who is from the Vancouver area, is also director of global initiatives for The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. He spoke with *Faith Today* by phone from his New York office in January.

It does take more work, he says, for tour organizers to arrange “encounters with both Palestinian and Israeli Christians. But if you really want to understand what is going on today, those encounters are very important.” Doing so can “generate concern and prayer for the Holy Land, and for the community of believers there,” including finding ways to best support them.

Tunncliffe has travelled to more than a hundred countries. Yet Israel, which he has visited four times, holds special meaning for him.

“If you’re ever going to take a pilgrimage, Israel is the place to go,” he says. To look over Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives or walk the shores of Galilee brings the Bible to life, he says.

“What initially surprised me about Israel is how close things are,” he says. “Bethlehem is only [10 km] from Jerusalem.” Experiencing the geography and visiting biblical sites gives indelible “images in your mind.”

He advises prospective travellers to closely examine the tours they are considering. “Who organizes the tour? Whose eyes are you seeing through? What guides are you getting? If you have someone who can unpack biblical stories as you travel, it brings a great sense of meaning to it,” he says.

Unfortunately, Tunncliffe says, there are a few international tour operators who leave out key sites such as Jericho and Bethlehem, purportedly because they are in the Palestinian territories. Visiting them requires passing through a passport terminal, which is normally unproblematic.

Tunncliffe urges Christians not to overlook such sites. “I mean, going to Israel and not going to Bethlehem, how insane is that?”

Tourism is very important to Israel’s economy, but also to the areas under the Palestinian Authority, he points out –

and so avoidance of Christian Arab areas is detrimental to the Christian Arab population.

Whatever preconceived notions people may have about the conflicts in the Middle East, he says, if they take the time to fellowship and interact with local believers, they’ll come away realizing “It’s far more complicated than they ever understood.”

Furthermore, he adds, “That would lead to conversation and relationship. And that’s a great thing to be able to remember – not just remember the historic places, but the people you came into contact with.” ■

Peter Fleck is a writer and photographer in Red Deer, Alta. Bruce J. Clemenger, president of The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, has also visited Israel. Read his reflections on visiting Nazareth at www.theEFC.ca/ClemengerIsrael.



Churches on the Mount of Olives.
Inset: Geoff Tunncliffe.

PHOTO: NOAM CHEN / IGT

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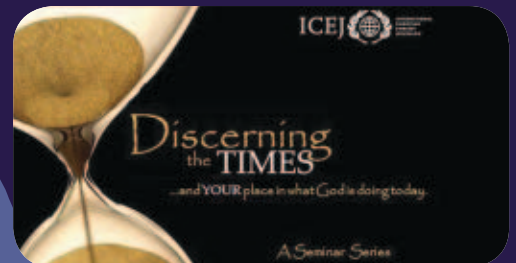
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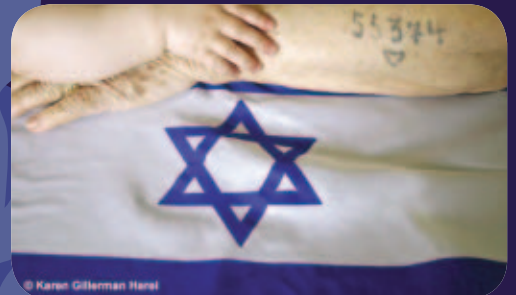
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