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Scenes from the Okanagan in late July. Clockwise from left: Flames approaching West Kelowna; water bomber in action; Emmanuel Church in danger. Photos: Marlene Beagle.

Okanagan fires bring out the best in local churches

By Jim Coggins

AS FOREST FIRES threatened a B.C. city late last month, some churches were in the line of the fire, and others were trying to help out. Some were in both categories.

Three fires broke out on the west side of Okanagan Lake on the weekend of July 18-19. They quickly became major threats, fanned by high winds and tinder-dry conditions. Soon an estimated 11,000 people had been evacuated from their homes.

The Glenrosa fire started first, on the edge of West Kelowna (formerly called Westbank), and immediately became a threat to homes and businesses. Because it was nearby, fire crews and other emergency personnel began using the parking lot of Emmanuel Church as a staging area on July 18.

However, when the fire jumped Highway 97 and began approaching the church, fire crews evacuated the area. Church staff quickly removed computers and other vital documents from the building and also left – but not before church bookkeeper Marlene Beagle snapped some impressive photos of the approaching wall of fire.

See 'Fires,' page 8

Christians disagree over 2010 Games

By Jim Coggins

HOW should Christians respond to the 2010 Olympics?

There are essentially two views, according to the Christian social justice agency Streams of Justice (SOJ).

One is to embrace "the spirit of Olympism," with its emphasis on "peace, human harmony and fair play." The other is to denounce the games as a project of the rich, designed to enhance their power and wealth while it increases homelessness and degrades the environment.

Streams of Justice offered these two alternatives in a creative presentation called 'A Tale of Two Visions: The Olympic Games and the Kingdom of God – Are They Compatible?' It took place June 29 at Grandview Calvary Baptist Church in Vancouver.

The event included a dramatic dialogue, video clips and music. One section of the presentation claimed the Olympics have displaced two million people over the last 20 years, as housing is demolished to make way for Olympic venues and Olympic pressures drive up land prices, making housing unaffordable. Another section talked of the impact on the environment of Olympic construction and the air travel required to bring athletes and spectators to the Games.

SOJ director Dave Diewert told *BCCN* any Christians who "co-operate with the Olympics" will be "standing with the powerful of our world," which is "antithetical to the posture of Jesus, who stood with the outcasts and was killed by the wealthy and powerful."

The options are not quite that simple, suggested David Wells, a Christian who has been actively involved in chaplaincy efforts at athletic games since the last Winter Olympics held in Canada, in Calgary in 1988.

Christians who get involved in the Games are not necessarily "deifying" them, endorsing them in every aspect, he said. Instead, they often take a more "pragmatic" approach: Since the Olympics are going to happen anyway, how can they make use of this opportunity for the good of God's kingdom?

See 'Olympics,' page 14

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'In my distress, I called upon the Lord.' Psalm 18:6

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Rampant busyness plays havoc with the family plans



By Jean Kim-Butcher

AS I write this, I have just finished cleaning up kids' vomit for the nth time over a period of days; my father-in-law is recovering in the hospital from major heart surgery (requiring regular visits on our part); my husband, who is trying to finish his thesis for an end of summer deadline, needs ongoing support.

To top it off, we were recently involved in a car accident – leaving us unhurt, thank God, but bereft of a vehicle (impelling us upon an arduous search for the all-but-impossible-to-find affordable eight-passenger minivan).

As they say: when it rains, it pours – even in July, in B.C.!

Often, when I get comments like, "Boy, you must be busy with six kids," I remain nonchalant. After all, isn't everyone busy, busy, busy? In this instance, admittedly, I am coming round to recognizing why others are evidently nonplussed. I am realizing, however, that it is not so much the quotidian challenge of our daily grind, nor the emotional investment required by parenting, that makes me feel so 'busy.'

It is rather the anxiety that comes from being preoccupied with what the next day will bring; the sense of fragility accompanying such security and stability as I am lucky to experience; and the way everything seems to hang by a thread, one that seems to snap the moment a 'crisis-ette' hits!

As a young single gal, living in a fast-paced, opportunity-saturated, convenience-oriented society, I found it a fairly straightforward exercise to maintain a five-year plan, to keep up a 'penned-in' social calendar, and to be regularly ticking off items on my 'self-care checklist.'

After becoming a mother, however, my priorities have been effectively turned upside-down: instead of a long-term agenda, I now have 'Plan A, B & C' for this afternoon – expecting that I may well have to come up with an impromptu 'Plan D' if, as often happens, things do not work out as I would like.

'Busyness' ultimately . . . is about the state of our souls.

In lieu of a 'little black book,' I now employ simply a mental 'penciled-in' plan of who I would like to connect with at some point – if probably only for a phone date, late at night while folding laundry. As for my checklist, its categories include 'kids' fed/hugged/cleaned' and 'husband spoken-to/back-scratched/prayed-for'; under my name, there is usually a question mark, if only because I am not always sure any more just what I need!

But 'busyness,' ultimately, is not about how much we have to *do*; it is about the state of our souls. It is anxiousness about the cares of life that the Lord reproves – not diligence in attending to them, as numerous as they may be. Isn't this why Martha was chastised and Mary praised? One can get it all right – and yet not *get it*, at all, right? We can lose key relationships – with our kids, with our spouses, with God – even as we fulfill all our duties in their respect. "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also," as Jesus said.

In fact, our busyness most hurts the relationships that we overlook, cast aside or 'outsource.' My latest read, *Global Women*, speaks of our society's 'unavailability' in regard to caring for children and the elderly – in consequence, soliciting Third World domestic labour.

Mother Teresa, who lived among the most abjectly poor in Calcutta, considered that the West suffered from its own endemic form of poverty: that of loneliness. Surely, this is a cumulative result of tending more to the cares of life than to the meaning of it.

What is the motivation behind all our busyness? Is it perhaps a desire to be noticed, a craving for something to be going on in our lives, a self-important focus on accomplishment?

Let's recall Mary, Martha and Jesus in Luke 10:41-42. In the midst of our busyness "with many things," let us not lose sight of the "better part," the "one thing needful."

So . . . when you're not too busy (!), feel free to drop me a line, at jeanfamilycolumn@gmail.com.

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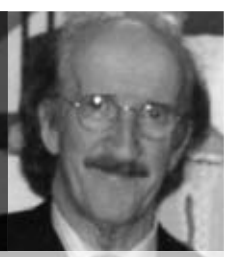
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TESTIMONY

A walking testimony to a miracle working God

On April 24, 2008, at a Christian rock concert by the band Starfield, the floor in Central Heights Church in Abbotsford collapsed, toppling a light tower and dropping several people into the basement. The most seriously injured was ***Debbie Helsloot****. A youth sponsor from Promontory Community Church in Chilliwack, she had brought a group of young people to the concert, including her daughter Melissa. A year later, on Sunday, April 26, she walked back into Central Heights to talk about her experience.*



GOD, in His infinite wisdom, has decided I don't need to remember the accident itself. What I do remember is seeing the band coming on stage and then saying, "That looks like a hole. What is that doing there?"

My next memory is of sirens and then waking up at the Abbotsford Hospital. A family friend was saying, "Everything is okay." Then I blacked out again. When I came back, there was my husband with my daughter saying, "Melissa's fine. Everything's fine." I thought, "Great. But what's going on?"

My next memory is waking up in the Intensive Care Unit at Vancouver General Hospital chewing on my intubation tube and seeing old friends. I thought, "If they're here, it must be something serious."

In God's hands

But I wasn't afraid. It is almost indescribable, the peace I felt with God. It was the most calming feeling I have ever experienced in my life. I wasn't sure what was going on, but I knew I was going to be okay and God had everything in His hands.

I was six-and-a-half weeks at Vancouver General Hospital and then 11-and-a-half weeks at G.F. Strong Rehabilitation Centre.

My first thought when I was able to put some thoughts together and get off some of the medications was: "How are they going to know I'm a Christian? How are they going to see Jesus in me?"

People say, "You must have been depressed." Not really. It was one of those God things, where His peace and joy shone through.

Doctors and social workers were taking my husband aside saying, "In our years of experience, people do not recover from injuries of your wife's nature. You need to make her understand that she will not walk again."

I said, "No, I am going to walk again."

They thought I was crazy. They would take him aside and say "She's not coping well. She needs to see the X-rays."

I said, "Look, my toe is moving. The other toe is moving."

They said, "No, it's just reflexes."

For God's glory

They didn't understand that I knew God was going to heal me, that He was going to take this and make it a powerful testimony for His glory. It was almost as if God put plugs in my ears. I didn't hear the doctors.

When you are away from your family, of course you are going to miss them. But God puts people in our path to provide friendship and comfort. There were a couple of girls in the hospital that I probably never would have been friends with outside of these circumstances. We clicked and started having fun, as odd as that sounds.

It comes back to the peace of God in your life. When you don't have anything to worry about, you don't worry.

I don't have a lot of family in the area, but the people in my church stepped in amazingly. We had purchased a house before the accident. It closed while I was in the hospital, and we had to move. So the ladies came in and packed up the house and then the men unpacked the house. They brought meals to my family.

We would all love to see a Bible verse that says, 'Life is easy.'

Prayer and love

I was blessed by my church, and by the cards and prayers from people around the world. Central Heights Church also upheld me regularly in their prayers. I got through this through the love of Christians.

I got a lot of questions such as, "Are you mad at God?"

But what makes me think I would be immune from anything in life? Of course, I'm not mad at God. It was an accident, something completely unplanned and unexpected. But God allows things to happen in our lives, to stretch and grow us, and to show His power through our lives.

I never asked, "Why me?" Why not me? We would all love to see a Bible verse that says, "Life is easy." None of us is immune from the hardships of life, but God's grace and power enable us to grow and learn as we go through them. It's amazing what we can do if we allow God to penetrate our lives.

Asking "What if" becomes a trap because it keeps us from dealing with what happened.

My biggest "what if" was: "What if the girls hadn't moved?" The five girls were sitting beside me and wanted to take pictures of the band, so I said, "Move out into the aisle." That way, they could move closer to the stage. If they had stayed there, they would have been injured. I praise God that they listened to me and moved.

What if I had moved? That's silly. What if I stopped complaining about my circumstances and just allowed God's glory to shine through in this situation?

There were some verses that were anchors for me. One was Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." The other was Isaiah 40:31: "They who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint." Lincoln Brewster sings that as a song.

'You will walk'

I was given an iPod by Starfield, and as I was sitting in the wheelchair, God kept speaking to me through this song. I kept hearing God saying, "You will walk."

Of course, the down days were there. For me, they came when my youngest was home from school sick. I was thinking, "I'm his mom, and I need to be there." The other hard time was when the kids got out of school for the summer and I felt "I have to be with my kids." But I kept hearing God telling me, "It may be tough right now, but if you keep leaning on Me, you will be okay."

It's amazing the lessons you learn when you have to rely 100 percent on God. Now I don't worry about things. I don't worry about finances. I don't stress about what's coming around the corner. I know I need to be accountable for my life and what I do. But I know God will provide. I have complete peace, knowing He is in complete control.

God is real. I am a walking testimony of that, literally. Doctors look at me and shake their heads. They cannot understand why I am walking because science has told them that with my injuries, that doesn't happen. I was rated one level below Christopher Reeves as far as my level of injuries. For me to be doing what I am today is a true miracle.

I still have a little way to go as far as recovery, and I 'm not sure what God has in store for me, but I am excited for the future.

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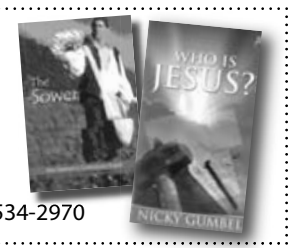

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A biblical worldview as the basis of education

By Joy D. McCullough

KNOWLEDGE is not neutral. It exists within a framework of beliefs. All teachers are influenced by their beliefs. Teachers' worldviews affect what they do in their classrooms.

A values-free zone

In the 1960s and early 1970s, much of the education taught in schools was supposed to be neutral, values-free, not based on a teacher's personal beliefs. This was even thought possible. By the early 1980s, most educators realized the absolute absurdity and impossibility of this.

All teachers teach material within their own specific frameworks of beliefs. What teachers include in their lessons is based on what they value. What teachers emphasize in a particular course is based on what they believe is important. What teachers decide not to teach is based on what they consider unimportant or even incorrect.

Unfortunately, some teachers still do not believe this to be the case. They believe that, since they do not teach from a religious foundation, then their teaching is neutral and values free. It takes only a minute or two to show them that they are deceiving themselves. These teachers may then say nonreligious values are a more credible, acceptable and relevant basis for teaching than religious values. They are really saying that only certain values belong in the classroom.

But who decides? Are all values, all foundations, equally acceptable in the classroom? If all teaching is based on some values, why have so many Christian teachers bought into the lie that they must keep their faith at home, and private?

If everything a teacher does is based on his or her foundational values, it is important to look at those foundations critically, to discuss them openly and honestly, to evaluate them according to some standard outside ourselves and to modify them where necessary. Teachers should be able to defend the foundations upon which their teaching is based.

Proverbs 23:7 reminds us that what we think is the foundation of what we become. Therefore, we need to look at our thoughts about key areas of life to determine the foundation on which we are building.

Building a worldview

Brian Walsh and Richard Middleton (*The Transforming Vision*) and Kenneth Badley (*Worldviews*) point out that worldviews are not systems of thought, but rather perceptual frameworks: ways of seeing, a filing cabinet for organizing life, a map, a compass.

As part of their training, teachers are asked to determine what they believe about many different things – about children, authority, right and wrong, discipline, punishment, a teacher's role, parental responsibilities, motivation, rewards and much more. But what is the foundation for these beliefs?

What criteria should they use to evaluate and organize the new information they are being taught? There are several options – but which option is best?

Some teachers process new data based on prior knowledge. But what if what they already know is not accurate?

Others evaluate new information in light of personal experience. But is truth different for people with different experiences?

Others assess new information in light of their feelings. But maybe what they feel about an issue one day will be different from what they feel another day.

Still others measure new information based on majority opinion, or the consensus of expert opinion. But if the majority believes something, does that make it true?

The final option is to measure new information against a specific standard. But what is the standard?



Scriptural beliefs

Matthew 7:24-27 points out that the wise person (who hears God's word, and puts it into practice) builds upon the rock and stands firm when the storms of life come. The foolish person (who hears God's word, but does not put it into practice) builds upon sand.

How do we know if we are building on rock or on sand? Does our foundation, our worldview, really line up with God's word?

What is your worldview? Take time to examine it. What do you believe about God? Who is Jesus Christ? Who or what is the Holy Spirit? What do you believe about scripture? What do you believe about people?

What do you believe about how God works in human lives? What do you believe about truth? What do you believe about teaching and learning? What do you believe about discipline?

Examining your worldview can be a life-changing experience, a wake-up call and/or a starting point from which to move forward.

One of the most fundamental visions we have is how we view people. Our view of people will affect everything we do – in life and in the classroom. Are people born good or bad? Are they passive recipients of knowledge, or are they active participants in the learning process?

Harro Van Brummelen (*Walking with God in the Classroom*) observes that, historically, there have been a number of common views teachers have had about children.

Blank slates

Some teachers believe children are blank slates onto which teachers deposit information. Memorizing facts was the central focus of this view, popular in classrooms up to the early 1960s. There is value in this view; but if God is active and purposeful, why are students so often treated as passive and aimless?

Some teachers view children as trainable objects, who can be taught good behaviour through rewards and punishments. Is this what we should be doing, or should we be leading them to have a heart change, so that they take responsibility for their own behaviour?

Good behaviour is necessary so that students will learn; but some classrooms have such elaborate reward systems for good behaviour that little attention is given to learning.

A popular view, accepted by both Christian and non-Christian teachers, is that people are simply products of their environment.

Almost every current textbook on classroom management sets forth reasons why children behave the way they do. The authors of these books are saying that children cannot be held responsible for their own behaviour. This often leads to teachers having lower expectations of students from difficult backgrounds.

What is the truth?

The apostle Peter, in 2 Peter 1:3-11, points out that God has given people all they need to live a life of godliness. That means that all people have the potential and responsibility for becoming godly.

Unfolding plants

Some teachers view children as unfolding plants who need to be watered and placed in a position where they will grow naturally. This has some merit, as we see in Psalm 1. But children are not plants; children can make decisions about learning, but plants cannot.

Some teachers see children as primary agents of social change.

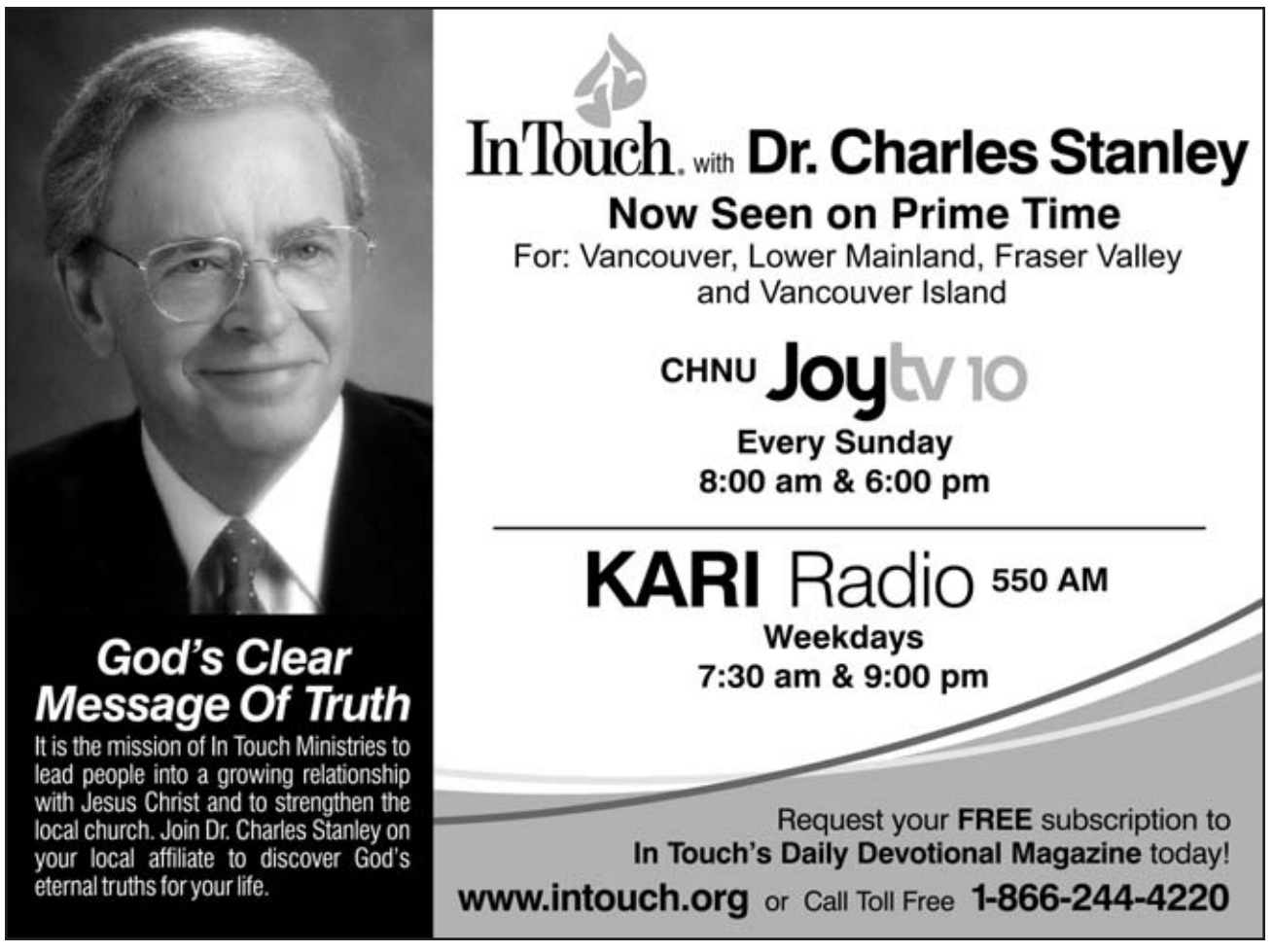
This is an extremely popular view today, and results in classrooms where children are the centre of attention – and the children determine what they want to learn and what the classroom rules should be. Underlying this view is the assumption that children are innately good and will choose to learn and do what is best for themselves – a view in direct opposition to scripture.

A similar but more recent view is that children's futures depend primarily on whether or not they have high self-esteem.

This view, held by both Christian and non-Christian teachers, was at its peak in the mid-1980s and early 1990s – but many still adhere to its tenets. These teachers focus much of their energy on developing positive self-esteem in children.

Sadly, when self-esteem is the focus, report cards point out only positive things – and the teaching of academic content, and the development of students' responsibility for their own learning, attitudes and behaviour, is often pushed into the background.

See 'Classic,' page 5





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A graffiti artist's secret message to his school

By Allen Unrau



"THIS GUY must want to get caught. You can still smell the spray paint!"

Lem Saunders, the grey-bearded janitor at Kingsview High, is standing at the side door of the school gymnasium pointing at a basketball backboard dripping with fresh graffiti.

A pack of tenth-graders pass by, their ears plugged with iPod earphones. Some of them laugh. None offers to help clean up the mess.

The mystery graffiti artist, or 'tagger,' is the talk of the school. His graffiti signature is 'ME,' in scrawly fluorescent blue bubble letters. He's already tagged the staff room door, the heating duct above the principal's office and the side of the pop machine by the girl's change rooms – all during school hours. Everybody's guessing where 'ME' will show up next.

Joel Bailey, a skinny ninth-grader with a bulging black backpack, steps to the doorway beside Lem.

"Art students must be pretty tall these days," he says with a smirk.

Lem's not in the mood for jokes this morning. "I can't keep up with my normal work, plus clean up all this graffiti every week."

Joel drops his backpack on the gym floor. Looking up, he says, "That's gotta be 10 feet high. Do you want me to hold the ladder while you do your janitor eraser job?"

"Thank you, Joel," replies Lem. "You're a good kid."

Joel hangs around the school a lot. Everybody assumes he comes from a troubled home, and has nowhere to go. He doesn't do well in school – and has no friends.

As Lem reaches the top rung with his can of solvent and a rag, the principal marches triumphantly through the door.

He barks at Lem. "So you caught the social deviant, and now you're letting him get away with it. Is that it? Your duty is to bring him to my office immediately, not let him help with the cleanup. For the last 30 years, you've been too soft. Students don't respect weakness, Lem. I'll deal with this."

Turning to Joel, the principal snarls, "Get to my office!"

Lem glares defiantly from atop the ladder. "I'm due for retirement, so I'll say what I feel. I've watched you ruin many kids in this school with your accusatory attitude. Why would a good kid like Joel do something like this? He's the only one who volunteered to help. All the other kids just walked by and laughed. Now, get back in your office, and let me do my job!"

The principal scowls at them both, but slowly retreats to his office.

Lem Saunders retires three months later. His send-off retirement party is in the gym on a Friday afternoon.

One wall displays a gigantic white sheet of paper. Mrs. Ferguson, the French teacher, takes the microphone. "For many years, Lem, you cleaned up graffiti in this school, along with other unmentionable messes. We wish to give you some 'good graffiti' to take with you into your retirement."

Students, staff and parents walk to the wall to record their memories of Lem with colourful markers.

Near the end of the party, Joel Bailey joins a group of parents at the wall. He draws a ladder and scribbles several lines. Then he quickly pulls a spray can out of his jacket, and 'ME' appears in scrawly fluorescent blue bubble letters.

The crowd gasps as the smell of paint permeates the gym.

Joel turns toward Lem. "Mr. Saunders, I know I'm kicked out for good now, but I wanted you to know it was me."

"But why, Joel?"

"I needed the world to know I exist. Other than my graffiti, you're the only one that ever made me feel that way."

Allen Unrau, from Abbotsford, writes fiction about real life.

The priceless gift of a compassionate teacher lasted decades

By Harry Schmidt

SCHOOL was something like four or five miles away. It seemed like a fairly long way to me then – but, with the help of my siblings, getting there was easy.

As we walked to school, the older ones carried the little ones on their backs, or held their hands and pulled them along when they were so tired it was difficult to go another step. As a very large family, we knew how to hold together.

The distance was only one of the difficulties we had to overcome. When I started going to school – a one-room building on the Canadian Prairies in the middle of the Great Depression – we still mostly spoke German at home, as that was the native tongue for both mother and father. So we hadn't learned the English language as well as we should have when we went to school. On top of that, I had a speech impediment, which was so dreadful that it was difficult for me to put a sentence together. It required a lot of stamina to try to cope with such a difficult situation.

Fortunately, some of the teachers had tremendous compassion for some of the young children who were a little backward, or had hearing or speech impediments. They would spend a little extra time at recess and lunchtime talking to us, drilling us with flash cards or giving us tips on how we should pronounce our words. That was a great help to me.

Years later, I was speaking at a family gathering, and I noticed an older lady sitting there watching my every move. After it was over and I stepped out from behind the podium, she approached me and said, "You are that little Harry who couldn't speak." I said yes, indeed, I was that little Harry.

Years earlier, she had been a beautiful young lady, perhaps in her early 20s, teaching in a little schoolhouse and giving extra attention to some of the children like me who needed a little more help.

Now here she was, as a grandmother, able to hear me speak. She was very happy with my performance that day. We embraced. I had a chance to talk to her about her family, and I told her about my family.

Somewhere along the way, we all have wonderful experiences. What a great experience this was for me.

Excerpted from The Incredible Dream *by Harry Schmidt, with James R. Coggins (www.harwoodltd.com).*

Classic biblical view *- from page 4*

A classic, biblical view of the human person was developed by Jack Fennema (*Nurturing Children in the Lord*).

First, children have been created by God. This means they are religious beings with an intrinsic desire to worship – and if they don't worship God, they will worship someone or something else. It also means that children are created to be dependent on the Creator. So, why do so many teachers encourage students to be self-sufficient?

Second, Fennema says children are created in God's image. This means they are rational beings who seek structure, organization and patterns – just like the God who brought order out of chaos in Genesis. This also means they were meant to live in relationship – with God and others. Are our classrooms communities of interactive, relational people? It also means children have moral awareness – a conscience – and creativity.

Third, the Bible teaches that children are sinners – a view that flies in the face of claims that children are good, and able to direct their own lives. Even though children bear the image of God, sin has distorted and marred that image.

Finally, the Bible teaches that children can become new creatures in Christ. What can we expect from children who are not yet new creations in Jesus? How can we encourage them? What can we expect from children who *are* new creatures in Christ, and how can we encourage them?

Teaching truth is the beginning – but in itself, is insufficient. Pushing students toward outward conformity, without them undergoing inner transformation, is futile. This is the challenge for Christian teachers. We want our students to move toward an inner transformation, that will then be reflected in their behaviour, attitudes and speech.

Having high expectations for students isn't being mean; having students experience consequences for their choices isn't being harsh or inflexible; and pointing out to students areas in which they need to improve isn't saying something negative.

Students are in the process of becoming something, and we have the responsibility to help them reach their God-given potential.

Joy D. McCullough has more than 30 years of experience teaching in many settings, most recently as an education professor at Trinity Western University. This article is excerpted from her 2008 book, Kingdom Living in Your Classroom.





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TWU's *que bueno* mission in Dominican Republic

By Lauren Thompson

THE FIRST TIME Dinora saw us, she was ecstatic.

"The little woman has arrived!" she cried, in excited Spanish. It was May, and the six of us were sitting with Arlene, the American missionary, at a small Dominican preschool. We were waiting to meet our host mothers.

Dinora, a single, childless woman who stands no more than 4'6", was to be the host for myself and Emily, my roommate, on our month long adventure in the Dominican Republic (DR) – and her personality was big enough to make up for an entire family. She greeted us with a kiss on the cheek and cries of "*Que bueno!*" and *"Fantastico!"*

We – six Trinity Western University (TWU) students aged 19 to 25 – had finally arrived in Los Higos, a village of about 700 located just outside of Jarabacoa, a town in the centre of the DR. Our purpose was to work with Students International, a Christian community development organization operating out of the DR, Guatemala, Fiji and Costa Rica.

"I am your mama now," Dinora explained to me and Emily as we walked up a steep, narrow hillside to her one bedroom, tin-roofed house (complete with an outhouse and a lean-to for bucket showering).

My simple Spanish was merely functional – good enough



The TWU team in Los Higos. Below: 'mother' Dinora.

to get by on a surface level. It was sometimes difficult to interpret Dinora because of the intensity of her speech, which was always matched by the earnestness of her dark, weathered face. "You can call me mama. I will take care of you. This is your home now."

It was the first of many experiences with Dominican hospitality. Families are far from nuclear in Los Higos, where a "close relative" is practically anyone with whom you share food. Because of this, we were daughters.

Living with host families was vital in our learning about missions and development. Though the trip was centred on ministry, it was also a chance for us to share our culture with the Dominicans, and for them to teach us about theirs.

My teammate Rob and I worked with Andre, the local Dominican pastor, in the mornings doing agriculture, home visits and community service projects. In the afternoon, we ran Kids' Club, teaching Bible studies, English, computers and sports to a dozen village teens. With our rudimentary Spanish, we taught everything from what happened at Christ's ascension to when to use the phrase "chill out."

The team leaders, Sarah and Alicia, served with Arlene at a women's ministry centre Arlene has been establishing. Emily and our teammate Jacob assisted in Student International's local preschool – learning the days of the week and basic colours in Spanish along with the kids.

In the evenings we'd attend church, watch telenovelas with our host families or play cards with the neighbourhood kids.

The DR is often seen by North Americans as a tropical vacation hot spot, but despite its Caribbean beaches, it is far from a developed country. Villages such as Los Higos are host to poverty and illiteracy. They lack many basic government services, decent education and proper nutrition.

There were difficult things to witness during the month: overcrowded and understaffed public schools; a 17 year old with a neurological disorder that made her unable to walk unassisted, and a family unable to afford her treatment; preschoolers with dark hair turned blonde due to poor nutrition; and a boy wrapping his shoe laces around the bottom of his shoes before tying them, so the soles wouldn't fall off.

But there were more than enough moments of hope. Once, we walked to the church's casita, a small building where they have opened an internet café (though the connection is off-and-on, to say the least). Outside sat my teenage friend Hector, reading a Spanish encyclopaedia for fun.

Nearly every day, I saw Dinora feed both young and elderly neighbours when there was no food at their own homes.

One day, we sat in a church service where men and women discussed the reason for baptism, using verses from Scriptures they had studied and applied on their own!

The Pentecostal movement is prevalent in the DR, but in Los Higos, revival isn't about huge crowds or massive conversions. It is much more subtle, working its way slowly through key layers of society. It's in teenagers being nurtured at pivotal points in their lives. It's in a safe place provided for women to learn both the gospel and useful life skills. It's in a preschool making sure no child misses out on an education.

Our month in the Dominican Republic was a cross-cultural experience of intense learning, service, humility and exhilaration. In the words of Dinora: "*Que bueno!*"



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'Fires,' from page 1

Church services were cancelled for July 19. When senior pastor Derrick Hamre was interviewed on radio that Sunday morning, he encouraged church members to gather together, to pray, to volunteer and to help the community.

With calmer winds and aggressive firefighting on July 19 and 20, the church and all but three homes were saved from the flames, although some others suffered damage.

The Rose Valley Fire was proving somewhat harder to fight due to the difficult terrain, but was a little farther away and not considered an immediate threat to houses. What became the largest fire, on Turtle Mountain, was even farther away.

Meanwhile, Emmanuel Church staff worked hard to keep in touch with the congregation and connect evacuated church members with families who could offer billeting. Hamre and his wife Sara-Lee had five people staying with them, even though their house was also on evacuation alert – meaning they could be told to evacuate at a moment's notice.

Several other churches were also closed on the Sunday, including some not in the official evacuation area. Redeemer Lutheran Church decided not to hold its regular Sunday service for a variety of reasons: about half the congregation had been evacuated from their homes; some roads were closed, and people were being asked to avoid travelling on others to keep them clear for emergency vehicles. Smoke was also an issue.

Some members of the church offered their homes for billeting. With the service cancelled, extra work was required to pull church members together to prepare for a vacation Bible school, scheduled for the week of July 27–31.

On its church sign, the church posted these words: "Lord protect, save, heal, comfort in Jesus' name." Pastor Jonathan Asmus said it was both a prayer to God, and a witness to the community.

Churches not affected by the fires offered help in large and small ways. Members of St. George's Anglican Church made and took sandwiches to an emergency registration centre every day, from the first day the fires began.

The Salvation Army provided more than 2,000 meals to displaced residents, firefighters and other emergency staff and volunteers in the first weekend. They had additional service vehicles and volunteers on call, in case the fires continued to spread.

Members of many churches offered to billet evacuees in their homes, and the offers exceeded the need. Many evacuees had gone to stay with friends or family. Others just jumped into their RVs and drove them down to the WalMart parking lot or various campgrounds.

'Lord protect, save, heal, comfort in Jesus' name.'

Circle Square Ranch, a Christian camp about an hour north in Armstrong, had some vacancies for the week of July 19–25, so director Dwayne Boyd phoned churches and the evacuation centre in the affected area, offering a free week of camp to any evacuated children.

The fires did not affect the larger city of Kelowna on the east side of Okanagan Lake; but the fires stirred memories of 2003, when similar fires there destroyed hundreds of homes and drove thousands of people into evacuation centres.

Kelowna Christian Centre began collecting and delivering bedding to the main evacuation centre in West Kelowna on the evening of July 18 – and offered other help which, at press time, had not been needed.

Trinity Baptist Church in Kelowna provided emergency lodging to evacuees, and hosted a public meeting for people who had lost their homes in 2003.

Trinity is still listed as a possible emergency lodging or reception centre with Emergency Social Services (ESS), but Kelowna is in a different disaster response area than West Kelowna, and designated centres there will be used only if the centres in West Kelowna are themselves evacuated or become overcrowded. Trinity has offered ESS a variety of help, including prayer. ESS responded by asking for prayer.

Prayers have been answered. By Tuesday, July 21, the Glenrosa fire was 60 percent contained; and 6,000 of the 11,000 evacuees were allowed back home, while still being kept on alert for another evacuation. Emmanuel Church was reopened.

This does not mean churches are relaxing their efforts. One thing they have learned from previous fires is that "it's not done till it's done," said Candace Giesbrecht, pastor of compassion and mission ministries at Trinity Baptist.

One big wind going the wrong way, or a thunderstorm with lightning strikes, could quickly reignite the recent fires or start new ones.

Even when the fires are over, they leave a lot of devastation and trauma behind them.

"We know we still have a lot of work and opportunity ahead of us," Giesbrecht said.

She encouraged churches in other communities to look at their resources and talk to city officials about what they have to offer their communities – because disasters can strike without warning.

Giesbrecht concluded by saying it was a privilege to "be Jesus" and "serve the community in tangible ways."



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Secular Folk Fest had its sacred moments

By Rachael Cummings



Gospel icon Mavis Staples at the Vancouver Folk Music Festival. Photo: Lance Cummings

AT the gates of the 32nd annual Vancouver Folk Music Festival at Jericho Beach Park, my husband Lance and I stood equipped with several necessities – our weekend passes, a pair of ear-mufflers and a back-pack full of diapers.

In previous years, we had only experienced the event from outside the fence, straining for a glimpse of the performers onstage.

Now, we were prepared to enjoy an unhampered view, along with the thousands of Festival attendees and, even more notably, with our six month old daughter, Sienna.

We were curious to see not only if the Festival would live up to our own high expectations, but if this event would be suitable for a Christian family with young children.

Arriving shortly before the second act, we were surprised – in a way that flagged us as novice Festival attendees, I suppose – by the number of blankets already spread out like a colourful patchwork quilt, staking claim to any visible grass within the near vicinity of the main stage.

Settling into a spot towards the back of the field, we noted with relief that we were not the only ones who had ventured to bring kids and their plethora of gear to the Festival.

As I looked around, I saw babies and strollers, pre-schoolers playing in their red wagon, elementary-aged girls hula-hooping, and a little boy toddling amidst the crowd, wearing nothing but a cowboy hat.

Far from being bothered, the crowd seemed remarkably receptive to these little people, even once the music had started.

The most anticipated act of Friday evening was the full-bearded folk star, Iron and Wine; it did not surprise us when an exodus of people occurred after his performance. However, we were glad that we chose to stay, as the next band, Arrested Development, provided what was perhaps the most 'fun' entertainment of the entire weekend.

Narrowly sneaking under the wide umbrella of the folk music genre, the band performed high energy hip-hop numbers, with positive, socially conscious lyrics. Squeezing into the front section, we joined the crowd of dancers and head-nodders.

By this time, our previously sleeping daughter had made it known to us that she would not be left out of the party, so wearing a pair of ear-mufflers over her little ears, she joined us. Sienna was not the only under-aged dancer still at the Festival – just beside us were three generations of the same family, grooving to the same music. It was a welcome sight.

See 'Folk,' page 28

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Fat City brings the swing to Langley

By Linette Schut

THE MUSIC from a line-up of local jazz bands inspired spontaneous dancing throughout the day, as Douglas Park was transformed from grassy fields to the site of Langley's Fifth Annual Jazz Festival in June.

The small dance floor set up in front of the main stage was filled with young and old over the course of the festival – including the high-stepping organizers of the event, Omer Mahmood and Shannon Braithwaite.

These Trinity Western University alumni have been highly involved in the community's swing and jazz scene for almost a decade now. It started eight years ago – when Mahmood was finishing up his business degree and needed one more co-op credit.

Rather than find a typical placement, he started his own business: a swing club called Fat City Swing.



Fat City's Shannon Braithwaite and Omer Mahmood

He loved swing music, and was tired of driving into the city to find venues; so he decided to bring the swing to Langley, enlisting Braithwaite to help.

All these years later, Fat City Swing continues to be a thriving club, meeting every Friday night at the West Langley Hall in Walnut Grove.

Two Fridays each month feature live music, providing a platform for local musicians. Over the years, Mahmood and Braithwaite have invested countless hours to allow this venue to continue.

"It's an extension of our passions that we want to share with the community," Mahmood told *BCCN*.

While they admit there are no openly Christian aspects to what they do, Mahmood and Braithwaite both insist on the importance of the sense of community that is fostered through their efforts.

"We give people opportunities to come out, dance and socialize," Mahmood said. "We thrive on seeing relationships being formed."

Braithwaite agreed, saying that people have found "a real sense of belonging."

She added: "We don't want [the club] to be overtly Christian, because we don't want to exclude people."

As Fat City grew, Mahmood and Braithwaite also felt drawn to help get the annual jazz festival off the ground.

They are now the sole organizers of the free event, as they continue to believe in its importance.

"By having a free event, anyone can be exposed to jazz," Mahmood said.

Another venture the two have spearheaded is 'Swingin' in the Park,' which takes the place of weekly gatherings at Fat City Swing in the months of July and August.

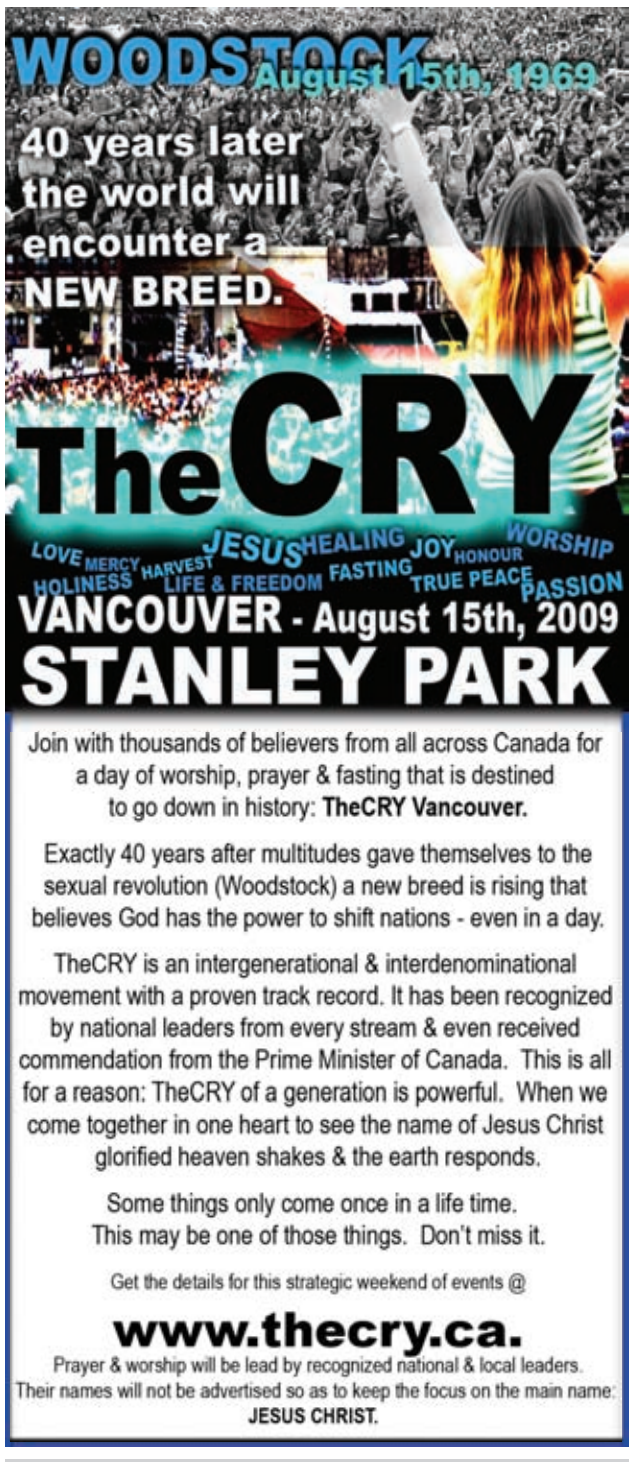
They rent a dance floor and set it up in Douglas Park every Friday night, inviting the community to come and enjoy the free entertainment.

Mahmood and Braithwaite also have contracts at local elementary schools, to teach swing dancing in physical education classes.

They do all of this purely because they enjoy it, as Mahmood has a 'day job' as a financial consultant and recruiter – while Braithwaite is a professional actor, producer and writer.

"We do it because it's a style of music that we love," Braithwaite said. "Really, we're both artists at heart."









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REGIONAL ROUNDUP

Unshakeable faith

The Langley Times published a July 16 front page profile of Gary Stevenson, the Campus for Christ worker who was badly injured November 8, when a bomb wrapped as a present was left on his doorstep. The article focused on the faith of Stevenson and his wife Lynda. They spoke of the peace God gave them; their gratitude that Gary survived, and no one else was injured; their conviction that God will use the evil incident for good; and their forgiveness of the perpetrator. It is still not known who planted the bomb, or why.

A monk's miracle?

The Catholic Church is investigating a healing in Vancouver, after Peter Andersen inexplicably recovered from flesh-eating disease in July 2008 when he was in a coma and expected to die. Andersen began to recover after his priest, John Horgan, visited him and placed a relic of a 19th century monk, Blessed Marmion, on his head, heart and diseased leg. Against the odds, Andersen has almost fully recovered, to the point of being able to walk and drive. If the church declares Andersen's recovery a miracle through Marmion's intercession, the monk will be canonized.

Fundraiser for fugitive

Almost 100 people gathered for an indoor barbecue at First Lutheran Church in Vancouver July 17. The event was a fundraiser for Mikhail Lennikov and his family, to help with living expenses and mounting legal costs. Lennikov, a former KGB agent who is under threat of deportation from Canada, is being kept in sanctuary by the church. Peter Julian, MP for Burnaby-New Westminster, was in attendance.

A good Cry

The Cry (www.thecry.ca), an interdenominational prayer movement of young Canadian Christians, is hosting a major prayer event in Vancouver August 15. Some 5,000 people are expected to gather at Lumberman's Arch in Stanley Park from 9 am to 7 pm. Worship will be led by Heather Clark, Sandy and Russ Rosen and Tracy Rahn. Prime Minister Stephen Harper has sent a 'letter of blessing' to be read at the event. The crowd will be invited to move into the city for a prayer walk after the gathering. A pre-event launch will be held 7 pm August 14, at Glad Tidings church; an arts outreach and a closing service will take place August 15.

The bus stops here

A July 10 unanimous Supreme Court of Canada ruling against bans on political advertising is good news for Bus Stop Bible Studies, the ministry says. Bus Stop Bible Studies, which seeks "to see Bible studies sponsored and placed inside every bus, streetcar and subway car in Canada," has until now been denied approval to post its short studies in Mississauga, Ont., and throughout B.C. The July 10 ruling concerned BC Transit bans on certain political ads.



Pictured are some happy campers at the 2008 barbecue hosted by Union Gospel Mission (UGM). This year's event is 10 am – 4 pm August 8, at Crab Park in Vancouver. UGM expects to serve food to 5,000 people. The event also includes live music, and a kids' carnival area with a bouncy house, face painting, water balloons and cotton candy.

Teacher charged

Martin Careen, 49, a popular teacher at St. John Brebeuf, a Roman Catholic secondary school in Abbotsford, has been charged with one count of inviting a young person to sexual touching and one count of communicating via computer to lure a child. The charges relate to email and cellphone communications with a female student reported to police in April. Careen has been placed on paid administrative leave by the school and is scheduled to appear in court August 6.

Mennonites worth studying

On June 24, the University of the Fraser Valley signed an agreement with the Mennonite Faith and Learning Society to establish a Centre for Mennonite Studies at the university. The centre would encourage research and study of Mennonite beliefs, traditions and contributions. Mennonites originated as a persecuted Christian sect in Europe in the 1500s. A quarter of the population of Abbotsford are now considered religious and/or cultural Mennonites.

Take the Night Shift

Night Shift, a front line street ministry helping the homeless in the Whalley area of Surrey, is asking for worship musicians to come out any night of the week to help with its evening services. Worship is done outdoors under a big tent, where food is served and then a message is given. There is a sound system, but musicians are asked to bring their own instruments. Contact: nightshiftministries.org

Servants fight slavery

Former Christian Heritage Party leader Ron Gray has a new passion. "Human trafficking and sexual slavery are going on today, right here in Canada," he writes. "Imagine what you would do if your daughter were held captive and forcibly raped, day after day." Gray is urging concerned individuals to support Servants Anonymous Society, a Surrey ministry which provides shelter, safety and education for victims of trafficking. Contact: 604-590-2304 (ext 229), or sasurrey.ca

Chaplains needed

Retired pastor Howard Hayden of Port Coquitlam wants churches to take up the slack for health care cutbacks that affect seniors' care home chaplains. He envisions various denominations establishing a foundation to offset the cutbacks. "Spiritual life in seniors' homes is as needed as medical attention," he said. He invites anyone interested in the project to contact him at 604-942-2270.

MusicFest goes sacred

Lovers of faith-based classical music will appreciate several offerings at Christ Church Cathedral, as part of this year's MusicFest Vancouver. Felix Mendelssohn's *Te Deum* will be performed August 4; Ralph Vaughan Williams's *Mass in G Minor* and J.S. Bach's *Jesu Meine Freude* will be sung August 7; and Arvo Part's *Kanon of Repentance* is scheduled August 10. For more details, go to: musicfestvancouver.ca

Keats corrections

The article 'Keats Camps back from brink of disaster' in the July *BCCN* contained inaccuracies, according to a spokesperson for the camp. Rob Ogilvie said inadequate information had been given to writer Jim Coggins. The article stated there were only two dozen usable beds left available in the camp's newest facility. In fact, the Pilot House contains 60 camper beds, and all 60 beds were usable. The article also said Keats was "facing the possibility of closing." Ogilvie stated that, even though the challenges were great, "closing has never been a serious option."

The envelope please . . .

BC Christian News won five awards in the 2009 Canadian Church Press (CCP) competition – including first place for John Cody's music columns. *BCCN* also won seven Fellowship of Christian Newspapers awards, tied for the most wins in a competition that includes Christian newspapers from across North America. The paper received an Award of Merit in the overall excellence category; and a first place award for Peter Chattaway's movie review columns. *Options*, Christian Info Society's youth magazine, won two CCP awards.

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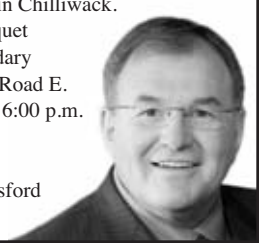

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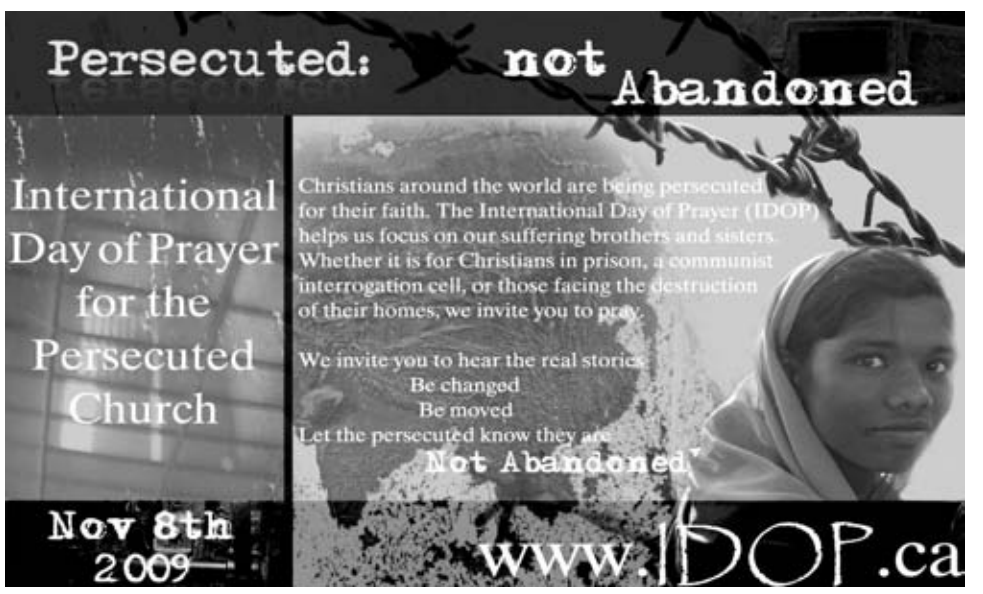

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Is fanatical religion the root cause of wars?

By Steve Weatherbe

IT KEEPS coming up: the contention that more people have been killed over religion than over any other matter.

A friend of mine advanced it the other day. I've encountered it recently on an episode of *CSI*; on a rationalist webpage called the Libertarian Defender; and in the book *America* by TV comedy host Jon Stewart.

The Stewartian variant is the most specific: most wars, he writes, are started in the name of Jesus Christ, adding,"It's a fact" - the only claim in his book so amplified.

Discrediting Christianity

Stewart is echoing that eminent historian, George Carlin – who reportedly made this claim in all seriousness in a televised show from Carnegie Hall in 1977. Now it is repeated as axiomatic. But long before Carlin's shtick, the propagandists of the Age of the Enlightenment started churning out the same message to discredit Christianity.

According to Wikipedia, the Thirty Years War between German Catholics and Protestants is the deadliest religious war in history, and it comes no higher than 10th in deaths, with World War II leading, followed by some Chinese conflicts and Mongol conquests, World War I, the Russian Civil War, the Second Congo War and the Napoleonic Wars.

Put all the religious wars in history together, and you get under half the death toll of WWII. Confronted by this, advocates of the Carlin fantasy would likely say: "It's not the numbers, it's the principle. Religions inherently lead to intolerance, which leads to war. Religious belief is inherently absolutist – so it leads inevitably to burning at the stake."

But many of the early Christians, for example, were willing to die for their faith, but not to kill for it.

True, institutional Christianity came to espouse other ideas: that wars could be justified if fought in national self-defence, or to support an ally, or to stop an unjust war, or to redress a wrong perpetrated by another country. WWII and the notorious Crusades were fought for some of these reasons.

The Crusades were largely initiated to defend the Byzantine Empire from Muslim attacks. Admittedly, in their execution, the Holy Land Crusades were sometimes immoral. Some later crusades in Europe were also waged partly to stamp out unwelcome beliefs, and also because monarchs used religious differences to increase their secular power.

Most Christian denominations today, however, would condemn the use of force to spread belief. Doesn't this prove religion does not inherently lead to intolerance and war?

The early Christian martyrs arguably had a more extreme faith than the crusaders, because they were so confident Christianity would prevail they did not need to fight in its defence. So, religion or depth of conviction, per se, do not lead to intolerance and war.

Fighting for values

Most people are willing to fight for strongly held values such as the family, the nation, democracy and equality.

The belief underpinning communism was equality. Should we then condemn equality as a value because communists were willing to starve multiplied millions for this noble goal?

Should we condemn patriotism? The Nazis were, after all, motivated by patriotism. But so was Stauffenberg, the officer who attempted to assassinate Hitler. Nazi patriots believed Germans should rule the world. Stauffenberg believed Germany had a God-given duty to protect Europe. Both were willing to die and kill for their vision of Germany. Should we then outlaw patriotism along with religion?

The Allies went into WWII believing freedom and democracy were worth fighting for. Perhaps we should outlaw those values, along with patriotism, egalitarianism and religion. Is it worse to fight for your beliefs than for the usual venal reasons for war – power, money, revenge or territory?

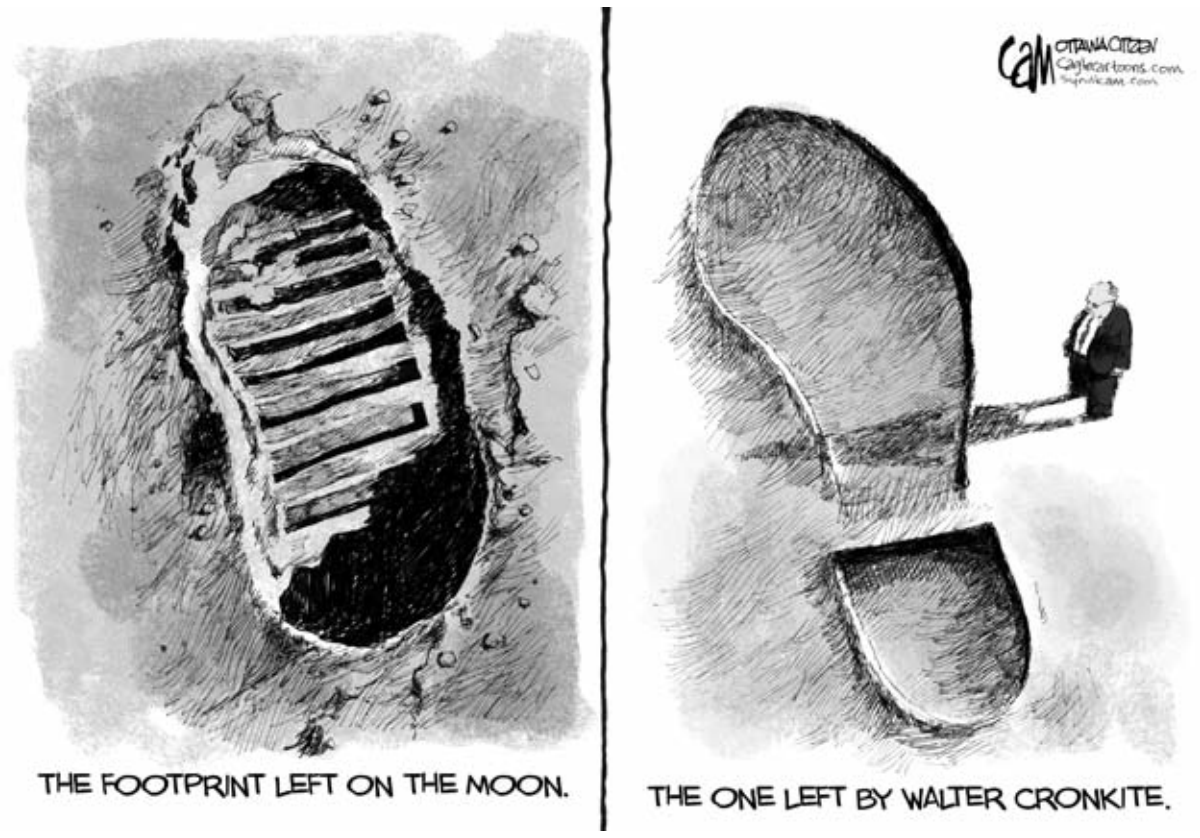
Predilection for violence

The root cause of war is the human predilection for violence. We resort to it as individuals because we cannot control our anger, and because we assign very little value to other people. This will to violence is a lamentably common human characteristic, and one not especially related to religion or any intellectual position. In fact, many religions – such as Christianity – preach against violence.

Of course, religions preach against other things too, like certain sexual behaviours. This is the real reason, I suspect, that people like Carlin and Stewart lash out at religions with baseless attacks, and why many others are so eager to agree.

War is a very distant reality for most of us. But none of us wants to listen when our personal behaviour is challenged. So we shoot the messenger, with all available ammunition.

Steve Weatherbe is a Victoria journalist.



Welcoming the wealthy and powerful to divest

By Aiden Enns

WE ALL KNOW Jesus loves the poor. What about the rich?

As long as I am materially and culturally rich, I will keep reflecting on how problematic it is. I trust this is an avenue of liberation. It's also very earnest, and maybe that's what makes me a good Mennonite!

My latest insight is that Jesus loves rich people like me. This insight stems from a conversation I had over lunch with a friend. As we each ordered our cheeseburgers and fries – I asked that mine have egg instead of meat, on account of being a vegetarian – I saw that he had a book sitting face-down at his elbow.

"So, what book are you reading?" I asked. He's always reading books, which is what I like about him.

"Oh, I'm back to reading Henri Nouwen," he said, and flipped over the cover of his book, *The Return of the Prodigal Son*. Then he added something like, "I need to read more Jesus-loves-me stuff. I can only handle so much of the God-is-mad-at-you-and-your-lifestyle stuff."

As we chatted, I discovered I have the opposite feeling. As I read the story of Jesus, I see him frequently reaching out to those in power, welcoming them to the abundance of life at the margins of society. Indeed, I feel Jesus loves me and has compassion upon me and my rich friends.

Jesus welcomes the tax collectors.

Three examples come to mind:

A Roman centurion, who commands 100 soldiers, hears about the healer who moves among the peasants, and sends Jewish elders to ask Jesus to heal his ailing slave (Luke 7). Jesus heals the slave and praises the centurion for his humility, generosity and faith. See? Here's a case where the powerful one comes to Jesus for mercy and is not disappointed.

Levi is sitting at a tax booth when Jesus invites Levi to follow him. That night, they "recline" together with many other tax collectors and "sinners" (Mark 2). In this story, I identify more with the tax collectors, who benefited from socially legitimate fraud, than with the crowds of exploited peasants outside. Jesus welcomes the tax collectors.

Finally, Zacchaeus, another tax collector, wants to see this Jesus who draws so many crowds of poor and hungry people. Again, Jesus reaches out to this man, who is relatively rich, and invites himself over for dinner.

They eat together – a social and religious taboo – and the proper response happens: Zacchaeus adopts the prophetic vision of the jubilee, redistributes his wealth and redresses those whom he has defrauded (Luke 19).

I find what Zacchaeus did rather daunting. I want to know what happened in his encounter with Jesus that enabled him to let go of his wealth. In Jesus, did he find mercy and love? I suspect he did. Did he discover an alternative, prophetic vision of common humanity, social justice and all-around beauty? Likely, at least in my mind.

In the story of Jesus, as he mingles with those who are medium-rich, I discover a welcoming love and alternative vision. This love and new way of seeing cuts through the prevailing consumer-capitalist perspective and opens up new beauty in voluntary poverty and solidarity with the masses.

I trust this is an avenue of liberation.

Aiden Enns is publisher of Geez *magazine and is a member of Hope Mennonite Church in Winnipeg. He can be reached at aiden@geezmagazine.org.*

'Olympics,' from page 1

Wells agreed there is a place for a prophetic voice; but he argued that another biblical model is also valid, namely the Jeremiah 29:7 concept of "seeking the good of the city."

Wells agreed that Olympic events have often displaced the poor and brought with them an increase in human trafficking, particularly for prostitution, though he was cautious about the validity of all of SOJ's statistics.

However, he is convinced that Christians also need to be a "redemptive influence" and that they will be more effective in dealing with housing, trafficking and environmental sustainability if they are "at the table."

Wells is also vice-chair of More Than Gold (MTG), a broad-based coalition of churches and ministries designed to coordinate the Christian response to the Olympic Games. MTG is addressing creation care, homelessness and trafficking.

While Wells denied the charge that supporters "idolize" the games, Karen Reed, CEO of MTG, suggested it would also be wrong to "demonize" the games. She said she has encountered people in the Olympic organizing committee who are genuinely concerned about social issues. She noted that she was able to bring two senior VANOC leaders together with a ministry leader in Vancouver's downtown east side.

The goal of MTG, said Reed, is to be neither in alliance with the Olympics nor antagonistic to them – but to motivate the Christian community "to collaborate for the common good."

Diewert suggested that MTG should "simply fold its operation, and cut all association with the games."

However, Reed welcomed the SOJ presentation because it offered a Christian critique of culture that is often sorely lacking in the church, though she said she wished that the presentation, attended by about 300 people who mostly already agreed with SOJ's position, could have attracted Christian groups with other perspectives as well.

Christians need to be "engaged in culture," said Reed, since this is the model used by the early church when it used public spaces to engage with its culture. The biblical model MTG has chosen to follow is "radical hospitality."

This is not the superficial kind of entertaining prescribed by people like Martha Stewart, said Reed, but a much deeper hospitality that includes the poor and marginalized. It is the kind of hospitality offered when residents of Gander, Newfoundland, brought over 6600 stranded airline passengers into their homes for several days following 9/11.

Reed cited the MTG effort at the recent Canada Day parade, which included a Christian band on a truck, dancers and people giving out MTG T-shirts and cards explaining how to say hello in ten languages. The Christian dancers were unexpectedly joined by hundreds of people from the crowd, and thousands of people joined in the singing.

"What would happen if there were a flood of that," Reed asked, "a mobilization of the Christian community finding radical ways to offer hospitality to strangers?"

– additional reporting by David F. Dawes

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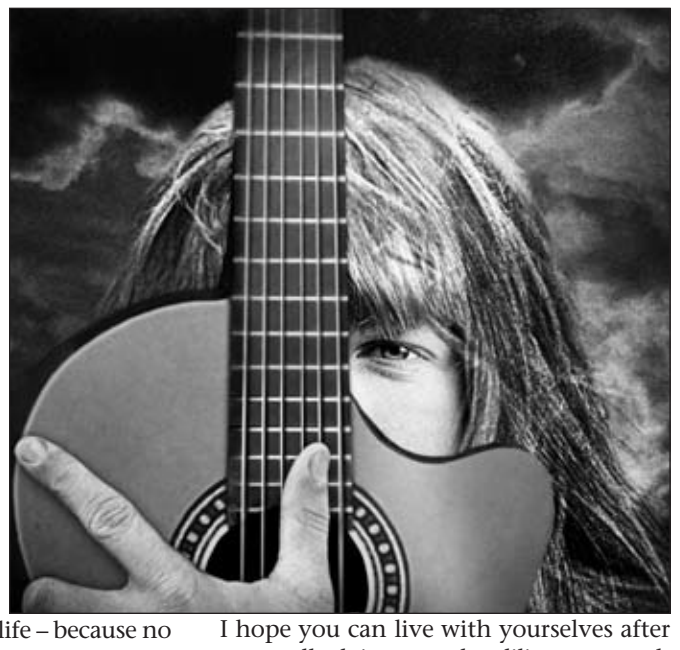
READERS' FORUM

Passions flare over Norman film

The online version of 'Angel *tells tragic tale of Larry Norman' (July), John Cody's interview with* **Fallen Angel** *director David Di Sabatino, drew an extraordinarily polarized response. Following is a cross-section of opinions.*



Larry had an absolutely enormous burden of expectation on his shoulders. In fact, he really was in a similar situation to Presley, Lennon or Michael Jackson. Everywhere you go, you meet a lot of people who are obsessive fans of his.

For that reason, I've always found it easy to forgive his behaviour. He couldn't have led a normal life – because no matter where he went, there were people wanting a part of him. That kind of adulation is difficult for anyone to cope with.

Add to that the slings and arrows that he received from the Christian establishment. It's easy to forget just how conservative the church was back in the 60s and 70s, and how utterly outrageous Larry would have seemed.

And then, there were his health issues.

None of the above excuses whatever lying and cheating might have taken place; but it might help explain it, in part.

Bottom line: I can still enjoy his music. What Di Sabatino said about Jacob is true. The Bible is absolutely full of flawed characters God used. I don't let the whole Bathsheba thing put me off David's Psalms, either.

DC Cardwell

The primary role of 'Christian journalism' – if there is such a thing – is to bring wholeness, healing, and restoration.

These were never the goals of Di Sabatino; and it is clear that they are not the goals of CanadianChristianity.com, either.

TB Gilman

I think the truth is the best thing for everyone. I don't know why people would criticize your article. That's weird to me.

It was super insightful – but then again, I'm not threatened by imperfection in the church.

Deb

Those enriched by Norman's work now confront reports of his private life – the imperfect, who dared take a stand for the Perfect.

Whether *Fallen Angel* handles the less admirable aspects of his life in as flattering a manner as fans would like, Cody presents a balanced report on the fallible artist placing himself on the line to make his statement.

The lesson is that, whenever an enterprise is built around a testimony for Christ, the spiritual battle intensifies. There's no fallibility allowed. Who among us would welcome the pressure of keeping such a standard in public? At some point, keeping up appearances is inevitable.

Norman's work was a pivotal contribution to faith, expressed purely in visceral pop culture. It will stand – despite, or perhaps alongside, the story presented by *Fallen Angel*.

Al Harlow

I hope you can live with yourselves after not actually doing your due diligence regarding this article. I worked and lived with Larry for a year in LA, and no one from the film has interviewed me. I saw and heard many things first hand – but none as outrageous as what has been written about.

There are many who had the same positive experience with Larry as I did.

This is utterly disgraceful. It is tragic!

Brander 'Standing Bear' McDonald

Whether or not it was inaccurate, the overriding impression I get from the article is that this guy Norman was a human being – who found out that accepting Jesus didn't change him the way the church tells you it does, and yet didn't want to give up hope (nor the image people had of him). Sounds like me.

I don't have much tolerance for contemporary Christian music; but I'd probably like to hear some of his songs.

Cody helps clarify one of my greatest problems with the church: that everyone tries to cover the truth about themselves. We'd be a much more authentic people if we didn't feel the need to project an image of love and fulfillment – that most don't have – in order to conform to everyone else in the church, who are trying to project the same thing.

JP

It is helpful for the Christian community to recognize and talk about the fact that we are all fallen, and continue to struggle. I had the opportunity to meet Larry Norman a couple of times, and I had heard rumours about his 'complications.' Still, he was a hero to me – and his music an inspiration.

I think Larry was a prophet. And if you are a student of the Bible, you will know God's prophets were always complicated human beings – who continued to sin, had ego problems, and who much of the world would assume were mentally unbalanced.

The fact was that Larry Norman had issues – and *Fallen Angel* addresses this. But that's not a reason to dismiss Norman, his music – or honest reflections on the person he was.

On the contrary: his music is even more meaningful, knowing that it came from someone who struggled with his demons – just like the rest of us.

Murray Stiller

Sanctuary recipient must apologize

Re your July story, 'Former KGB agent relies on God in sanctuary': some of us have our doubts about this man, despite the article's talk of forgiveness for his past.

I don't recall hearing Lennikov apologize or admit any guilt about abusing our laws and goodwill. There must be an admission of guilt before there can be forgiveness.

It has been suggested throughout this messy business that the government is guilty of separating the family in question – when, in fact, his wife and son are free to go with him.

Lennikov and his family have played the system like a fiddle. Proof of this is that, when he was given an extension in order to be able to attend his son's graduation, he very ungraciously treated us like suckers by requesting 'sanctuary' at a local church.

Let him remove himself to someplace neutral, and apply for citizenship from without – just like everyone else must. He might be surprised at the generosity of Canadians to those who play by the rules.

Larry Bennett, Burnaby

True Anglicans oppose apostasy

Re: 'B.C. Anglicans sue for divorce' (July):

George Cadman of the Diocese of New Westminster skates on rather thin ice, and seems willing to divert from the facts of the matter. It was the actions of the diocese that precipitated the court action.

The media might portray this as a situation of Anglicans vs. Anglicans, or liberals vs. conservatives. The truth, however, is that this case is one of orthodoxy versus apostasy.

To be a true Anglican, one must be a believer in the authority of scripture. Their stance on key doctrines places the apostate bishops and clergy within the Anglican Church of Canada *outside* of Anglicanism – despite any claim to the contrary.

Clearly, true Anglicans would rebel in mass if their priests would tell the truth of the matter. At their ordination, they made specific promises before God – and that includes upholding and standing for the faith.

Frank C. Wirrell, Abbotsford

Christians divided over evolution

Brendan Ritchie ('Ross theory won't impact science,' Readers Forum, July) declares: "Our evolutionary history is as obvious as our wisdom teeth, our tailbone and our appendix."

He is trotting out the old, tired 'vestigial organs' argument in favour of Darwinian evolution. Darwin wrote of organs "bearing the plain stamp of inutility," or uselessness.

Unfortunately, Ritchie's fellow evolutionists do not unanimously agree that vestigial organs offer worthwhile support for evolution. "Our evolutionary history" is not quite as obvious to everyone else as it is to him.

In 1981, zoologist S. R. Scadding wrote a classic article titled 'Do 'vestigial organs' provide evidence for evolution?'

Scadding concluded that "the entire argument that vestigial organs provide evidence for evolution is invalid" on both practical and theoretical grounds. He showed that a variety of purportedly vestigial structures do have functions – including the appendix and the coccyx ('tailbone'). Wisdom teeth, of course, are obviously functional for eating.

A 2007 article in the *Journal of Theoretical Biology* noted the appendix is "often considered to be a vestige of evolutionary development, despite evidence to the contrary, based on comparative primate anatomy."

Richard Peachey, Abbotsford

I commend Hugh Ross for his attempt to recognize that any attempt to tear down evolutionary theory by suggesting there are holes or gaps in it is doomed to fail. It is doomed to fail because, ideally, science claims knowledge provisionally, not as fixed dogma.

But I must take issue with Ross' view of the creation/evolution debate. The problem arises when he proposes the "development of comprehensive creation 'models.'" This can never happen.

In the entire history of creationism, no model has been proposed that was a coherent scientific theory, with peer review in serious scientific journals.

Please don't suggest this is some massive conspiracy of 'Science,' or you will be sharing a room with flat earthers and 9/11 conspiracy theorists.

It is theology's job to look for evidence of purpose and meaning in the universe. To reject evolution because it doesn't speak about ultimate causes is to reject the notion of science altogether.

Any attempt to inject the supernatural or spiritual into science is just not scientific. The cold hard facts are that 'creation science' and 'intelligent design' are not real science.

I sympathize with the motivations behind those movements, however. Evolution, at first glance, does seem to threaten our notions of God's providence and his mercy.

Random mutation and natural selection seem to place God at a distance, and paint him as indifferent to millions of years of suffering. However, I would argue that, upon close study of evolutionary theory, God is revealed as bigger, closer, and more compassionate that we could possibly imagine.

My fear is that we evangelicals have painted ourselves into a corner. By rejecting science, we are creating barriers preventing the mainstream culture from hearing the gospel.

The more we argue for 'creation science,' the more the mainstream rightly sees us as a paranoid clique with our collective heads in the sand.

For 2,000 years, the historical church has striven to integrate scientific understanding into its interpretation of the scriptures. If we refuse to follow in this tradition, we risk losing any relevance in the wider world.

Spencer Capier, Vancouver

I began my honours science degree with an open mind. After the first year, studying a combination of zoology, botany, microbiology, organic chemistry, genetics and statistics, I was dumbfounded that anyone could believe in evolution.

The latter two subjects alone make it so improbable when one considers that over 99 percent of mutations are deleterious. Interpret that with statistics!

When, in the first class, the zoology professor began by asking if anyone was not convinced of evolutionary theory, I raised my hand – the only one in the auditorium of some 400 students.

As Brendan Ritchie notes, evolutionary theory is simply *accepted* by students today – and herein lies the problem.

Where are the honestly inquisitive minds science depends on? Where are people like the Christian Galileo, who questioned the geocentric view of the solar system against prevailing dogma?

Science doesn't need people who jump on the prevailing bandwagon and 'accept' that they have to endorse what is placed before them.

Rather than "damage the intellectual lives of Christians," as Ritchie asserts, people like Hugh Ross foster the inquisitive spirit at the heart of true science.

Gary Desterke, Maple Ridge



We encourage reader participation. Please feel free to write, whether you agree or disagree with what you read, or simply want to add another perspective. Letters are subject to editing for brevity, clarity, legality and taste. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the staff or board of *BCCN*. **Mail:** 20316 - 56 Avenue, #200 Langley, BC V3A 3Y7
Fax: 604.534.2970 **Email:** editor@bcchristiannews.org

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Canada Day parade

THE TEAM of MTG volunteers at this event was led by Creative and Performing Arts Working Group leaders Russ and Sandy Rosen. Three volunteers led the MTG entry carrying a banner with our snowflake logo and the words 'More Than Gold – Radical Hospitality.' Next came a group of dancers, then a vintage red truck with a drummer, a sound system and a fiddle player, along with four string musicians. Following behind were approximately 80 volunteers clad in white T-shirts with a big, bold 'More Than Gold' logo.

The reaction was noticeable as hundreds of people along the parade route joined in the dancing and singing. One of the parade organizers commented, "What a great way to end the parade!" Another said the MTG contribution was the highlight of the parade.

One of the many parade watchers asked, "What is More Than Gold all about?" As it was explained to her, she said, "Oh, so the Christians are banding together for hospitality? That's great!"

To see more of what happened, go to: morethangold.ca

Richmond churches & MTG

IN ADDITION to the ongoing hard work of its Working Groups, MTG is beginning to lead clusters of churches in specific collaborative responses to the Games.

July 15 saw 25 leaders representing ten Richmond churches gather at Trinity Lutheran Church. They were acutely aware that Richmond, with the Airport and the impressive new skating oval, will be a very strategic place during the Olympic Games. In addition, all the leaders indicated a desire to form a stronger ongoing ministerial.

"We have the building, and want to invite other churches to come and collaborate using it," said Trinity Lutheran leader Don Hindle. The church is directly across from Minoru Park, a main socializing area the City is using at the time of the Games.

Many ideas for a significant Christian witness were proposed, including large screen sports events, internet cafes and a Fusion street festival. A further meeting is planned in coming weeks.

In addition, Airport chaplain Layne Daggett expressed the hope that Christians will be available to help his office in myriad ways.



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Musicians offer CompassionArt to restore hope



By Kevin Pollard

***CompassionArt**, Sparrow / EMI

CompassionArt is described as "a charity that joins the dots between art and poverty . . . restoring hope and igniting justice."

In January 2008, project founder Martin Smith and various Christian music luminaries crafted songs during a retreat in Scotland. Soon after, at Abbey Road studios in London, the vocals were recorded.

The resulting CD/DVD package features 14 new songs and a 50-minute documentary; all proceeds from the songs go directly to combat poverty worldwide.

Standout tracks include 'Come to the Water,' 'There is Always a Song' and 'You Have Shown Us.' The only downside is that



the diversity of artists – including Kirk Franklin, Amy Grant, CeCe Winans, Chris Tomlin, Paul Baloche and Steven Curtis Chapman – makes for a somewhat disjointed effort. *compassionart.tv*



*** Newsboys: *In the Hands of God***, InPop

Expectations were high for the Newsboys' 13th studio album. Their first one in three years, it marks the last with Peter Furler as lead singer.

It's a little odd to listen to a new album that only has current lead singer Michael Tait doing backing vocals on a few tracks. There are a handful of great songs, like 'The Way We Roll' and 'Glorious.'

Furler's vocals are in top form here, but his songwriting lacks the wit we have come to expect, despite co-writing with Steve Taylor. Some songs come across as a little serious and dull; and it wasn't necessary for one lyric to refer to Celine Dion's music as "the soundtrack of Hell." In addition to that misstep, the total length of 37 minutes left me feeling a little short changed. *newsboys.com*

*** Mandisa: *Freedom***, Sparrow

One of the most successful Christian artists to be discovered on *American Idol*, Mandisa returns with her sophomore album – one of the best of the year. Standouts include 'My



Deliverer,' 'Not Guilty' and 'Definition of Me.' Ballads showcase Mandisa's amazing vocal abilities – especially on 'You Wouldn't Cry (Andrew's Song),' written for a friend whose baby boy was stillborn.

Stellar production by Chris Stevens (tobyMac) and Brown Bannister (Amy Grant), and co-songwriters such as Cindy Morgan, Ronnie Freeman and Matthew West, make this a perfect pop record – with lyrical substance. *mandisaofficial.com*

*** Jonny Diaz: *More Beautiful You***, INO Records

Diaz has a hit with this debut, offering intelligent acoustic pop. At times, this singer/songwriter reminds me of Chris Rice, with his witty – yet profound – storytelling. The title track is getting abundant radio play, with a much-needed message about self-image, inward beauty and self-worth.

Songs like 'Stand for You' show that the catchy pop hooks here are equally matched with insightful lyrics: "In a world that tries to water You down / Where beliefs cannot be spoken too loud / I'll stand for truth / Where they claim Your way isn't wide enough / And they do their best just to cover You up / I'll stand for You."

Other gems here are 'See The Wind,' 'Prodigal Like Me' and the bonus song, 'The Opener' – a hilarious take on being an opening artist for a big touring star.

jonnydiaz.com



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Calendar of EVENTS

Full listings online*



Article One are at Coastal Church August 12. See 'Regeneration' below.

August

• **'Regeneration'** ~ Real life. Real people. Real God. Wednesdays until Aug 26, 7 pm at Coastal Church, 1160 W Georgia St, Vancouver. www.coastalregeneration.org

• **Community Lunches –** Thursdays at St. Andrew's United Church, 1044 St Georges, N. Vancouver, noon-1 pm. All welcomed. 604.985.0408 www.st-andrews-united.ca

• **Food for Families Foodbank** – Thursdays 9:30-11 am at The Warehouse, 2650 Slocan St, Vancouver. 604.254.2489

• **'Wacky Wednesdays'** for kids ages 5-12 at Surrey Pentecostal Assembly: Aug 5 – the zoo, $15; Aug 12 – swimming, $3.40; Aug 17-21 – kids camp, $15 for the week; Aug 26 – water fight/BBQ, $5. Pre-registration necessary. 604.574.2403 office@surreychurch.org www.wix.com/kidscamp09/crocodiledock

• **Family Camps** at Barnabas Camp, Keats Island. Aug 2-7 with Ken Needham. Aug 9-14 with Dale Wolery. Aug 23-28 with David Collins. 604.886.2220 www.barnabasfm.org

• **Bard on the Beach Shakespeare Festival** – May 28-Sept 26 at Vanier Park, Vancouver. 604.739.0559 bardonthebeach.com

Saturday, August 1

• **Gospel Blues Festival** ~ July 31-Aug 2 at Thresherman's Village, Chilliwack. With Jessy Dixon, Sojourners, Ashley Cleveland, John Lee Sanders, Jimmy Bratcher, Darrell Mansfield, Eric Turner, Larry Howard, Johnny Manion, Ken Whitely, Graham Ord, Chad Bush Weibe, Dr. Bones, Trimmed n' Burnin Blues Project, Steve Delamar Band, Aron Loewen, Dusty Shoes, Chop Liver Band and more. Tickets: House of James, Abbotsford, 800.665.8828; or Blessings, Langley, 800.882.8665. More info: www.back2blues.com or 604.795.479

• **Cultus Lake Campout '09** for singles 35+ July 31-Aug 3 at Lindell Beach, Cultus Lake, sponsored by Fraser Valley Christian Singles. Theme 'Who Am I?' Activities: Jewish dancing, square dancing, campfire, relaxing on the beach, volleyball, golf, getting to know each other, canoeing, swimming, kayaking, fireworks, great food. $119 for tents, $129 for cabin sharing. northview.org

• **'Do the Fair with Family Flair'** ~ July 30-Aug 3 at Abbotsford Agrifair: RCMP Musical Ride; KidZone; Mighty Fraser Rodeo; lumberjack, livestock and 4-H shows. Pride of the Valley tradeshow. Admission $9. www.agrifair.ca www.shadowsanddreams.org

• **Organic Church Life Conference** July 31-Aug 2 at Best Western Hotel, Mission, with speaker Milt Rodriguez. The main goal is to plant one (or more) organic churches. $35 US. 604.619.5420 housechurchresource.org

Monday, August 3

• **Athletes In Action Soccer Camp** – sponsored by New Life Church, Burnaby, Aug 3-7, 9 am-3 pm at Yale Oval. Age 6-12. Price: $130, family rate $110 each for 3 or more kids. www.newlifecrc.ca 604.743.8011

• **BC Day Festival in Fort Langley** - free pancake breakfast, BBQ lunch, bouncy inflatables, miniature golf, face painting and entertainment all day. www.fortlangley.com

Friday, August 7

• **Cultus Lake Waterpark** ~ 'Slidin to the Music' 8 pm-midnight. Live Christian rock bands, new Pirates Cove, adventure playground. 604.858.7241.

Monday August 10

• **Newton Black Belt Academy summer camp** ~ Aug 10-14, 10 am to 2 pm at 6468 King George Hwy, Surrey. 604.590.5425 www.surreyblackbelt.com

• **Kicker's Soccer Camp** ~ Aug 10-14, 9 am-3 pm for boys and girls aged 8-14 at Andy Livingston Park, Vancouver. Put on by First Baptist Church, Vancouver. Training, athletic conditioning, soccer strategy and expert tips from professionally trained coach Jose Figueroa. $100 per child. 604.683.8441. www.firstbc.org

Wednesday, August 12

• **Traditional Learning Academy - Home-Learning Specialists** ~ open house at 100 - 6425 - 136th St, Surrey. Contact: 604-572-7875 or schoolathome.ca

Saturday, August 15

• **TheCRY Vancouver prayer event** ~ at Lumberman's Arch, Stanley Park, 9 am-7 pm. An intergenerational & interdenominational movement recognized by national leaders from every stream. For details of a weekend of events: www.TheCRY.ca

• **Contemplative Communion Service** - third Saturday of each month, 7 pm at Fairview Baptist , 1708 W 16 Ave, Vancouver, with musicians Anna Borowska, Helma Sawatzky, Kirk Eliot, Susan Porter, Ruth & Rob Des Cotes. imagodeicommunity.ca

Monday, August 17

• **Calling All Crocodile Hunters!** Kids Camp 09 for ages 3-12, Aug 17-21, 9 am-noon at Surrey Pentecostal Assembly, 16870 - 80 Ave. Games, sports, food, crafts, songs and more. $20/camper. 604.574.2403 www.wix.com/kidscamp09/crocodiledock

Friday, August 21

• **Vancouver 'Equip & Refresh' Alpha conference** - An opportunity to find out more about Alpha, and an opportunity to meet people from other churches – to share experiences and ideas, through small group discussions and interactive sessions. www.alphacanada.org

Monday, August 24

• **Upward Basketball & Cheerleading Camp** for boys and girls grades 1-7, 6-9 pm, Aug 24-28 at Cascade Gospel Chapel, 3833 Boundary Rd, Vancouver. Improve your skills and learn about teamwork, respect for authority and sportsmanship. $70/child. www.cascadegospelchapel.com

September

• **Sept 9 – Alpha on Tap** 5:30-7 pm at Doolins Irish Pub, Nelson & Granville, Vancouver. www.alphacanada.org

• **Sept 12 – Gideon fundraiser banquet** ~ 6 pm at Chilliwack Senior Secondary School, 46363 Yale Rd E, with speaker Serge LeClerc and music by the Heritage Singers. Tickets: $10, available at Verses Bookstore in Chilliwack and House of James in Abbotsford. 604.824.9897 h-etours@shaw.ca

• **Sept 17 – Missions Fest Strategic Planning Team.** All sponsoring churches are invited to send their representatives. Enjoy a tour of the 2010 festival facility at Broadway Church Fellowship Hall, 2700 E Broadway Vancouver, 7-9 pm. missionsfestvancouver.ca

• **Sept 18-19 – MCC Festival Auction & Relief Sale** ~ Sept 18, 5-9 pm, and Sept 19, 8 am-3 pm, at Abbotsford Tradex (Abbotsford Airport). **Sept, 20 – Festival of Praise,** 2:30 pm at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, 3471 Clearbrook Rd, Abbotsford. All MCC projects help hungry people around the world. 604.850.6639 www.mcc.org/bc/festivals

Sept 19 – Learning to Pray with the Saints St. Benedict lecture series, 10–11:30 am, with John Toews, Professor Emeritus of Church History and Anabaptist Studies at Regent College. Held at Vancouver Chinese Evangelical Free Church, 3295 E Broadway, Vancouver. 604.254.1242 vcefc.org

Sept 27 – Casting Crowns Until the Whole World Hears tour, with guest Matt Redman. Brought to you by World Vision. At the new Langley Events Centre. Tickets available at www.langleytickets.com or by phone 604.455.8888

VANCOUVER ISLAND EVENTS

August

• **Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship** ~ Marketplace luncheon every Tuesday noon at The Pantry, 3214 Douglas St, Victoria. 250.658.8734

Saturday, August 1

• **Alive Inside** ~ music festival with Seventh Day Slumber, Fridays Cry and Manafest at Cowichan River Bible Camp. Gates open 3 pm. Tickets: Christian Book and Music Centres. www.aliveinside.ca

• **Bike for Bibles 2010 Olympics** ~ Island Ride: Aug 1-7. Collect sponsors, enjoy the view and spread the Word. 604.872.6691 vancouver@biblesociety.ca

• **Art Show and Silent Auction** ~ 10 am at The Mustard Seed, with two local artists showcasing their work. mustardseed.ca

Sunday, August 2

• **Holiday Bible Weeks** at Capernwray Harbour on Thetis Island. 1.888.224.5681 www.capernwray.ca

Thursday, August 6

• **'God, Israel and the Church' seminar** Aug 6-8, with Marty Shoub at Temple Yeshua, 886 Craigflower Rd, Victoria. 250.477.2763 besouthward@shaw.ca

Wednesday, August 12

• **Art Spark Summer Day Camp** – Aug 12-14 for 4-5 year olds; 9:30-11:30 am at Lion of Judah Ministries, 6021 W Saanich Rd, Victoria. $45/child. 250.544.8246 www.lionofjudah.ca

Saturday, August 15

• **'From Murderer to Missionary'** – an Interview with Glenn Flett, 6-7:30 pm at Victoria Seventh-day Adventist, 983 Pandora Ave. 250.383.1510 www.victoriaadventist.ca

Monday, August 17

• **Youth and Family Camp for Aboriginal Peoples,** with separate activities for teens and adults. Aug 17-21 at Nanoose Bay Pentecostal Camp, 2531 Nanoose Beach. Speakers: Leonard John, Edgar Lapeciros. Adults $140, children $90, family rate $400. 250.585.8853 bcbrownministries@msn.com

Friday, August 21

• **Men's Conference** at Capernwray Harbour Bible Centre, Thetis Island. $130. 888.224.5681 www.capernwray.ca

Monday, August 24

• **Arts Ignition Summer Day Camp –** Aug 24-28 for 6-9 year olds at Lion of Judah Ministries, 6021 W Saanich Rd, Victoria. $130/child. www.lionofjudah.ca

Monday, August 31

• **Arts Ignition Summer Day Camp** – Aug 31-Sept 3 for 10-14 year olds at Lion of Judah Ministries, 6021 West Saanich Rd, Victoria. $160/child. www.lionofjudah.ca

• **Camp VIP –** Aug 31-Sept 5 at Cowichan Lake and Rathrevor Park: Bible lessons, swimming, canoeing, field & forest games, theme meals, crafts. www.campvip.org

THOMPSON/OKANAGAN EVENTS

Monday, August 3

• **Teen Summer Camp** ~ Aug 3-7 for ages 13-15 at The Faith Mission Christian Conference & Retreat Centre, 4690 Hoath Rd, Falkland. $160. 250.379.2422 www.faithmissioncanada.org

Sunday, August 9

• **YWAM Hockey Camp –** Aug 9-14 for boys & girls aged 8-15 at Jim Lind Arena, Mt. Boucherie, Westside. $299. www.ywamhockey.com

Monday, August 10

• **Christian Retreat** - Aug 10-15 at The Faith Mission Retreat Centre, 4790 Hoath Rd, Falkland, for all ages/denominations. Adults: $275 all inclusive. Register: 604.524.5922 Jackiesmithbc@aol.com

Sunday, August 16

• **Barb Elyett in Concert** 6 pm at Bethel Pentecostal, 945 Main St, Penticton. Admission free. 250.493.3911 www.barbelyett.com

• **Discovery Camp** Aug 16-21 for ages 8-12 at Faith Mission Conference & Retreat Centre, 4690 Hoath Rd, Falkland. $150. www.faithmissioncanada.org 250.558.1805 or fminterior@telus.net

*** For a fuller listing of events see our web calendar: www.canadianchristianity.com/events**

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Half-Blood Prince a cliffhanger lacking in momentum



By Peter T. Chattaway

THE END is near, for Harry Potter and his gang.

Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince is the sixth movie to be based on J.K. Rowling's phenomenally popular books, and like all the previous sequels, it is darker and more mature than the instalments that have preceded it.

But there is only one book left to be adapted, and so this film is filled with a sense that things are coming to a head. Secrets are revealed, the nature of the evil Dark Lord Voldemort's futile plan to cheat death is finally spelled out, and the film ends on a major cliffhanger that will set the story spinning towards its inevitable climax.

The best thing about the film is the way it finally – after all these years – gets Dumbledore (Michael Gambon) right, giving the Hogwarts headmaster just the right mix of absurdist whimsy, personal authority and startling vulnerability. Also very good is Jim Broadbent, the actor hired to play Horace Slughorn, the new potions professor.

But the film is regrettably lacking in other areas. There is very little spectacle, for one thing; in an odd way, it feels like one of those small character-based British dramas, except that there happen to be lots of visual effects in the background. And yet, ironically, the film pays very little attention to the supporting characters who have given this series some of its best grace notes.

While some major plot twists do transpire in this film, it feels strangely inert, and lacking in momentum. Hopefully, the powers that be will fix this problem when they adapt the seventh and final book – and bring the story to what should, by rights, be a stirring conclusion.

* * *

The release date has changed a few times, but as of this writing, a movie based on the true story of an Iranian woman who was stoned to death in the 1980s, shortly after the rise of the ayatollahs, is set to open in Vancouver-area theatres July 31.

The Stoning of Soraya M. is written and directed by Cyrus Nowrasteh, an American of Persian descent, and it features many Iranian actors in its cast – including Shohreh Aghdashloo, who was Oscar-nominated several years ago for *House of Sand and Fog*, and has since had prominent supporting roles in films like *The Nativity Story*.

But the film also marks the reunion of a few people who collaborated on *The Passion of the Christ*, including producer Steve McEveety, co-star Jim Caviezel (who plays the real-life French-Iranian journalist who first reported this story) and composer John Debney.

What is more, the new movie also has some narrative parallels to *The Passion*, since it, too, is set in the Middle East and revolves around an innocent victim whose slow, torturous execution is portrayed in brutal, harrowing detail.

My interview with McEveety and Caviezel is up at *ChristianityTodayMovies.com*.

I also posted a couple of 'bonus quotes' at my blog, in which McEveety talks about some of the other films he is working on, including: *Left to Tell*, which concerns the 'spiritual warfare' behind the 1994 genocide in Rwanda; and *Snowmen*, a family film written and directed by Rob Kirbyson, a UBC film-school graduate who happens to be a Christian.

* * *

Speaking of Kirbyson, his short film ***Ctrl Z***, which played at the local film festival last year, has been picked up by NBC and turned into a series of short webisodes, all written and directed by Kirbyson himself. Check 'em out online at *NBC.com/ctrl*.

* * *

Kevin Miller must like controversy.

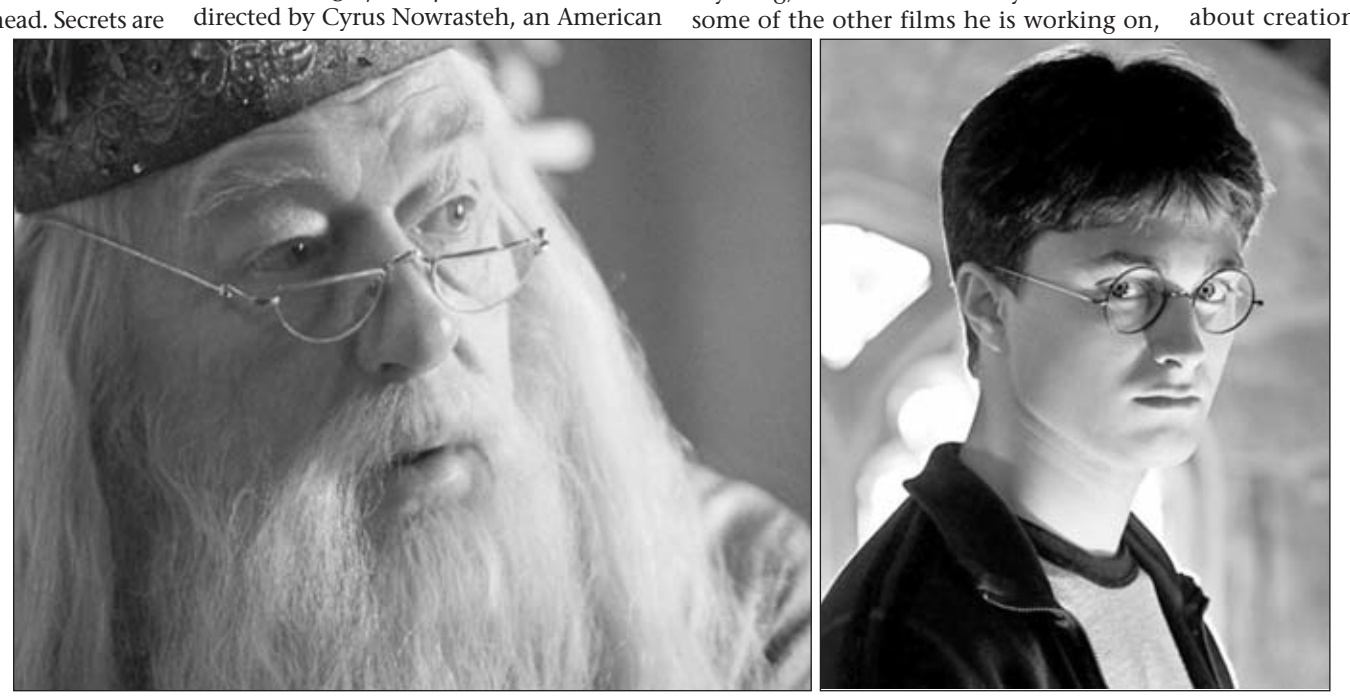
Last year, the Abbotsford-based screenwriter, occasional actor (he played Lex Luthor in an episode of *Smallville*) and sometime *BC Christian News* contributor, co-wrote the documentary *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed* – which provoked a lot of debate about creationism, evolution, intelligent design and the social ramifications thereof.

And now, this year, he has a new documentary coming out that just might offend some of the conservatives who rallied to his previous film's defense. It's called ***With God on Our Side***, and it's about Christian Zionism – a theology which, as Miller puts it at his blog, leads "some Christians in the West to give uncritical support to Israeli government policies, even those that privilege Jews at the expense of Palestinians. This leads to great suffering for Muslim and Christian Palestinians alike, and threatens Israel's security as a whole."

The film, he adds, "suggests that there is a biblical alternative for Christians who want to love and support the people of Israel, a theology that doesn't favour one people group over another – but instead, promotes peace and reconciliation for Jews and Palestinians."

The filmmakers hope to release the movie sometime later this year. You can watch a trailer and read a bit of info about the film at its website, *WithGodOnOurSide.com*.

– filmchatblog.blogspot.com



Super wizard Dumbledore and sorcerer's apprentice Harry Potter become entangled in the Half-Blood Prince's schemes.

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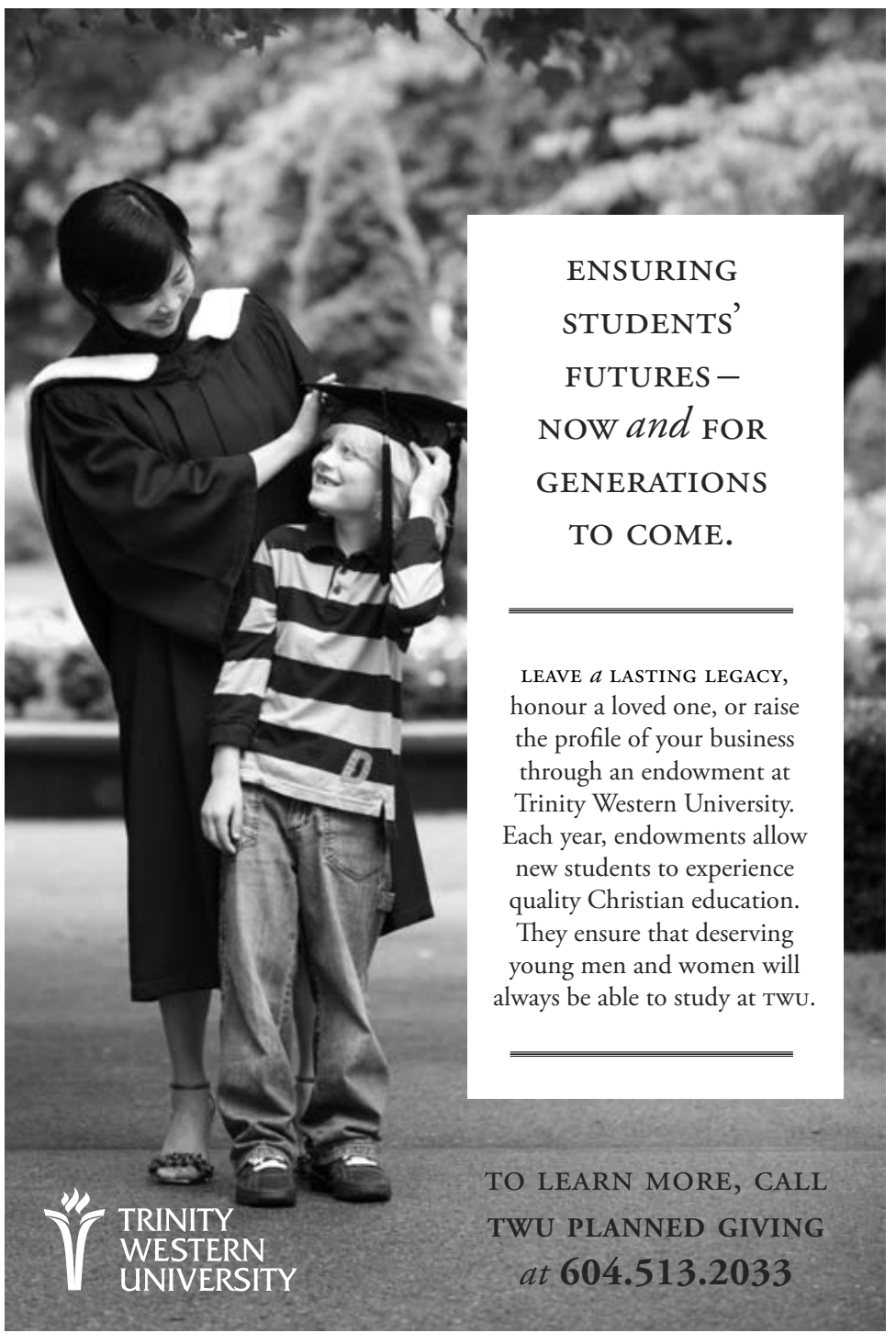

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A perfect introduction to legendary Mingus recordings



By John Cody

AS the 1950s drew to a close, the Jazz scene in America was flourishing.

A myriad of previously popular styles – from Dixieland and big band to more recent forms like be-bop and west coast cool – were either evolving or making way for the brave new world of hard bop, free jazz and Afro-centric explorations.

A half century on, deluxe editions of three landmark albums from the era – by Charles Mingus, Dave Brubeck and Miles Davis – are being released under the banner '1959 – Jazz's Greatest Year,' by Columbia/Legacy Records.

It's not just a marketing ploy; the year really was pivotal. The future was upon us; while Kennedy's New Frontier was still to come, the music was already well out of the gate.

In addition to the titles in this series, 1959 brought John Coltrane's seminal *Giant Steps*, Ornette Coleman's groundbreaking *The Shape of Jazz to Come*, and important efforts from Cannonball Adderley, Ray Charles, Duke Ellington and Oscar Peterson.

The Legacy titles were all originally issued on Columbia Records – a major label with all the resources that implied: marketing departments, nationwide distribution and radio play. Independents like Riverside, Prestige, Blue Note, Atlantic, Pacific Jazz and Savoy boasted formidable rosters – but that extra clout meant the music had a far greater chance of being heard by a mass audience.

While it's hard to imagine in today's world of lightweight pop, recordings in this series were popular sellers. Brubeck even scored a hit single: 'Take Five' is one of only a handful of odd time signature pieces to ever grace the pop charts. Miles' *Kind of Blue* became the most popular jazz LP ever released.

For the uninitiated, *Mingus Ah Um* (50th Anniversary edition) is a perfect starting point into the legendary bassist/composer's music. Mingus recorded extensively for a wide range of labels, with only two albums for Columbia during this era: *Mingus Ah Um* and *Mingus Dynasty*. Both are included in this package, along with seven bonus tracks, making for more than 2 ½ hours of music.



Charles Mingus in 1976. Photo: Tom Marcello

It opens with 'Better Git it in Your Soul,' which is described in the liner as "a grand slam home run – an infectious multi-layered gospel piece." It's not likely to be heard in conservative churches anytime soon, but it is an excellent example of how the form was incorporated into so much of his work.

Mingus grew up in the Pentecostal church, raised by a religious step-mother who only allowed gospel music in the home. His parents argued frequently regarding what each felt was the 'proper' denomination, which undoubtedly left him confused. (Then again, they argued about nearly everything else as well). He learned to play in the church band and sang in the choir, and that early experience would inform all that came after.

Much of his music brings to mind a revival meeting – especially 'Wednesday Night Prayer Meeting' (from *Blues and Roots* – also recorded in 1959). 'Ecclusiastics,' (a play on 'Ecclesiastics') deals directly with faith, and tracks like 'Love Chant' and 'Prayer for Passive Resistance' are clearly gospel-derived.

'Black Saint and the Sinner Lady,' a six-part opus from 1963, reflects the confusion he felt regarding faith and worldly matters. Mingus even had liner notes by his psychologist, which read in part:

"One feels deeply for the tears of Mr. Mingus that fall for himself and man . . . He is the Black Saint who suffers for his sins and those of mankind, as he reflects his deeply religious philosophy. His music tells of his deep yearning for love, peace and freedom"

There are three tributes to his musical influences: 'Goodbye Pork Pie Hat,' aka 'Theme For Lester Young,' is dedicated to the tenor sax legend; 'Open Letter to Duke' is for Ellington; 'Jelly Roll' is for pianist Jelly Roll Morton.

'Bird Calls' might sound like a tribute to sax legend Charlie 'Yardbird' Parker, but that would come on the *Dynasty* album, with 'Gunslinging Bird.' The full title – 'If Charlie Parker were a Gunslinger, There'd Be a Whole Lot of Dead Copycats' shows equal parts humour and respect for the sax giant.

Mingus addressed race relations repeatedly, on tracks like 'Meditations on Integration,' and 'Freedom.' His background offered a unique perspective: his mother was a mix of Chinese and English, and his father was the illegitimate son of a black farmhand and his Swedish employer's granddaughter.

Ah Um includes 'Fables of Faubus,' easily one of his most powerful statements. It was a response to the segregated south, specifically an Arkansas governor who deployed the National Guard to prevent a handful of black children from attending a court-ordered integration of a state high school.

Columbia refused to allow the lyrics to be sung on the recording, but live performances from the era allow us to witness his righteous anger: "Oh Lord, don't let 'em shoot us!/Oh Lord, don't let 'et stab us!/Oh Lord, don't let 'em tar and feather us!/Oh Lord, no more swastikas!/Oh Lord, no more Ku Klux Klan!"

Reviews of more 1959 jazz albums are in the 'Music' section at CanadianChristianity.com

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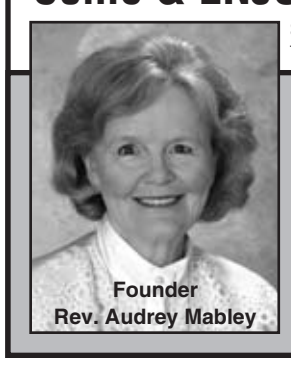

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TWU and Redeemer have a unique relationship

By Steve Weatherbe

WHEN Whitney Agassiz toured Europe with the women's soccer team from Trinity Western University (TWU), she provided standout defense for the evangelical university.

Like her teammates, she also testified to audiences about her faith in Christ – but with a difference. Agassiz spoke from her heart too, but from her Catholic heart; since many audiences were Catholic, that was fine with TWU.

She is the product of a unique relationship TWU has with Redeemer Pacific (RP), a small school committed to teaching the liberal arts from an orthodox Catholic perspective.

The principal push behind RP and its happy connection with TWU is Tom Hamel. After 20 years in business, Hamel decided to realize a longtime dream of teaching his faith.

"I was wary of local public universities because so many of my friends from 20 years before had gone to them, had partied, done dope and lost their faith," he told *BCCN*.

So he thought of TWU, which had the advantage of being local and Christian. The downside was that Hamel still harboured some stereotypes about fundamentalists.

But he remembered many of his high school friends who were evangelical, and how "on fire for Jesus they were." He had always seen "a need for Catholics to develop more of a personal relationship with Jesus." At TWU, he found "great people with an openness to Catholic thought." And he often heard from his classmates "about how so-and-so had accepted Jesus." As he pursued his degree, the idea began taking shape in his mind that a similar school was needed for Catholics.

In 1996, Hamel broached the idea to his favourite instructor, TWU history professor Robert Burkinshaw. This soon led to a discussion with then-president Neil Snider, who said



Whitney Agassiz, a standout with TWU's 2007-08 soccer team, benefitted from Redeemer Pacific's Catholic presence.

he'd been wanting to work with Catholics in higher education for some time. Hamel next approached Vancouver archbishop Adam Exner, who swiftly endorsed the idea.

Burkinshaw remembers, during negotiations between the RP steering committee and TWU's board, attending a lecture by American evangelical historian Mark Noll.

"Noll wondered when Catholics and Evangelicals were going together at the level of higher education. I wanted to put up my hand and say: 'It's happening right now.'"

Burkinshaw also recalls giving a lecture on Catholic-Protestant interactions in Canada – which involved considerable intolerance and violence on both fronts.

"There were riots against Catholics in Toronto and against Protestants in Montreal," said Burkinshaw.

"The interesting thing was the reaction of the students. They wondered why everyone had been so nasty towards each other."

Burkinshaw described why things have changed.

"In the latter part of the 20th Century, Catholics and evangelicals weren't on different ends of the spectrum. They were crowded together at the same end, with everyone else at the other end." Moral issues like abortion provided common cause.

RP was established as a 'teaching centre' of TWU, providing courses in philosophy and theology from a Catholic perspective. RP students take the bulk of their courses at TWU and get degrees there. TWU now offers, through RP, a minor in Catholic studies – and certificates in Catholic theology or liberal arts.

Agassiz said that if TWU is like a supportive community, RP is "a family. The building is a former farmhouse, and the classes are held in what was the living room. Tom drives the students to mass on Sunday evening, and . . . the secretary has students living in her basement."

Soccer brought Agassiz to RP: she won a scholarship to play for TWU, which RP topped up. Characterizing herself as a typical lukewarm Catholic when she began, she took her first RP classes to meet scholarship requirements – but ended up majoring in its Christianity and Culture program.

"What I learned [at RP] is how to be a Christian, how to let Christ lead my life.

"I think a lot of Catholics struggle with how to have a personal relationship with Christ, but Redeemer Pacific and Trinity . . . created a space where we can learn how to do this."

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TWU strings attached to school kids

THERE was giddy chatter and nervous anticipation backstage at the Chief Sepass theatre in late June, as students from Langley's Blacklock Elementary Fine Arts School prepared for their year-end show.

'One Toy, and a Variety of Other Things from the Toy Box' featured a range of drama and dance presentations. One of the highlights was a set of performances featuring puppets created by the children themselves.

Under the guidance of Trinity Western University (TWU) assistant professor of fine arts and theatre Claire Goodfellow, and Blacklock teacher and TWU alumna Angela Mitchell, grade 5 students from the I-Pod, intermediate classes, spent two weeks making puppets for the evening performance. One class created marionettes for characters from C.S. Lewis' *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, and the other focused their efforts on hand puppets for a show dealing with the theme of peer pressure.

Jordan De Jesus created a marionette puppet called 'Dwarf,' with which he performed in 'News in Narnia' a puppet show based on the Lewis book.

Describing the creation of Dwarf, De Jesus said: "I got the wood part, and then I started to paint it. I then made him a belt, gave him a hat, and then got some cotton to make him a beard – and then I covered his feet in black fabric."

Asked what he liked best about the project De Jesus said: "I liked the whole thing, especially shredding the cotton and putting on the beard." Dwarf's new home will be on the top shelf in the boy's room.

When asked what it was like to work with the children at Blacklock, Goodfellow exclaimed: "It was so fun and exhilarating! They are 10 year old kids. It's such a cool age, as they still have a wonderful sense of play – but at the same time, can talk about things on a deeper level."

– Erin Mussolum



Blacklock student Madison Hunter with a puppet she created.



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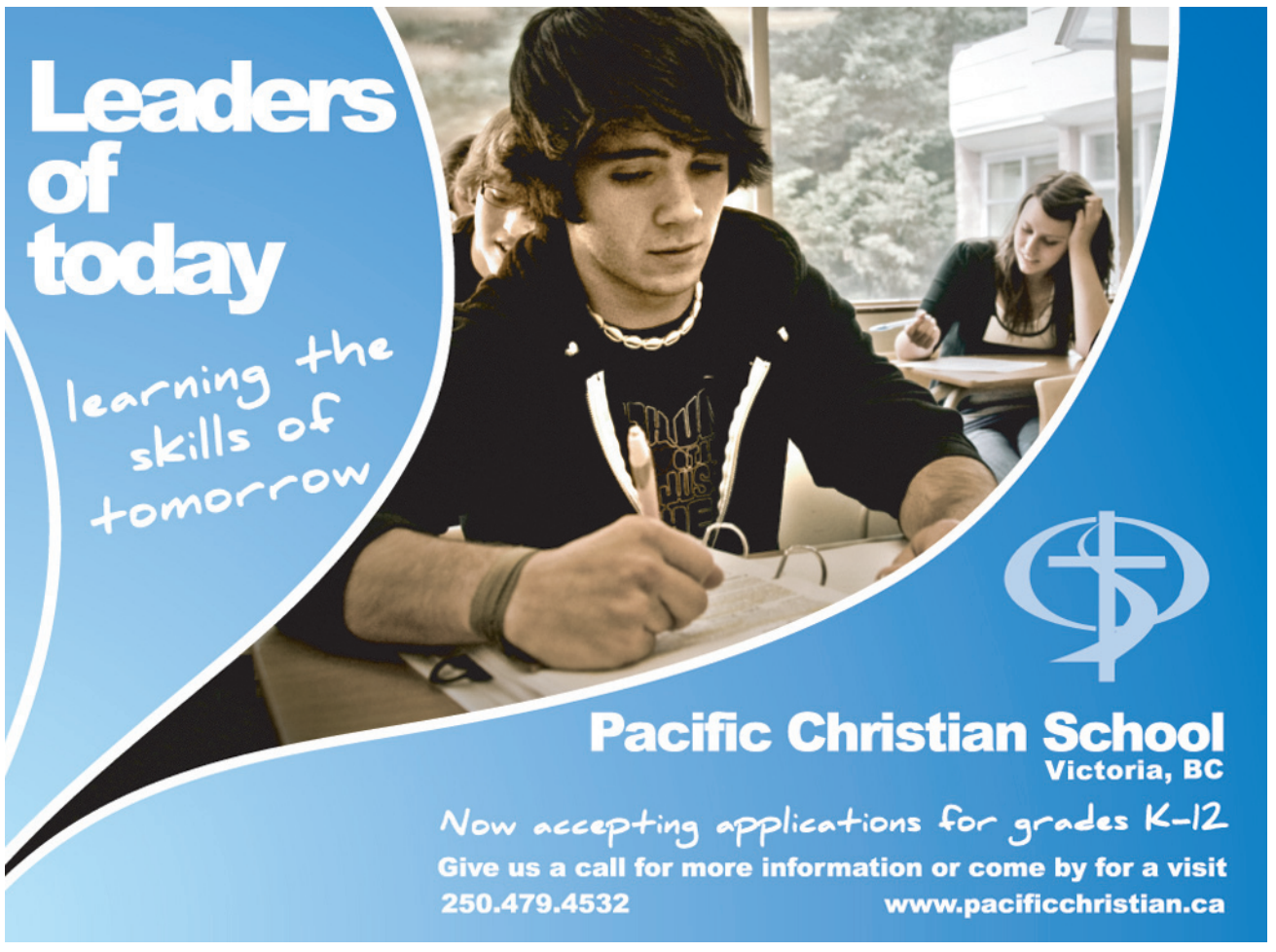

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Cultivating a global perspective in children



By Marla Stewart Konrad

CHILDREN head back to school next month, but that doesn't mean parents can leave all the instruction to the teachers. Children often learn more about global compassion and justice from examples and conversations they have at home. In an increasingly self-centred, me-first generation, it's critical for parents to be intentional about it – if they want to raise compassionate, caring global citizens.

Some tips to help cultivate a global worldview in your child:

* Discuss world events around the dinner table, and take time to pray together about them. The aim is not to worry your children with the burdens of the world, but to raise their awareness of the needs God is concerned about.

* Get your children to help choose a family gift through a gift catalogue like the one World Vision produces each year, and invite them to donate some of their savings to the effort.

* Model involvement and empathy. Get involved in a community project that your children can help with: collecting food for a refugee centre, cleaning or painting a shelter, or delivering meals to elderly people who can't get out.

* Sponsor a child from another country, and learn all you can about that country's geography, climate, food and culture.

* Find age-appropriate books that open children's eyes to the wider world. World Vision's *Early Readers* are a good start for young children. Visit a bookstore or library to find others.

Marla Stewart Konrad is director of internal communications & public affairs for World Vision Canada.

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Schools holding their own in tough times

By Steve Weatherbe

AS birthrates decline throughout the industrial world, so does the population of school-age children.

In B.C., immigration has kept the population increasing; but the decline of resource industries has sent populations spiraling downwards, in parts of the province which don't appeal to working-age immigrants.

That's the bad news for schools.

The good news is that, so far, faith-based schools are holding their own. To do that, they are pinching pennies, marketing aggressively, offering discounts and widening their recruiting campaigns beyond their traditional faith base.

The province's independent schools, most of which are Christian, were showing enrollment increases until last year. Since 1999, the total independent school population has grown by 16 percent, from 59,403 to 69,138 students; but the rate of increase has slowed to a mere 0.3 percent.

Enrollment figures at individual schools vary considerably. Independent schools are impacted by emigration from resource towns such as Campbell River, Nanaimo, Quesnel and Fort St. John, just as much as public schools. When the number of students at a particular school falls below 11 for two years in a row, the school loses crucial provincial government per-student funding.

'We're looking at a decline, not a big crash.'

That happened to the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) School in the Interior resource town of Hazelton two years ago.

"Families and young people are moving to Alberta, or south, to get work," said parent Laura Blabey. "Our church just doesn't have many young families anymore."

But everyone wanted to keep the school. The church agreed to back it for a year without government funding, and it kept going with tuition of $110 a month. The school reached out with advertising and a mailer extolling the virtues of the small, Christian school. Enough new students were found to requalify for provincial money.

Now a minority of students are SDA, but the Christian content has been maintained. "Our kids miss out on the gym, on cooking and shop classes," said Blabey, "but they get to go to school with their friends from church, they get the benefits of the church affiliation and they get more attention."

Beacon Christian Academy in Nanoose Bay on Vancouver Island hasn't been able to weather the demographic storm; but it hasn't given up, either. At the end of this school year, with its enrollment down from 120 in K-8 at its peak to just 11 in K-3, it shut its doors. Principal Barb Judd blames the aging of the local population and the trend to smaller families. As well, the tightening economy has made the $3,400 per year tuition more of an obstacle, with some parents preferring to home school rather than send their children to either public or Christian schools.

But the Beacon's light is not out. Beverly Groenewold, mother of three Beacon grads, said the school's board has a business plan that would see the school reopen in Parksville – which is closer to the centre of the region's population, offering shorter drives for parents. A 're-lit' Beacon would operate as a satellite of Nanaimo Christian School, which would take over all administrative responsibilities to cut costs. So far, however, a suitable building has not been found.

Fred Herfst, executive director of Federation of Independent School Associations of B.C., said independent and public school officials throughout North America are watching the numbers closely. He said "it's too soon to tell" what the 2009-2010 year will bring, since registration is far from complete for September, and some currently signed up may never show up. "The proof is in the pudding," he said.

Duncan Christian School expects to stay stable this year. Taking a page from a Bellingham school, said outreach officer Norm Sowden, it is offering big discounts for new students. The reasoning, said Sowden, is that the new students still attract the provincial, per-pupil grant; and since most classes have empty seats, the new students won't add to staff or service requirements.

Dave O'Dell, the principal of Pacific Christian High School in Victoria, expects his school to be down, marginally, in numbers next year. More serious are the long-term prospects. "We graduated 90 from high school this year; we expect 60 to 65 newcomers. We're looking at a decline, not a big crash."

O'Dell said the school has to reach out to a broader market, something it has been doing since its founding by members of the Christian Reformed church. Now Pacific Christian is the school of choice for a broad range of denominations.

Herfst said Christian schools must be true to their mission – but also reach out to a wider market and dig deeper into their current market: the churches. Bigger schools are getting serious, by creating marketing and recruiting positions. Independent schools have steadily taken a market share from public schools since getting funding in the late 1970s; they now claim over 10 percent of the school age population.

Herfst said he doubted that much of this shift is due to parental protest over specific content in public schools. He said schools in southern B.C. are still a going concern.



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More parents choosing 'school at home'

By Grace Jorgensen

FOR the majority of parents, enrolling kids in public or private school has been the familiar and 'reasonable' option.

However, it is not the only option; and many families across B.C. are now choosing to teach their children at home. Parents who make this choice can follow one of two paths.

Traditional homeschooling places the parent completely in charge of the child's learning. There is little funding support for parents making this choice; but the freedom to cultivate their children's gifts is liberating, and opens many doors of opportunity.



Traditional home school students do not lack opportunities for further education. In fact, a traditionally homeschooled student has just been accepted into UBC without a B.C. Certificate of Graduation, having challenged the grade 12 provincial exams.

There is another approach, for parents wanting more structure and accountability, and a report card and a diploma for their kids. The Distributed Learning (DL) program gives teacher support and direction. Some 18,000 students in B.C. are doing all or part of their schooling at home through DL.

Home-based programs are free to the parents, and the cost of materials and activities that directly relate to the student learning plan can be partially absorbed by the school. Parents have a responsibility to implement the teacher-directed learning plan, and communicate regularly with the teacher.

Why are so many choosing to school at home? Because these parents want to nurture their own children.

Eminent psychologist Gordon Neufeld, in his book *Hold On to Your Kids: Why Parents Matter*, presents a strong argument for schooling children in a nurturing home environment. Family travel, flexible schedules, individualized learning, and freedom from peer pressure and bullying, are a few more of the reasons. For many, public school is simply not an option. The recent economic crunch forces some parents with children in private schools to look at alternatives.

School at home requires a parent or caregiver to be in the home, and this can impose adjustments to household income. But with only a few short years to educate their children, many parents believe the extra time and money invested now will provide benefits for generations to come.

The longstanding concern that children schooled at home will not be adequately socialized is a myth buried in the past. Opportunities for socialization abound.

One example is the Graduation Program offered by Traditional Learning Academy (TLA) to high school students. Students meet their teachers online in a virtual classroom, with fellow students around the province. Students may never meet face to face, but they share concerns, interact in enjoyable activities, and pray for each other.

When a teen is unhappy, the whole family knows about it! Junior High students in grades 8–9 often feel trapped in a world of questions such as, "Where do I belong, and why do I have to do this?" TLA has recognized the needs of such teens, and developed a unique program that allows students opportunities to engage in 'real' learning that makes sense.

There is one other important consideration. Special needs students are falling through the public school cracks. More and more parents are bringing their children back home, believing they can do a better job and give their children more individualized attention than they would receive in the overburdened public system.

Parents know the potential of their own children, and desire for them to be all they can become. The world is changing, and parents need to know they have options. School at home is rapidly becoming a key choice of the future.

Grace Jorgensen is director of relations for Traditional Learning Academy.

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TRADITIONAL LEARNING ACADEMY

The Home Learning Specialists



"Traditional Learning Academy is a fully accredited BC Independent school with a firm foundation in Christian Principles. The Distributed Learning (DL) and Homeschool divisions exist to provide support to all homeschoolers across BC, both secular and Christian."

HOME LEARNING OPTIONS

REGISTERED "TRADITIONAL" HOMESCHOOLING

TLA recognizes that some families are best suited to homeschool the traditional way. Parents are "in charge" of their child(ren)'s learning at home. The learning program is self paced with no mandatory tests or exams. Parents are free to choose learning resources without any obligation to follow Ministry of Education learning outcomes. A knowledgeable and experienced consultant is available to assist families with implementing a program.

ENROLLED DL (DISTRIBUTED LEARNING)

Students learn at home under the direction of a BC Certified teacher. Programs for grade K - 9 students and the courses for grade 10 - 12 students may be paper-based, computer based, online or a combination of all three formats. The teacher's supportive role is to ensure the student is meeting the BC Ministry of Education learning outcomes in effective and individualized ways.

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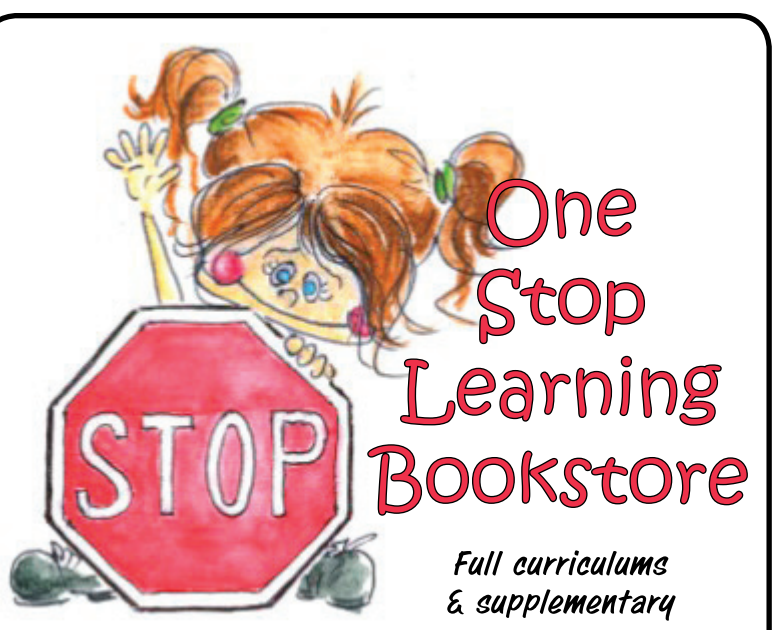

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Empowering the laity with good theology

By Andrew Tsai

KOINOS, from the Greek word for 'common' or 'together,' is a program that offers adult believers basic theological education – so they can become effective disciples of Christ. It was developed by the Pacific Association for Theological Studies, in Seattle.

Each series consists of 10 full-day seminars spread out over 10 months, all taught by world-class scholar-teachers – such as Dr. Carl Armerding, renowned Old Testament scholar and former president of Regent College.



Regent College alumnus Soo-Inn Tan is one of the lecturers participating in Koinos.

The program was brought to Vancouver by Richmond Chinese Alliance Church (RCAC) a year ago. Nearly 200 individuals participated in a series of Saturday seminars; 60 completed the entire series, leading to a Certificate in Christian Foundations. The series can be accessed on the Christian Info Society website, at: www.canadianchristianity.com/koinos/.

Contrary to many people's assumption that 'lay' Christians are not interested in theology, many participants were fascinated by the wealth and depth of Christian theology.

"I am grateful for the opportunity to strengthen my Christian faith and enhance my theological understanding through the rich provision of the Koinos seminars," commented Jack Chow. "I won't hesitate to recommend these seminars to Christians from any walk of life."

Dr. W. Ward Gasque, pastor of English congregation at RCAC, is the founder and facilitator of Koinos. Applying the biblical teaching of the priesthood of all believers, his intention is to make theology accessible to every Christian. Because most church-going people do not have the time or the money to attend a seminary, Koinos is intended to bring the condensed version of seminary education to those who are interested.

The 101 series includes fundamental subjects such as Bible 101, New Testament 101, Old Testament 101, Christian Spirituality 101, Christian Ethics 101 and Global Mission 101. For those who are thinking of investing in formal theological studies, Koinos offers a foretaste.

Having completed the 101 series, RCAC is planning to host a 201 series beginning in September, and a 301 series after that. Those who complete each series will get a certificate – and with extra work, they can obtain credit through Carey Theological College.

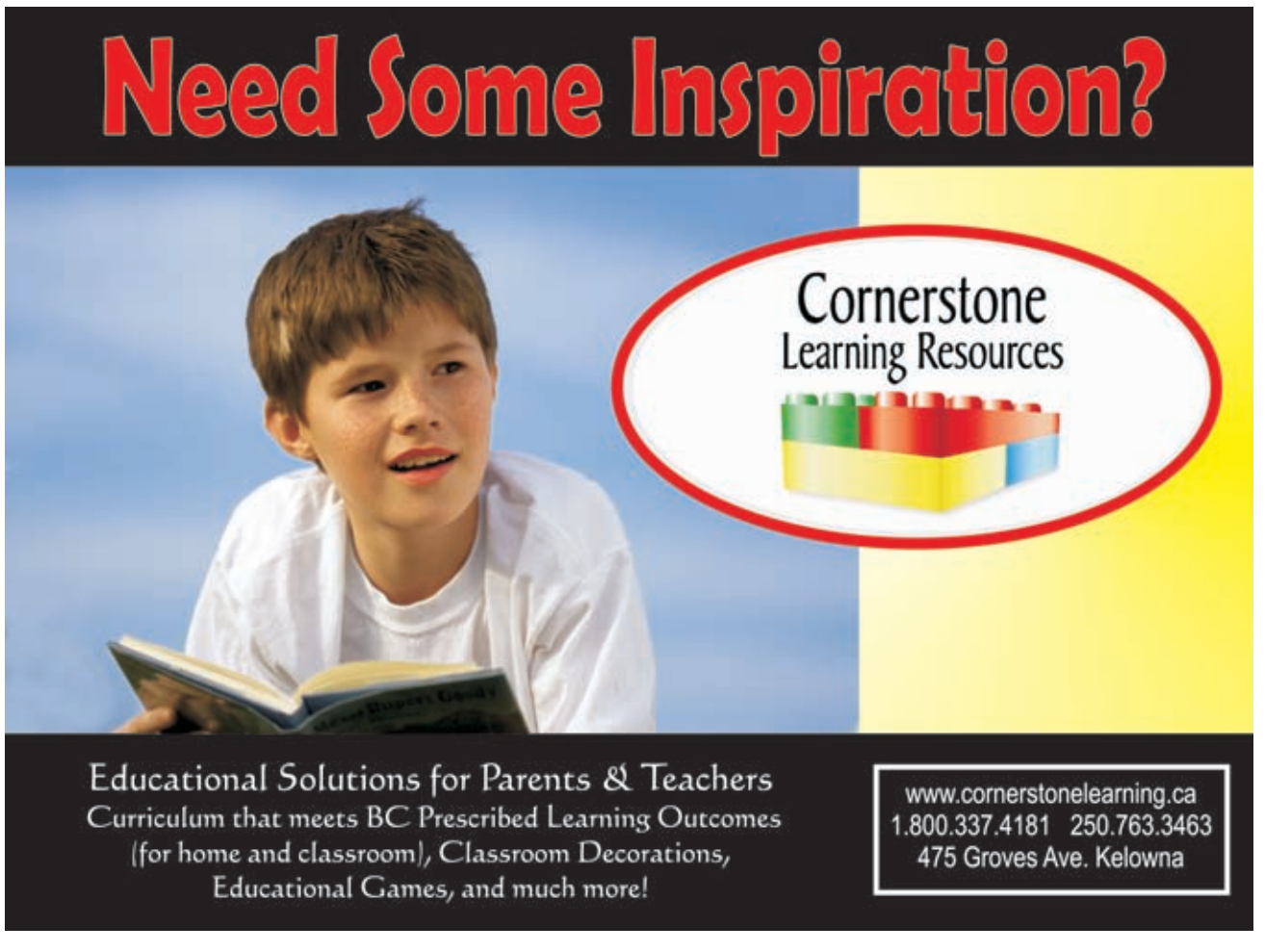
Also in September, the Koinos 101 series will be offered at Lord's Grace Church in Vancouver; and West Vancouver Baptist Church on the North Shore. People from all churches are welcomed at each location.

There is a modest fee of $30 per seminar or $250 per series, including lunch and extensive printed materials. Several other churches have expressed interest in hosting the program.

Koinos is producing both audio recordings and DVDs for use by churches and individuals around the world. Requests have already been received from a missionary educator in Uganda, to use the seminar materials for the training of lay preachers. For more information, call 778.887.2350.

Andrew Tsai is a student at Regent College.











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'Folk,' from page 10

Sunday morning, the Vancouver Outreach Community (VOC) Soul Gospel Choir commandeered a small stage, set against a beautiful backdrop of trees and blue sky. Missing my own church, I was looking forward to what was likely to be the closest thing to a church service at the Festival.

Opening with a lively version of 'This Little Light of Mine,' the show progressed through a mix of songs, ranging from 'I Believe I Can Fly,' to the 60s hit, 'How Sweet It Is (To Be Loved by You).' With his characteristic energy, music director Checo Tohomaso bopped around the stage, garnering enthusiasm from both choir and crowd.



Vancouver's Checo Tohomaso

The choir itself showcased several outstanding soloists, and while I thought the male section was rather weak, the enthusiastic clapping and dancing of the audience indicated they thoroughly enjoy the show. While labelling the performance as 'church' may have been a bit of a stretch, my spirit was lifted. It set a positive tone for the rest of the day.

Later in the day, feeling the effects of too much sun exposure, I went in search of shade – a rare commodity in the main stage area. In my wanderings, I stumbled across the 'Little Folks' station, swarming with kids.

Small pools of water and toys were being enjoyed by the younger children, and a large rock climbing wall had been set up for the more adventurous kids. Sienna was too young to benefit from the amenities, but I envisioned her joining the cheerful ranks of seasoned Festival kids in a few years.

Legendary gospel diva Mavis Staples provided the 'grand finale' of the festival, with a dynamic performance that was both glitzy and personable. With her distinctively low and throaty voice, she covered a variety of familiar songs, ranging from the Staple Singers classic, 'Respect Yourself,' to the old spiritual, 'Wade in the Water.'

At one point, remembering a childhood visit to Martin Luther King Jr's church with her father, 'Pops' Staples, Mavis emphasized the influence the preacher's message of equality and social justice had on their songs. "If he can preach it," 'Pops' had said, "We can sing it." Coming from the family once hailed as 'God's Greatest Hit Makers,' Mavis showed she is still an influential force in gospel music.

Lest I portray the Folk Festival as a family-friendly utopia, I must caution that, while I did not recall seeing a single unhappy kid the entire weekend (save my own, close to feeding time), several musicians used strong profanities, and there were a number of references to drug use.

That being said, however, the majority of workshops and concerts that I attended simply provided great entertainment by a talented group of musicians from places ranging from Ghana to Ireland to Canada, whose music often highlighted environmental issues, or areas of social injustice.

As a Christian parent, I want to raise my child with not only an appreciation for the good things in God's creation (music, community), but also an awareness of the issues that exist in this world, and an ability to infuse a Christian perspective into the dialogue surrounding those issues.

The Folk Festival provides a terrific venue to facilitate these goals, while offering quality music and a fun atmosphere that can be appreciated by grown-ups and kids alike.

Job Market · Job Market

BRITISH COLUMBIA CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

Learning Resource Centre Teaching Positions

As of August 1st, 2009, British Columbia Christian Academy (Pre K–12) is seeking to employ either one of the following positions:

Full-time Learning Resource Centre Department Head whose duties would include (but not be limited to) overseeing the K thru 12 Learning Assistance programs of the school (which includes both remedial and enrichment programs), applying for grants for special needs students and implementing CAT, GRADE, and other assessment testing.

Half-time Intermediate Learning Resource Centre Teacher whose duties would include (but not be limited to) serving as the Elementary LRC Department Head, overseeing the intermediate grades' Learning Assistance program (which includes both remedial and enrichment programs), applying for grants for special needs students, and implementing CAT, GRADE, and other assessment testing.

Only qualified persons need apply, please, which means the candidate must have related/similar work experience.
British Columbia Christian Academy only employs Christian teachers who are B.C. Certified.

Please send your cover letter, resume, statement of faith, and philosophy of Christian Education paper to the attention of Mr. Travis Bryerton, Elementary Principal, at tbryerton@bcchristianacademy.ca ; or fax: 604-945-6455; mail: 1019 Fernwood St., Port Coquitlam, BC, V3B 5A8

Job Market
BC CHRISTIAN NEWS

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A full description for the Youth Director position is at www.lefc.ca. Submit your resumé to katie@lefc.ca.



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St. Andrew's & St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church requires a part-time children & youth pastor to assume overall responsibility for our Children and Youth ministries. For full details, please see the job description on our website at: **www.sasspc.bc.ca**

The terms and benefits of this part-time position include:
- It is part-time, based upon 20 hours per week.
- Remuneration will be $20,000/annum, and the candidate will be enrolled in the PCC's extended health and dental plan.
- Vacation time will be 3 weeks per year.

Please submit a resumé and a covering letter to our church office as soon as possible. (Email preferred)

St. Andrew's & St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church
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LifeChurch White Rock is currently accepting resumes for the position of **Mission Facilitator**, to begin September 1st. This is a part-time position, 20 hours per week, with some on call work on Sundays as needed. The successful applicant will be a highly organized self-starter who exhibits attention to detail and excellence, has the ability to foresee what will be required for upcoming tasks or events, and the initiative to effectively address them.

LifeChurch White Rock is a non-denominational church that has been a vibrant part of the South Surrey/White Rock community for almost fifty years. We are a Bible-based, family-based church of approximately 200 members and we place a strong value on each member connecting with the God-given passion in their own hearts and living out of that mission in their day to day life.

To apply for this position, please drop off (or mail) your resume by August 7th at:
LifeChurch White Rock, Attention: Theresa Fryer, 2265 152 Street, Surrey, BC V4A 4P1
or email your resume to theresaafryer@yahoo.ca

Fujian Evangelical Church Richmond, BC



The Fujian Evangelical Church (FEC) is a Reformed Church in America (RCA) congregation committed to reaching out to people in need of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Fujian is a coastal province in southeast China. The Fujianese people in generations past have migrated to places such as the Philippines, Taiwan, Malaysia and Singapore.

The FEC congregation consists of a majority of Fujianese-speaking immigrants from the Philippines. Though an immigrant church, over two-thirds attend one of the two English Language Services. Our total congregation size is about 400 people; about 70 are preteens and teens.

Youth Pastor Search

FEC requires the dedicated service of an enthusiastic, creative, relational, and Christ-centered Youth Pastor who would employ his/her passions and gifts to lead and motivate our youth to passionately follow Christ 24/7/365. The youth of FEC include middle school (grade 6 – 8) and high school (grade 9 – 12) aged children.

For more details, please go to www.fujianevangelical.org/jobs/youth-pastor.

Application
Applicants should submit a detailed resume with a cover letter that reflects their knowledge, skills and abilities relevant to this position. A list of references is also required. Applications must be received by August 31st, 2009.

Email address:
pastorsearch@fujianevangelical.org

THE SALVATION ARMY

Giving Hope Today

The Salvation Army - Cascade Culinary Arts School

POSITION: Culinary Arts School Program Director/Instructor

FACILITY: Cascade Community Church and Banquet Centre, Abbotsford, BC

The Salvation Army, a Christian charitable organization, requires a Culinary Arts School Program Director/Instructor for its PCTIA accredited Cascade Culinary Arts School in Abbotsford (www.culinaryartsabbotsford.ca).

The successful applicant will be a Red Seal Chef with a Post-Secondary Instructor Diploma (or at least working towards the diploma), and a minimum of 3 years related work experience. For more information, visit www.cascadechurch.ca/Employment.htm.

Interested applicants must respond by August 10, 2009 to:
sylvia.antonescu@shawcable.com

We thank all applicants, however, only those candidates to be interviewed will be contacted.

Job Market

BC Christian News



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Visit **www.seedsofhopecm.com** to see the exciting and rewarding projects currently in progress. The successful candidate must agree with the vision and policies of Seeds of Hope ministry as well as accept the Seeds of Hope statement of faith.

Resumes with references can be sent to
jchalkias@seedsofhopecm.com

Tabor Home Society

tabor home

Tabor Home is a residential complex care facility and part of the Tabor Village "Campus of Care", located in Abbotsford, BC.

We are a Christian Health Care Community providing "Care from the Heart" in an environment of compassion, sensitivity, and respect for the whole person.

We invite you to visit our website at
www.taborhome.org
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Director, People Development

deadline: Aug. 5

for more info visit **www.ugm.ca/jobs**

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The successful applicant should have experience and training in the area of interest, hold a BCCT Certification or BC Independent Schools Certification, possess strong communication and organizational skills, and be a committed Christian. Application package should include a complete resume, statement of faith, reference letters, and a letter from a pastor. For further information/details, please contact Karren Chupa at the email address listed below.

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Interested applicants should contact Cates Hill Chapel
by e-mail: **chcpastorsearch@gmail.com**
or phone: **604-947-4260**

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or email dbue@childcareworldwide.ca

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Family Pastor Positions

Cloverdale Baptist Church, in Surrey, BC, is seeking two additional family pastors to fill the full-time positions of Children's Ministries and Discipleship/Assimilation. For more info:
www.cloverdalebaptistchurch.ca

EXTREME Outreach Society

Office Administrator

Extreme Outreach Society in Victoria BC is seeking a part-time gifted Office Administrator for September 2009. Someone who works well in a ministry environment. Extreme Outreach is primarily focused on children and families.

Please submit resume and cover letter to
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999 McKenzie Ave, Victoria BC, V8X 3G8
P: 250-384-2064
F: 250-386-2064

Employment opportunities at

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Columbia Bible College seeks a full-time person to connect with Columbia's donors, churches, and publics to provide accountability to them as well as encourage their support. Proposed start time: August 2009.

Please view our website for more details, qualifications and requirements regarding this position at
http://www.columbiabc.edu/facultystaff/employment.html

Agreement with CBC's mission statement, Responsibilities of Community Membership and Confession of Faith is essential. Membership in Mennonite Church or willingness to join is required.

Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

Please mail or email resume and cover letter to:
Human Resource Officer, Columbia Bible College
2940 Clearbrook Road, Abbotsford BC V2T 2Z8
Email: brenda.foth@columbiabc.edu

THE SALVATION ARMY

Giving Hope Today

Gateway of Hope in Langley, BC is currently looking for a **Director of Food Services/ Instructor of Hospitality Server Training Program** to become part of the management team. Become a part of the largest non governmental direct provider of social services in Canada. The Salvation Army has been helping people since 1886 in B.C. and with the help of focused, solution orientated individuals the clients will be well served in the needs they may have.

We are requesting resumes of those that have experience in Food Service Management and Instruction in the Hospitality industry and that would love to make a difference in tangible ways in people's lives. Would you like to interact on a professional level, yet instill love and joy with those you serve? Does going above and beyond the status quo excite you?

We are purposed to make a difference for each life that we would have the privilege of serving, if you would like to be part of a dynamic team, please apply by fax or email to **604.514.0797** or **info@gatewayofhope.ca** only those contacted before September 15, 2009 will be advised of the staffing action.

Resumes will be accepted until August 28, 2009.
Basic First Aid, Food Safe and WHMIS will be requirements for this position.

THE SALVATION ARMY

Giving Hope Today

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

EMERGENCY SHELTER & RESIDENTIAL HOUSING SUPPORT STAFF

Gateway of Hope in Langley, BC is currently looking for Residential Support Staff to assist our Director of Emergency Shelter and Housing. Become a part of the largest non governmental direct provider of social services in Canada.

The Salvation Army has been helping people in British Columbia since 1886 and with the help of focused, solution orientated individuals the clients will be well served in the needs they may have.

We are requesting resumes of those that have experience in Emergency Shelter and Residential Housing services who would love to make a difference in tangible ways in people's lives. Applicants should have experience with those in addiction, those that have mental health concerns and are in crisis. Would you like to interact on a professional level, yet instill love and joy with those you serve? Does going above and beyond the status quo excite you? We are purposed to make a difference for each life that we would have the privilege of serving.

Please apply by fax or email to **604.514.0797** or **info@gatewayofhope.ca**.
Only those contacted before Sept 11 2009 will be advised of the staffing action.
Resumes will be accepted until Aug 28 2009

Basic First Aid, WHMIS and Food Safe will be requirements for all positions.

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CHRISTIAN Marketpages



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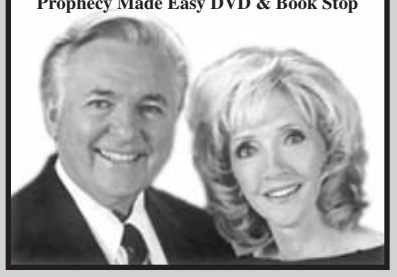

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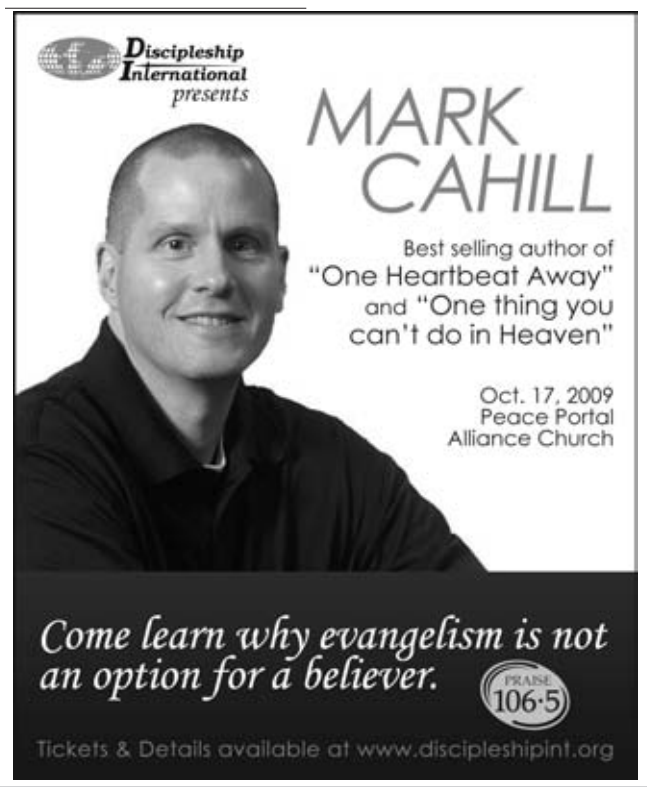

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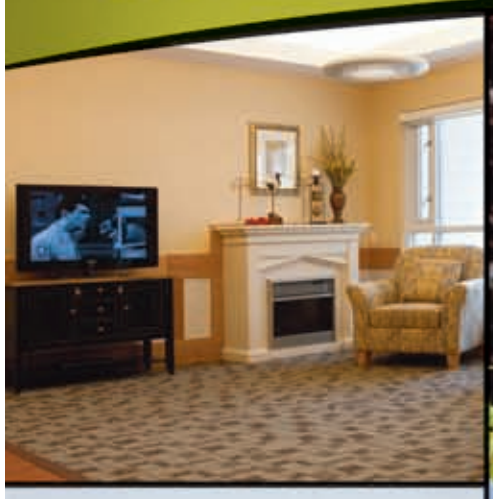



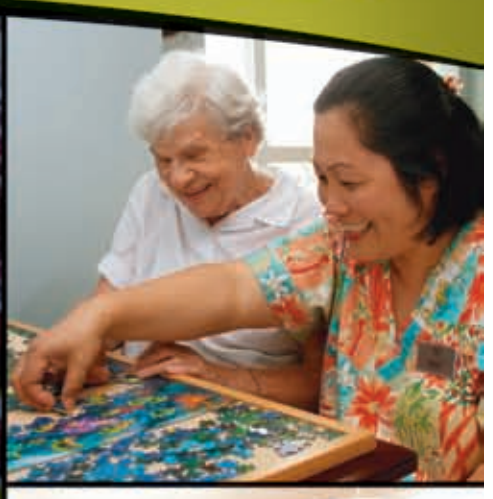





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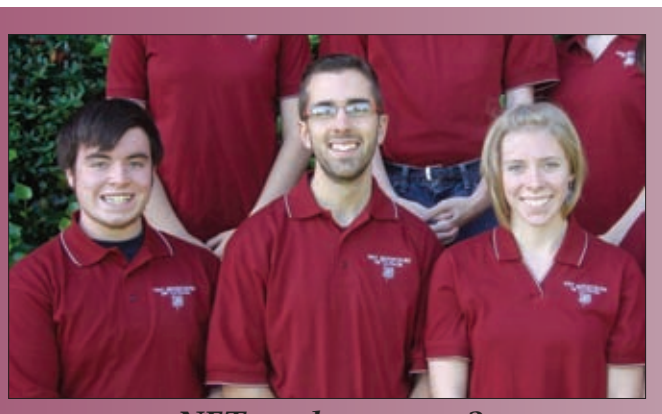
Section B

Local news roundup – page 7

AUGUST 2009



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Streethope – page 5

BC Christian News

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Victoria Seals pitcher Chris Bodishbaugh in action. Aside from home team fans, the Seals also have the support of a baseball chaplain – former Baptist pastor Peter McRaild. See story on page 6. Photo courtesy of Victoria Seals.

Anti-graffiti art by Christian school rejected

By Steve Weatherbe

IT should have been a win-win deal: downtown Duncan gets free murals on walls that too often invite unsightly graffiti; high school students get to leave their mark on their hometown, before heading off to university or big city jobs.

Instead, there are soured relations between Duncan Christian School (DCS), some downtown business people and City Hall; plenty of disappointed art students; a promising project halted in its tracks; and store walls waiting to be vandalized.

Perhaps nobody is as unhappy as Garry MacGregor of the Duncan Business Improvement Society. His group has tried to combat graffiti for its entire 15-year history, and saw student-painted murals as a surefire deterrent.

"The people who do graffiti invariably respect the art of others: when an area looks like it's being cared for, they leave it alone," he said.

As for the quality of the student art: "It was student art, not Chemainus," he admitted – referring to the nearby town famous for its use of every available stretch of downtown wall, for professionally-done murals depicting local history.

DCS's mural would have graced the building housing Telus. "I thought Duncan Christian's mural idea was great – and the people at Telus embraced it," said MacGregor.

However, a majority on town council felt differently. After approving two murals without debate, by local Katimavik volunteers and students at Queen Margaret School, the councilors suddenly decided, on seeing DCS's proposal, that they could approve no more without first establishing criteria.

"By the third one, they decided they were losing control," said MacGregor. "I feel really badly for the students."

See 'Mural,' page 4

Kayak excursion to help African kids

ATHLETIC skills have frequently been utilized to raise funds for charitable causes. But usually, the athletes involved have companions helping them.

Mark Towery is travelling alone, in an excursion around Vancouver Island. If he is successful in raising funds, children in Malawi will benefit.

Towery has built a Florida-based ministry around his favourite form of recreation. As a press release put it, "Mark is an avid kayaker – and has decided to put his love of the sport together with helping children worldwide. Thus, Kayaking for Christ was founded."

His circumnavigation of the Island began July 6, when he left Roche Harbor in the San Juan Islands. The total length of his intended route will be approximately 800 - 1,000 miles. The entire trip, travelling counterclockwise around the Island, is expected to take four to six weeks – depending upon weather conditions.

The mandate of Towery's organization "is to organize challenging kayaking trips in an effort to raise funds for children in need . . . A charity [is] chosen for each trip planned . . . These charities go to countries where Christians are not only persecuted, but children never even get a chance to read the Bible and choose for themselves."

For the Island trip, the ministry has chosen Cross International, Inc. as the beneficiary. Cross International provides food, medicine and education to vulnerable kids.

The particular project which will benefit from Towery's effort is Kondanani Children's Village in Malawi. The village ministers to a population where AIDS is rampant among adults, and youngsters often die of starvation.

The village "rescues these infants and provides them with the tender loving care they need to grow strong."

To track Towery's progress, or to donate, go to: kayakingforchrist.com

– David F. Dawes



Mark Towery, kayaker for Christ.

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NEW VOLUNTEERS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME

Former addict offers a Neway

By Gary Bennett

HIS LIFE is one that is marked with thanksgiving.

But it hasn't always been that way for Darrell Vanderhoek.

The early years started out well enough. He grew up in a Christian home and went to a Christian school. But as a teenager, he started experimenting with drugs.

A few years later he got married; but as the drug use escalated, the marriage disintegrated.



Darrell Vanderhoek of Neway Recovery Home.

At age 28, he found himself divorced and lonely. Crack cocaine and alcohol became his best friends; his 154 pounds of body weight was stretched over his 6 foot 1 inch frame.

He describes the period of his life from 1998 to 2007 as "a decade of a downward spiral" of drug and alcohol abuse. But since Thanksgiving Day 2007, Vanderhoek has been experiencing the blessing of a clean and sober walk with God. His life is now marked with gratitude and grace.

Not being one to hoard the opportunity of a new life for himself, Vanderhoek has set out in recent months to investigate what it would take to provide a place for "supported sober living," for those like him who had been caught in the throes of drug and alcohol addiction.

Such places are currently available, but he discovered that for every thousand beds available for men there is only one bed available for women. So he decided to do something about it. His investigation turned to action.

Neway Recovery Home in Esquimalt is the result. It officially opened on May 15.

Vanderhoek is careful to point out that Neway is not a treatment centre. It is simply supportive housing. Any in-depth treatment that takes place in the lives of Neway's residents is outsourced to other agencies. But Neway is an essential place of community and compassion. Simply stated, it's 'home.'

Currently, there are four young women living at Neway, in two bedrooms with bunk beds. For them, the life is structured. Neway's only staff member, Tricia Law, supervises their daytime activities.

Each day starts out at 7 am with breakfast. From 7:30 to 8 am, they split up the chores – bathroom, kitchen, laundry, garbage, recycling and vacuuming. From 9 to 11 am, the women gather for a 'feeling check' – a session much more like a family meeting than a group counselling session.

Lunch is served from 12 to 12:30 pm. Then, for the next hour, the women do their 'step work' – using the 12-step program of Narcotics Anonymous (NA). The rest of the afternoon is free time, with dinner served from 5 to 6 pm. In the evening, each woman is required to go offsite to a meeting of NA or Alcoholics Anonymous. Curfew is at 10 pm.

The Neway Recovery Home is not an overtly Christian agency. Vanderhoek claims that it is a far more effective approach to "lead by example," than to be "preachy."

The women are given the option of substituting one of their offsite support meetings with a visit to a local church gathering. A couple of the women have been attending the New Life Community Church. There is also a library in the home, with some of the shelves stocked with Christian books and other inspirational materials.

From personal experience, Vanderhoek knows it is ultimately the love and grace of God that is able to transform lives. For years, he was caught in a perpetual cycle of failure – never able to forgive himself and too ashamed to ask for help.

He would often see the names of his father Harry and stepmother Ann appearing on his cellphone call display; but out of embarrassment, he would refuse to pick up the call. Finally, the love of God – expressed through parents, family, and friends – broke through.

When Darrell would say in self-condemnation, "I'm just a crackhead," Ann would counter: "Did you know that when Jesus died on the cross, he died with Darrell on his heart?" Harry, with outstretched arms, would then add: "And all God wants is to bring you back in."

Vanderhoek credits his recovery to the ongoing support of his parents and his sister; his pastor, Harvey Roosma; and his church family at Christ Community Church – who, he says, continually remind him of the forgiveness of God and the fact that "God loves me."

Vanderhoek still carries some of the marks of a painful past. He suffers from Hepatitis C, and has lost a lot of his teeth. But his heart has been forever changed, and he lives with a passion to help others break free from the bondage of addiction – and to find meaning, purpose and fulfillment in life.

One step in that healing process is to have a place to eat, sleep – and call home.

For more information on Neway Recovery Home, you can call 250.590.5697.

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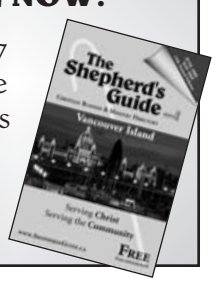

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NET worker in unique position to help youth



Catholic youth worker Bradley Cameron (second from left in front row) is seen here with other members of the National Evangelization Team, with whom he spent a year at St. Joseph's parish in Victoria. Photo: BC Catholic.

By Steve Weatherbe

A RARE BIRD is Bradley Cameron, the new youth minister at St. Joseph the Worker parish in Greater Victoria.

Though they are common in the Maritimes where Cameron is from, and in Vancouver, which is flush with immigrant Catholic youth, there are no other paid staff in Vancouver Island's Catholic parishes specializing in youth.

"This is the way to go," said St. Joe's pastor Father William Hann, a former high school teacher and fellow Maritimer. "We need youth," he said, and noted that youth need the church to guide them in a culture that offers them "so many gods: money, power, sex."

Hann credits two young parishioners, Del Myers and Robin Daniels, with providing the push for a youth minister. Both had full-time experience in the field, having done stints with National Evangelization Team (NET) Ministries.

NET trains teams of young college-age Catholics, and sends them out for a year of evangelizing teens in a series of high schools or a single parish.

Daniels said NET reaches out to parish teens in four ways: with solid Catholic teaching; building fellowship; addressing big and relevant issues like sex before marriage, abortion, war, and drugs; and service. Teens, he emphasized, "need to see faith in action." Daniels said a typical month of activities would feature one weekend night devoted to issues, another to fun and socializing, and two to teaching the faith.

NET, he stressed, will only do a year-long mission in a parish that is committed to taking youth ministry seriously over the long run – which, as far as he's concerned, means hiring a full time person.

"Otherwise you get volunteer burnout," he said. Enthusiastic volunteers can do it for awhile, but not forever. Hence, most Catholic parishes don't have this form of ministry.

Daniels pointed out, in his pitch to Hann and the parish council, something noted by University of Lethbridge sociologist Reg Bibby: that while Catholic teen involvement in church had diminished in recent years, evangelical Protestant teens had maintained their participation.

"Protestants throw a lot of money at this, more money than most Catholic parishes would dream of spending on youth ministry," said Daniels.

The parish went for NET – and so did other Victoria parishes, who happily directed their youth to the weekly 'Ignight' events. Starting with 50 young people, the event was attracting several hundred by the end of its stint. Hann figures 60 percent of those are from St. Joe's, and the rest from other parishes.

Now, with NET gone, the parish has followed through and hired one of the team to return on a full-time basis.

Cameron, 19, got involved with NET by following in his older brother's footsteps. He applied, without full commitment – but, told BCCN, "ultimately the Holy Spirit decided."

He said he sees teenagers as generally "pretty apathetic towards God. When they are in trouble, they may pray; but when things are going well, they aren't much interested. God is far off in the distance and they are not sure who he is. They are not aware of God's love nor of their own self worth."

Cameron was surprised to get the call from Hann. "I'd gotten the sense I was being called to do another year of ministry – but I thought it would be with NET."

Both Cameron and Daniels stressed the social aspect of youth ministry. "The big way to increase the numbers is to get those who come to bring their friends," said Cameron. "It's like the chicken and the egg," added Daniels. "In order to get teens to come, you have to get their friends to come."

The point, said Daniels, is to lead the teenagers to a close relationship with Christ, and into the life of the church.

Hann believes an important part of the way to do that is through the Catholic church's social teachings – which means "responding to the downtrodden and the broken."

Teens already have a passion for justice, he said, but often don't know that the church does as well. Hann, who taught social justice for 15 years at St. Andrew's Catholic High School, concluded: "Kids need to know Jesus not just in their heads. They need to know they can do great things for others."

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Duncan Christian School student Lindsay Bakker with the painting her school planned on turning into a mural.

'Mural,' from page 1

By the time the project was vetoed, the Grade 11–12 art class from DCS had already bought the paint, and put up the first coat of blue background. Senior student Lindsay Bakker had even sketched the main elements on top of that.

"It's unfortunate," said DCS principal Kevin Visscher. "The students were devastated . . . We were willing to dialogue, to make the work [more] presentable; but we got the impression they just didn't want to do business with Duncan Christian School."

The project had been incorporated into the course, so the marking scheme had to be rejigged to make up for the lost work. Visscher noted that the school has participated in other projects to beautify the city, such as one inviting organizations to create banners to hang from lampposts.

"It's certainly a strange way to treat young people who are trying to make a difference. City council made zero communication with them. It's very deflating," added DCS development director Norm Sowden.

Mayor Phil Kent was embarrassed by the situation. Council, he said, was growing increasingly uncomfortable with each successive mural. "There were no criteria around what subjects were chosen, the quality of the work, preservation issues." And then, there were people on council with "an artistic eye," who "didn't like all the dark blue" in the DCS mural.

Kent accepted council's decision to approve no more murals until criteria had been worked out with the Business Development Association. However, he tried – unsuccessfully – to get the decision amended to allow the DCS mural through first.

Lindsay Bakker said she's "over it . . . But it would have been cool. We'd never done a mural." However, she concluded, "These things happen."

The young artist is looking forward to attending Nanaimo's Vancouver Island University, where she hopes to combine her artistic interests with cooking.

An award winner's 'joyful service'



Award-winning phys ed teacher John Stewart with students.

By Steve Weatherbe

JOHN Stewart was youth pastor at the Western Communities Baptist Church in Colwood – when he felt God calling him to something different.

Coincidentally – not that he believes it *was* a coincidence – a mid-year vacancy suddenly opened up at Pacific Christian School (PCS), in the very field he had trained in at Biola University in Los Angeles: health and physical education.

"My wife Jennifer, who was already teaching there, came home with the news. It's very rare for openings in mid-year," he told *BCCN*.

'What drives him is helping kids . . . use their gifts for God's glory.'

That was 11 years ago. This spring, his efforts were recognized by PHE (Physical and Health Education) Canada, with the national organization's Teaching Excellence Award for British Columbia.

PHE Canada's B.C. board representative, Irene Wallace, commented: "I don't think I have ever known anyone who is so creative, willing to push the edge, willing to give – yet so humble."

The award cited Stewart's promotion of a "lifestyle of fitness," designed to empower his students to make healthy choices and work as good team members.

Left out of these official commendations, inevitably, were Stewart's evangelistic endeavours.

His approach to witnessing for Jesus Christ has resulted in informal encounters he believes are hugely important – in and out of class, in casual lunchtime conversations, and coaching PCS's senior volleyball and basketball teams.

"A big part of our vision is life lived in joyful service," said Stewart, who was caught completely by surprise by the award.

Someone who got the message in a big way is recent PCS grad Erin van Wiltenburg, whose recommendation of her former coach formed part of the nomination to PHE.

She said Stewart encouraged his students to "find themselves and dream big."

Van Wiltenburg dreamed big – and found herself running across several African countries last year, with another PCS grad. Their 'See Them Run' trek raised money for education initiatives in Africa.

Stewart also started triathlon classes for both juniors and seniors – with an end-of-year race which includes a 300-metre swim, 10 kilometre bike race, and three kilometre run.

The race ends at the school, where students from his leadership class lay on an appropriate welcome and celebration.

PCS principal Dave O'Dell described his athletic director as "a pretty energetic fellow. What drives him is helping kids to develop and to use their gifts for God's glory, to develop as citizens. We are very proud of him."

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Streethope: soup for the soul – and Nanaimo bars, too

By Steve Weatherbe

THE CHILD is father to the man, the saying goes – and in Victoria, a ministry for street teenagers was father to a ministry for street adults.

Streethope is the name of this hybrid ministry, operating on the rough northeast edge of the capital's downtown – out of an aging cottage, to the rear of St. John the Divine's Anglican Church. The neighborhood is an area of low rent, soup kitchens and drug abuse.

Streethope has just released a book. It combines the favourite recipes of volunteer cook Barb Stoeckel; and pithy tales from the ministry's sole paid staffer, longtime Church Army evangelist Rick Sandberg.

The Church Army is the Anglican church's answer to the Salvation Army, addressing the evangelical and social needs of the poor since the early 1880s. Sandberg is actually a captain, but there is no rank or ceremony in evidence at the spartan cottage – dubbed 'the Shoe Box Place,' because of the street survival kits it has been handing out for 20 years in shoeboxes.

Sandberg is big and affable man who, when this reporter arrives on the spur of the moment, is patiently helping an emaciated young woman find a truck to move her possessions.

A quick tour reveals a computer; a cupboard half full of small boxes packed with cans and packs of food; the world's smallest kitchen;a compact front room already crowded with coffee, fruit drinks and three people . . . and – that's it. The other half of the cottage is otherwise occupied.

Though Sandberg gives the impression he could easily preach to a large gathering, he likes the low-key intimacy of Streethope – which might only host three dozen street people a week.

There was a time when teenagers with backpacks abounded in Victoria's downtown, and Sandberg was assigned to minister to them – accountable at one time to Youth for Christ, and at another to the Anglican Diocese of British Columbia.

For whatever reasons, the teens have dwindled, though Streethope still serves them weekday early afternoons – offering refreshments, a sympathetic ear, and shoeboxes.

"Around 2004, people started showing up on our back step – and we decided we've got to do something," said Sandberg. 'People' being adult street people – and 'we' being his cadre of volunteers: Barb Stoeckel, Sue Patterson and Erick Hinton.

So late afternoon became the time to invite in the far-gone folks society has generally abandoned – but who, in Victoria, are provided for in large numbers a block from the Shoe Box, at Our Place.

Still, there are stragglers who shun the numbers at Our Place – and these are Streethope's congregation.

"It's a personal ministry. We do referrals to social agencies, help hunt for apartments, help people feel like they are somebody," said Sandberg. Most of those who show up are addicted to one thing or another. He believes they can't recover from these problems until they first "feel God's unfailing love" – and thus recover self worth.

In the meantime, too many believe they can't be saved if they are still addicts, and so they abandon hope. Streethope loves them in Christ's name, said Sandberg, "as they are." Which turns out not to be all that hard, he maintained. "They look scary. But they are great people once you get to know them."

To draw some attention, Streethope has published *Recipes for the Ultimate High*. It features 17 recipes for soup, and one for Nanaimo bars – interspersed with Sandberg's anecdotes, and some letters from former street people.

One named Shannon writes to thank Sandberg for helping her with air fare back to New Brunswick and her family. Another woman, Pauline, recounts how she got off the street after four years of help from Streethope – and after 13 more years of struggle finally came to Christ.

In one of Sandberg's tales, he describes persuading a teenager he met on the street to apply for detox. On the short walk to the Shoebox Place to phone, "we met a 17 year old girl who looked distraught. She had been robbed. When she learned where we were going, she asked if she too could get into youth detox, because she was using pills.

"While still on the way to the Shoebox Place, we met two 20 year old girls. One asked for help getting into drug rehab . . . It was another Spirit-led start to a day downtown."



Streethope staffer Rick Sandberg (left), seen here at the 'Shoebox Place' with volunteers Barb Stoeckel and Erick Hinton.

Big boost for Cridge



The Cridge Centre for the Family is now going ahead with extensive renovations on two group homes which will provide safe and supportive housing for single women in need. Pictured: Capital Regional District representative Christopher Causton (left) is seen June 1, presenting a cheque for $80,000 to Gregory Cran, Cridge board president. The money will go toward the renovations, which are scheduled to be completed by Christmas.



Michael Crowe

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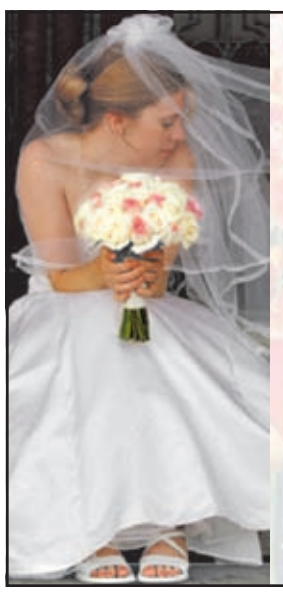

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Pastor now plays ball – as Seals chaplain

By Lloyd Mackey



Pastor turned chaplain Peter McRaild.

RETIRED Baptist pastor Peter McRaild now volunteers some of his leisure time as chaplain to the new local 'Boys of Summer' – the Victoria Seals.

In that role, he can be found most Sunday afternoons, pre-game, at the Royal Athletic Park, leading about 20 players from both the home and visiting baseball teams in a short chapel service.

In his introductory session with the players, back in May, he talked about Eric Liddell, the athlete immortalized in *Chariots of Fire*. Liddell used to say: "God made me fast. When I run, I feel his pleasure."

His point, as a way of encouraging the players, was to help them feel God's delight when they play baseball well.

McRaild came into his chaplaincy role through an international ministry, Baseball Chapel, which is recognized in both major and minor leagues. The organization oversees a total of more than 500 chaplains throughout pro ball.

The chaplains, as far as possible, try to work with players, coaches, managers, spouses, umpires and ballpark staff.

The Baseball Chapel recruitment was directed to him through both Victoria churches where he had previously pastored: Westside Bible and Gateway Baptist.

Chaplains have a role in helping players deal with issues like transfers and trades – which, especially in a minor league, can be upsetting, particularly when they require uprooting family. And chaplains help by simply encouraging players to do well, using their gifts for the game.

McRaild has been getting to know other chaplains in the league via e-mail and, in some cases, by phone consultation.

That is significant, he said, "because we do chapels that include the away team. The chaplain for one team does not travel with the team." In effect, the chaplain for the home team 'pinch-hits' for the visitors, in the encouragement and pastoral care role.

Royal Athletic Park has been the site of professional baseball off and on since 1946.

Baseball's "golden era" at the park was the 1946-54 run of the New York Yankee-owned franchise known as the Victoria Athletics. Attempts to return pro ball in the next 40 years were periodic and short-lived. The Mussels and Blues operated in the late 70s, in the Northwest League. The Capitals came in 2003, leading the Canadian Baseball League in attendance with an average of over 1,000 fans per game. They died with the demise of the league mid-way through the 2004 season. Some later semi-pro experiments met a similar fate.

Then came the October 2, 2008 headline in the *Times-Colonist*: 'Boys of summer are back.' It was announced that the Victoria Seals would begin play in the Golden Baseball League this past May. Some of the other teams in the Golden League are from Edmonton, Los Angeles, Yuma, Reno and Tucson.

The Seals are owned by Russ Parker and his son, Darren. The elder Parker owned the Triple A Pacific Coast League Calgary Cannons from 1985 to 2001. He has also owned a couple of professional hockey teams over time.

McRaild usually meets pre-game with Darren. "He has been very encouraging," the chaplain said.

The Golden League is unaffiliated – which means the teams are not farm units of major league franchises. But there are still opportunities for player advancement. Scouts from higher level leagues are around town, and watching for talent.

Crowds at Seals games have been averaging 2,500, with 3,500 turning out on Father's Day. After doing his pre-game chapel stint that day, McRaild took his grandson and son-in-law to the game. It turned out to be a bit of a thriller for his grandson, with the home team turning in a game-ending grand slam home run.

McRaild is hoping that an end-of-season team barbecue in late August will take place at Gateway Baptist, if tentative arrangements work out.

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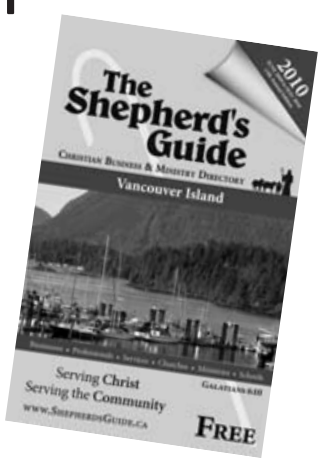

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Baked goods break-in a lesson for students

ALL winter, once a week, the grades four and five students at Comox Valley Christian School sold baked goods at lunch hour, to raise money for things like roosters and soccer balls.

The Munchie Monday project, as it was called, was aimed at enabling them to order items out of the World Vision catalogue. They would then see that the goods were sent to selected African countries, to help in the economic development of villages where children their own ages were living.

Close to $130 was raised during the year, and was stored in what seemed like a safe spot in the home classroom of the students involved, said Derrick Nelson, their teacher.

Early in June, Nelson found that the money had been stolen, along with a television set, a DVD player and a stash of candy.

It was a disappointment to the children, intent as they had been to see that the money was well spent, so children in a less developed country could be helped. The story did not end badly, fortunately; but more about that later.

Noted Nelson: "Three students did their research through an online World Vision catalogue; then the rest of the class members debated what they thought of the proposals.

"Among the recommendations were three soccer balls, a rooster and hen set, desks for children, school lunches and supplies for a fish farm."

Each item helps provide relevant economic or social assistance to young people. The rooster and hen, for example, supply eggs, more birds – and, in due course, meat.

In addition to helping people in a less-developed country, the students were learning lessons in democracy and citizenship. They voted in an election that helped them choose four different items from the catalogue.

And, as it turned out, the Comox Valley children learned something about forgiveness – choosing to forgive the yet unknown thief who broke into their classroom.

And, when some of the parents and leaders in the church affiliated with the school (Northgate Foursquare) learned about the break-in, they pitched in with . . . not $130, but $250. So, almost twice as many items than originally intended were provided to the recipient African villages.

As to the choice of project for citizenship education, Nelson pointed out that Munchie Monday was just one of several operating in the school.

Other classes were involved in Operation Christmas Child, where students fill shoeboxes with items that are sent to less developed countries. Still others used a 'Jeans Day' to help young people at Children's Hospital in Vancouver. And there was a 'tech fast,' in which young people went a certain number of days without using their iPods.

– Lloyd Mackey

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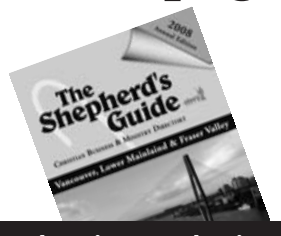

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A failed suicide led to a successful ministry

CHAPLAIN Steve Bradley has recently published a new book. *Christ's Healing Touch for Addictions* is his third self-published title, in a series of books inspired by his life and ministry. This follows his first two books, *Connection to Freedom* and *Youth at Risk*.



Recently, *BCCN* heard from Bradley about his journey and his published works.

"These three books evolved from a suicide note which I wrote in 1987, while an inmate at Vancouver Island Regional Correctional Centre (VIRCC)," said Bradley.

"As I penned that which was to be the record of the end of my life, Jesus Christ intervened – and called me to 'help these men' – meaning other addicts and inmates, such as myself."

Bradley described where he found himself at the time of this intervention. "I had spent 18 wasted years in heroin addiction, and nine years more addicted to alcohol and nicotine. I was serving a year and a half for attempted drug store robbery.

"I had no idea how to answer God's call on my life, other than to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit. He guided me to establish a support group, and write the beginnings of what has now become three published books."

Connection to Freedom, he said, "is a Bible-based workbook for men and women, to help them find the road to recovery." Though he also intended the book to be used as a correspondence program for prisoners, he struggled to attract interest – until Hope Farm's Healing Centre invited him to facilitate a program.

"I used several lessons from the book, and found the experience to be an absolute blessing," he said. The program was a success, but as for the workbook itself, "it pretty much sits gathering dust. However, in my thoughts, I have not given up on the workbook. I sense that God is still going to use it, in his time and for his purpose."

Bradley's Bible-based support group, which shares the name *Connection to Freedom*, is now in its 21st year. The group meets bi-weekly in downtown Victoria.

Regarding *Youth at Risk*, he said: "This book has its own website, and is a result of my work of 15years with high school students, and nine years with college students. This work I performed, more often than not, with assistance by Connection to Freedom group members. The book is formatted to motivate, make aware, and deter students from a life of addictions and criminal behaviours."

He added: "Because secular venues do not allow anything to do with Jesus Christ, I sought the Lord's wisdom in this book's creation."

He formatted the book using the concepts of right and wrong, and the consequences of poor choices. Through interactive workshops, Bradley writes, the workbook tackles myriad topics, including: "expressing feelings; importance of education; sports and steroids; youth suicide attempts; consequences of crystal meth, alcohol, heroin, cocaine, ecstasy, cigarettes and marijuana; sex abuse and healing; addiction to dieting; pain caused by racism; impaired driving causing death; youth detention and adult prison; the street and prostitution; home invasions and growing pot; molestation and chat rooms; bullying and the truth; youth gangs and the truth; addiction to violence."

The book, he said, is based on information "taken from the personal stories of prisoners and ex-prisoners, struggling and recovering addicts . . . The written exercises are intended to teach youth how to choose the right path in life. My heart cries, when I think of the young people whose lives could be saved by this book – and yet this work, too, is doing nothing but gathering dust. Nonetheless, God's will be done."

Which brings us to *Christ's Healing Touch for Addictions*. "As was my experience," said Bradley, "many addicts find it impossible to express their true feelings. This book is an excellent resource, as it provides my testimony, teachings, and lined pages for the reader's personal testimony. My personal addiction and recovery struggles, incarceration at VIRCC, and victory through healing, lift the reader from despair to hope – and guide the way to Christ, if the reader so chooses."

Bradley described some of the experiences he shares in his book. "Through faith, I learned how to forgive a corrections officer whom I deeply resented. A druggist and I were reconciled, 14 years after I had attempted to rob him. The healing took place at Emmanuel Baptist Church in 2000, after I had shared my testimony. Unbeknown to me, the pharmacist was a part of the congregation."

Bradley has also seen how his testimony affects others. "When I shared at Centennial United Church in 2001, my message was 'Christ's forgiveness and the need to forgive one another.' With tears in his eyes, a man approached me and thanked me for my message, and told me: 'I know the Lord wanted me to hear your message today. I'm an airline pilot from Seattle, and I believe God brought me here to listen to you. Thank you sir!'"

According to Bradley, his third book is receiving a positive response. "I sense success in the Lord. Who but Christ could transform a suicide note into three published works?"

Contact: youthatriskprogram.com. *– Janelle Visser*

Island Roundup

In the Park with God

Sundays in the Park at Beacon Hill Park's Cameron Bandshell are continuing apace on August 2, 9, 16 and 23, in line with some 65 years of tradition. The services run from 6 to 7 pm. Each service is preceded by a time of fellowship and barbecued hot dogs, beginning at 4:30 pm. Attenders are encouraged to bring salads, drinks and desserts to share. No charge for the hot dogs.

The organizers for the long-running event intend, during this month, to "acknowledge and celebrate the . . . obedience, vision and faithfulness of some special individuals – like Tom Oshiro, John Stone and Norman Archer. God has built a substantial foundation, for the greater things that he still wants to do in this city." More info is at www.cityreach.ca, or the Facebook group 'City Reach Victoria.'

Serving class

Gateway Baptist Church, in the Royal Oak area, is doing something called a 'Serving Class.' The introduction to the idea, on the church website, states: "You are absolutely unique, and have been given gifts and talents that enable you to serve like no one else. In these classes, you will be helped by others to discover what your gifts and talents are."

More info is available at www.gatewaybaptistchurch.ca. There is no announced time for the Serving Classes; rather, a suggestion that the church office be contacted.

Brush up on basics

Providence Community Church is setting up a 'Christianity Explored' next month, to help people investigate Christianity or "brush up on the basics." The promo for the course, on the Providence website notes: "You won't be asked to pray, sing or read aloud, and you can ask any questions you like. Or, if you prefer, you can just come along and listen."

Providence, which is affiliated with the Presbyterian Church in America, has its weekly worship services Sundays at 10 am in the Monterey Centre, 1442 Monterey Avenue in Oak Bay Village. Senior pastor is Steve Bickley. Scott McDowell, the pastoral intern, is the person with more information about Christianity Explored.

Contact: www.providencecommunitychurch.com

Heritage housed

In Duncan, one of the places where families can find a Christian pre-school is Agapeland, located in a 1910 Heritage House adjacent to St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. Established in 1982, it is billed as a facility for three and four year old children whose parents are looking for an enriched nursery school operated from a Christian perspective.

Among the activities: music, arts and crafts, dance and movement, singing games, poems, fingerplays, story telling, drama, activities in French, signing, board games and puzzles. For more details, contact www.standrewsduncan.org or 250.746.4551.

Prayer shawl

If you live in Nanaimo, you might have been the recipient of a prayer shawl, lovingly knitted by a member of Brechin United Church. The ministry was organized by the Pastoral Care Group at Brechin, a suburban congregation on the north side of Nanaimo.

Notes the website entry about the Prayer Shawl initiative: "Whether you are lonely, fragile, not up to par for whatever reason, the comfort and lift that comes along with this soft cozy gift does bring physical comfort – and a real blessing, in knowing that the folks at Brechin care about you."

More info is at brechinunited.ca.

Scenic advantage

Island Life Discipleship Centre is a spinoff of Maranatha Foursquare Gospel Church in Nanaimo, and Pacific Life Bible College in Surrey. Lisa Wengel, who is on the Maranatha pastoral staff, is director of the Centre – which is intended to provide basic leadership training for people who might want to go into ministry, or be active as a Christian lay person.

The Vancouver Island scenic setting is considered a plus for the Centre, especially as it relates to using its natural surroundings for learning and fellowship experiences.

Outdoor activities, in line with that objective, include hiking, camping, snow shoeing, surfing, caving and water sports. Outreaches take students into the more remote areas of Vancouver Island. Contact: ildc.ca *– Lloyd Mackey*



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New Manna Ministries head Fred Ilyin (left) with Russian street kids. See story on page 3.

Major United Church event to be 'greener'

By Lloyd Mackey

CLOSE to 400 commissioners to the United Church of Canada's 40th General Council (GC40), plus more than 200 guests, will converge August 9–15 on the campus of University of British Columbia Okanagan (UBCO), in what is being described by church leadership as "a greener council."

The GC is the highest legislative body in the United Church of Canada (UCC), generally considered to be the country's largest Protestant denomination.

Some 250,000 regularly attend about 3,400 United churches across Canada. Around 2.8 million people, or nine percent of the population, tell census takers the UCC is their denominational home.

Kent Israel, minister of Summerland United Church and co-chair of the GC40 local arrangements committee, told *BCCN* a large cadre of volunteers from local United churches will be assisting in the smooth functioning of the council.

The official host for the event is the Kamloops-Okanagan Presbytery, whose congregations are scattered from Cache Creek in the north to the Canada-U. S. border in the south. Israel shares the local arrangements task with Karen Medland, lead staff minister at First United, Kelowna.

Israel said the volunteers will be involved in "a range of administrative, hosting and direction-giving activities. Local churches, for example, will be providing 35-40 dozen fresh-baked cookies for the refreshment breaks."

Israel noted that the process of preparing for an event that brings people together "from different parts of the country, facing different challenges – urban-rural, economics, faithfulness and so on" – is an interesting challenge.

See 'Greener,' page 2

Young grads have some big ambitions

By Andrea Dujardin-Flexhaug

LIKE MANY high school grads at this time of year, 18 year old Joshua Stevens has thought about and planned his future – which includes medical school at Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia, in the fall.

He and his brother have made worthwhile work choices for their lives after their time in Penticton Christian School (PCS). He plans on becoming a doctor; and his younger brother Ben wants to be a pastor.

Joshua served as valedictorian at grad ceremonies held at the school last month for the five students graduating there. He was also recently awarded with a 2009 millennium excellence scholarship, which recognizes students entering post-secondary education for their outstanding achievements in various areas – including academic performance and community service.

The work Joshua has been doing as a volunteer fire fighter, in his local community of Okanagan Falls, led to the award from the Canadian Millennium Scholarship Foundation.

"It's serving my community. It's also exciting," commented the young man. "I do enjoy it."

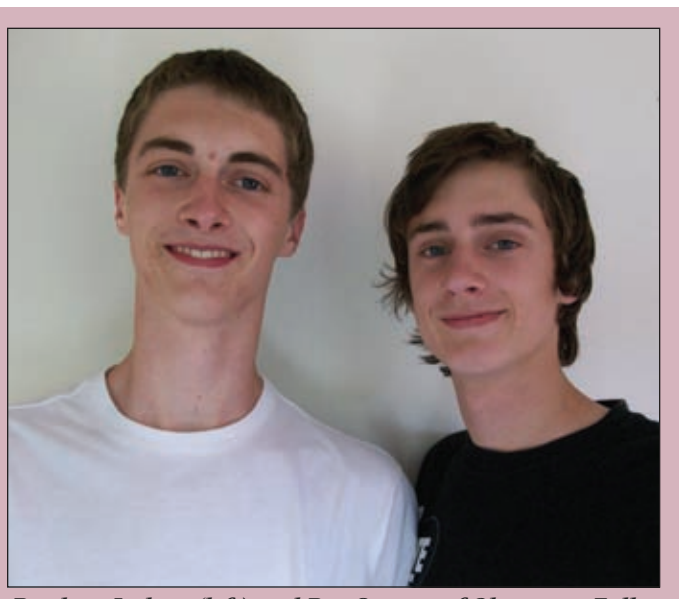
Joshua has taken Fire Management and CPR courses, and is permanently on-call with the local fire department

"Sometimes it'll be quiet, sometimes it'll be busy," he said. Most of the calls are as first responders to medical emergencies – although he did attend a fire at a local vineyard, where a house burned to the ground.

"I was in on the initial attack, because ours was the first engine – so I got to spray [the house]," Joshua said. Age restrictions prohibit him from entering a burning building; but he provided valuable assistance to the other fire fighters, by changing their air tanks and the like.

After immigrating from England two years ago, Joshua and Ben soon began attending Penticton Christian School.

See 'Brothers,' page 2



Brothers Joshua (left) and Ben Stevens of Okanagan Falls.

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The making of young Heroes in the Okanagan

By Narayan Mitra

A LOW PROFILE group is making a big impact upon impressionable high school students in the Okanagan.

Under its appropriately-named parent organization, Impact Society, Heroes entered the doors of three schools 18 months ago. The group's purpose was to reinforce the natural strengths of the young people, and unleash them for personal and communal effectiveness.

Since then, 12 projects have been conducted – and requests for more keep coming. The group's vision statement is "to fill our communities with Heroes that will lead the next generation . . . [and] to build confidence, character and integrity in the youth of our nation." This mandate has been overwhelmingly welcomed by the school administrations where Heroes has found its foothold.

The Calgary based Impact Society has been operating since 1994. It offers many programs to fulfil its mission. In the Okanagan, the program is delivered by regional coordinator Jennifer Gumienny and her team of trained volunteers.

Students are taught in 12 to 14 one-hour sessions in a school or community setting. Gumienny explained that "the effectiveness of Heroes is measured through the Developmental Strengths Framework used by Resiliency Initiatives Canada."

Before and after the program, each student goes through an online assessment of their belief systems and values, covering 31 different areas of their lives that play a role in the resiliency of the child.

At completion, evaluators are able to chart out the difference Heroes has made. They are also able to measure which areas are negatively affecting the student's resiliency. Such an evaluation works as a tool for schools to identify which of their students are at-risk, and which areas need targeting.

Course outlines are categorized under Confidence, Character, and Integrity – with each section interacting with the others in areas such as self-discovery, making fresh choices, powers of relationship and respect.

Gumienny is excited by results achieved so far. These include improved school performance, increased resiliency, better family communication, sense of purpose, and even some reduction in crime.

Heroes does not claim to be an evangelistic program, but rather a ministry aimed at bringing God's heart of love and



principles of truth into the classroom. Through interactive and experiential activities, students discover their unique abilities, and begin to see their intrinsic value.

Testimonials keep coming regularly from educators and community supporters.

One school vice-principal writes: "The Heroes program is well-designed and professionally presented. Instructors created genuine connections with the students . . . Students credited the program for their more positive attitude toward others, toward school and toward life . . . I strongly recommend this to other schools."

A teacher from Constable Neil Bruce Middle School in Kelowna commented: "Excellent – very professional. Started and finished very strong. Hope to see you next year."

With increasing cognizance of the life-building work being carried out by Heroes, business and community groups are coming forward to help out. Impact Society announced a recent tie-in with energy giant TransCanada, as a part of the latter's recognition of "improving lives, increasing hope and creating new beginnings."

Initially, the support would be for two years, with the possibility of extension by another three. This would help the Society to certify up to 4,500 school teachers as prospective instructors across Canada.

Half of Heroes' funding comes from schools or other host groups, with local support covering the other half. It costs $85 per student to experience the program. Individual student sponsorships or monthly giving are always appreciated and needed.

Perhaps the best commendation of the program comes from an expert in the field of building resiliency in youth, Dr. Wayne Hammond:

"Essential to positive school performance and conduct by students are the characteristics of positive perception of self and others, an understanding of one's strengths and limitations and a strong sense of hope." Heroes, he added, "is unique in that it invites students to understand and build their . . . ability to achieve genuine success through developing those internal values that provide consistency in nurturing respect of self and others . . .

"As a parent, I would embrace the opportunity for my children to experience this invitation to become a 'hero,' as it reflects my goal of preparing them to confidently believe in themselves and to constructively embrace the adventure of life."

Contact: 250.808.4376 or impactsociety.com.

'Greener,' from page 1

The Summerland minister said there could be crowds of close to 1,000 in the university gymnasium, for the opening and closing worship events.

The GC40 theme, enunciated by moderator David Giuliano, is 'Down to the Potter's House,' based on Jeremiah 18:2.

In that passage, Giuliano stated, "Jeremiah hears God calling him to go down to the potter's house, and watch the potter work, and imagine the ways in which God might be shaping Jeremiah's community in the same way as the potter shapes the clay."

That, he said, provides the biblical basis for seeing that environmental and 'green' concerns are translated – not only into council debates, but into the physical arrangements for the event.

The GC40 agenda and planning team is calling for commissioners and guests to be aware of how they might reduce their carbon footprints in matters of travel and transport; food and beverages; accommodations; logistics; and by adopting 'green' office procedures.

GC40 will see the election, on August 14, of a new moderator. Guiliano is completing his three year term. He was elected at the 39th General Council in 2006, in Thunder Bay.

Nominations for the moderatorial election close on August 10. At press time, there were six candidates:

• Mardi Tindal, nominated by Erie Presbytery, Hamilton Conference. An adult educator, author and video producer who has served in several roles at all levels of the church, she is currently executive director of Five Oaks Centre.

• James Christie, nominated by York Presbytery, Toronto. He is dean of the Faculty of Theology of the University of Winnipeg, and president of the Canadian Council of Churches.

• John Thompson, nominated by Keewatin Presbytery, All Native Circle Conference. He is chair of Keewatin Presbytery, is a member of the National Aboriginal Ministries Council, and ministers in Oxford House, Manitoba.

• Richard Hollingsworth, nominated by Renfrew Presbytery, Bay of Quinte Conference. A former president of Bay of Quinte Conference, he has pastored Braeside Pastoral Charge for the past 18 years.

• Jim Angus, nominated by B.C. Conference. A former president of B.C. Conference, he has worn many hats at all levels of the United Church. Most recently, Angus has been involved in Aboriginal ministry at the national level.

• Stephen Mabee, nominated by Toronto West Presbytery, Toronto Conference. He has held many voluntary offices at all levels of the United Church. Semi-retired, he currently ministers at St John's Halton Hills.

Specific items which might possibly create flashpoints in debate had not been publicly addressed by press time.

Topics for debate and exploration, however, were delineated for commissioners on the GC40 website, which can be found at gc40.united-church.ca.

They included: covenant living; sustainable community; racial justice; becoming an intercultural church; peace, and the responsibility to protect; the 'Emerging Spirit'; intergenerational options; leadership development; francophone ministry models; and focused Bible study.

'Brothers,' from page 1

It is a kind of family affair, with their dad Tom also at the school as a teacher. Tom said the family made the move to Canada mainly due to the "better quality of life," and educational opportunities for the sons. They chose the south Okanagan because of the mild climate, the scenery and the school.

"If the Christian school hadn't been there, we wouldn't have come to this area," said Tom. "I was so impressed when we looked around the Christian school – with the peace, the Christian attitude and what they were offering– that I enrolled my boys."

Both of the teens had never attended a Christian school before – but they found the individual attention a big plus, with a maximum of 21 students per class. Bible courses are part of the curriculum – and "we talk about the choices that we make with our time, money and our bodies, and what choices Jesus would have us make," commented Ben.

When he graduates next year, he plans to pursue a degree at Victory Bible College, with the aim of becoming a youth pastor. Ben said he wants to be part of a future among other young people "that will help them to avoid the dangers of modern living – such as drugs, wrong sexual relationships, violence and feelings of inadequacy."

Ben concluded: "People say that the church is not relevant in these days. I say that everyone needs to belong, and know that they are loved – and that Jesus' message is about a heavenly Father who cares very much for us."

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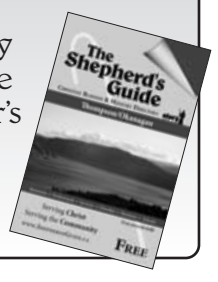

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New Manna brings Russian kids up from the gutter

By Andrea Dujardin-Flexhaug

"THEY LIVE in the gutters. They eat and sleep in the same place where they go to the washroom."

Fred Ilyin spoke bluntly about young Russian orphans who have passed the age of government sanctioned orphanages, and must now live on the streets.

As a longtime mission worker, and president of the Christian based group New Manna Ministries, Ilyin has seen a lot of the difficult conditions these orphans, or *vipustniki*, face.

"It's a dirty place. When you go down in the sewers, you have to make sure you don't step on needles – because there's needles all over the place." Ilyin did not mince words in his description of life on the streets. He was speaking recently at Osoyoos Baptist Church, before heading to Russia on one of his missions there.

Ilyin's background as a Russian Jew had given him his own perspective on life in Russia, with its history grounded in his own family's roots.



New Manna president Peter Ilyin (right) serenades youngsters at an orphanage in Russia.

Ilyin's father had been born in the Ukraine, and his grandfather – who was saved and inspired by an Azusa Christian street revival – had fled the Soviet Union in the 1920s, seeking freedom in neighbouring China. Ilyin, born in China, said he and his family eventually made their way to start anew in the West.

In the late 70s, Ilyin was living and working in Vernon. He had been on several mission trips back to Russia, and the plight of young orphans – and their poor prospects for the future – grabbed his heart. He formed New Manna Ministries in 1981, and headed back to Russia with his wife Val – to serve Christ, through helping the orphans there.

Ilyin said the goal of New Manna is to "curb this dilemma, which is a worldwide dilemma of street kids." With Russian orphans now numbering some 800,000, there is much overcrowding in the various orphanages. Hence, when they reach the age of 16, the orphans are released by the government and left to fend for themselves.

"What happens to a cute little orphan kid? Well, he grows up – and an orphan kid no longer lives in an orphanage. He has to go somewhere," explained Ilyin. "And a lot of the orphans end up going on the streets." Ilyin also cited grim statistics: "One out of every four or five have gone to prison or some kind of criminal activity. One out of every seven commit suicide."

New Manna Ministries teams of volunteers go to Russia three times a year, to seek out street kids and minister to them spiritually and practically. Many of the children actually do have parents, noted Ilyin, but have been victims of poverty, abuse or alcoholic fathers.

The city of Perm has given New Manna a long list of names of children of poor families who are in need of care. New Manna regularly visits these children in their home environments, and also has opened group homes and apartments for older orphans, with adult supervision.

Caring help and spiritual guidance are also provided for orphans and drug addicts, at two of New Manna's rehabilitation homes in Russia's Ural Mountains. Together with Perm's NT Church and other volunteers, New Manna assists with school and work training as well.

"We try to reach them, and save them, and bring them to the knowledge of Jesus Christ," said Ilyin.

One of the greatest needs has been helping girls aged 16-17, who have been officially released from orphan care, move to a Manna home – where they can stay safe, and try to find meaningful employment. The commitment is great for Ilyin and New Manna, as they are then legally required to take care of each released orphan for the rest of their lives.

Manna House of Hope is about 50 kilometres from Perm; it serves as a rehabilitation centre in fall, winter and spring, for street children and young drug addicts. During the summers, it comes alive with the happy laughter of orphans – who attend camp sessions there.

Another facility has been developed at New Manna's Camp Black Sea – where, with sponsorship from the West, children can attend summer camp in Ukraine. It serves as a rehabilitation centre the rest of the year.

The New Manna Ministries newsletter reports a high success rate for their rehabilitation centers (80 to 84 percent) – but notes that after 10 months, the street kids "do have struggles to re-enter the normal lifestyle in the society."

Hence, the ministry has also created 'adaptation centres,' which Ilyin described as places "for these young people that want to get strengthened in their faith, and at the same time learn work skills."

Church planting also plays an integral part in the work of New Manna. Ilyin noted that in the Perm area alone, 18 years ago there were only five churches in the region. There are now 80 church plants.

New Manna also ministers to orphans in Rwanda, Tanzania, Ukraine and Moldova.

For more information, or to make a donation to New Manna Ministries, contact newmanna.com or 250.549.1703.



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From Romania with faith – and a new song

By Dorothy Brotherton



From left: Simon Ivascu, Donovan Diminyatz, Wesley Pop and Steven Ivascu.

THEY focused on only one thing: getting away. The two young men had just finished high school, and were about to be drafted into an army that would deny their need to worship God.

Simon Ivascu and Wesley Pop were conscientious Christians, and they prized freedom of worship. If they simply refused to join the army, they could face long years in prison. The first step of their quest for freedom took them from their native Romania to Italy.

It was a journey fraught with danger.

After reaching Italy, one night they crawled into a container full of ceramic tiles that was headed across the ocean. The young men had heard about Canada and the freedom it offered. But it was a long nightmare away.

They baked in the heat for days while they waited in the shipyard, hiding in the container. Once underway, they experienced a wild storm at sea, suffered from lack of oxygen, and experienced extreme hunger and thirst. Both came close to death.

At last they arrived in Canada. It's another story how they regained health and travelled from the status of illegal aliens to honorable citizens of their adopted country. Their harrowing story is chronicled in their book, *The Price of Freedom*.

The foreword, written by Brad and Kandus Thorp of Hope Channel, declares: "*Pas cu pas*. In the Romanian language, *pas cu pas* means 'step by step.' This phrase is an apt description of how God guided and protected Simon and Wesley in their bold physical and spiritual journey."

The book is described as a tale of "adventure, courage, mistakes and miracles." It takes the young men through long nights as fearful fugitives to protracted days "as 'cargo' on the high seas – from police prisons to container prisons" – and eventually to something more than political freedom.

"Through mistakes, setbacks and steel prisons opened with little more than their bare hands, these two young men discovered a God who never lets go, and who gives hope and courage when life is at its darkest."

The pair arrived in Kelowna in July, 1999. In the decade since, they have made a remarkable life and ministry. From hiding in a container full of ceramic tiles, they have found careers in the construction industry as ceramic tile layers. Beyond that, they have created a musical ministry, that allows them to tell their story in a way that is dear to their hearts.

Simon and Wesley had always loved to sing, and were soon blending their voices in duets in many local churches. A year later, they were joined by Simon's brother, Steven Ivascu, who managed to get from Romania to Canada on a work visa; and by Donovan Diminyatz, also from Romania, who is now a university student in Kelowna.

The four young men called their vocal group Freedom Singers – a particularly apt name, considering the background from which they have triumphantly emerged.

The group has been touring western Canada, bringing their music and stories to churches, rallies and camp meetings.

As well, they have taken on two humanitarian projects. One is called Global Care-A-Thon Mission, which works with children in India, Romania, South Africa and Mozambique. It sponsors fundraiser walks, and features the Freedom Singers – most recently at a walk-a-thon in Beaumont, Alberta.

The other is Project Family Room – often called Kelowna's own extreme home makeover.

Last year, Paul Benson of Borebank Ventures was asked by Bob and Crystal Mandryk to look at building an addition to their 1,000-square-foot home.

The Mandryk family was bursting the seams of the tiny house. Their family of nine children includes five adoptees; some of the children have special needs.

Benson rallied the construction community, asking for donations of time and material to build the family a new home. The family moved in just before Christmas.

The Freedom Singers got involved by singing at events to raise awareness and funds for the project. They have characterized it as a way they can put their faith into action.

Besides a full summer of travelling and concerts, the Freedom Singers have produced a new CD called *To the Other Side*; they also offer earlier CDs, entitled *Meet the Master* and *Satisfied*. Their choice of songs – such as 'His Grace is Sufficient' and 'Peace, Peace, Wonderful Peace' – takes on new meaning, in the context of their own journey to freedom, *freedomsingers.com*.

Oliver singer/songwriter headed back to Music City

By Andrea Dujardin-Flexhaug

HER angelic voice and songwriting talent have taken a south Okanagan woman all the way to Music City.

Andi Zack has been making her mark in Nashville.

She spent the last few months in her home town of Oliver, visiting family and friends. She also renewed a visa for another stint of work in the centre of the country music universe – where dreams are made.

Zack also has a new CD of songs about life and love, entitled *Steady*. It is getting air time on the local Giant FM radio station in Penticton with its single, 'Unstill.'

This month, she heads back to Nashville to start a new three year songwriting contract with the ZMG publishing company.

As a Christian, Zack has written her share of gospel songs, and says country music is very much open to that genre. "There's so much on the radio and in video that could be totally a gospel song," she told *BCCN*.

Zack has not yet had her own gospel songs recorded. She gave *BCCN* a sample of one, entitled 'God and You':

"I'm just a girl in this world trying to find her way through all the obstacles of life. I got a plan where I'm headed, and I sure won't forget it, when I reach the end of the line, that my Grandpa once said: 'There's only two people you have to answer to, and that's God and you, God and you.'"

"It's a really family oriented genre, country music," she said, noting that the gospel music being produced in Nashville studios is reflected on Sunday mornings in the pews. "The music in the churches is incredible," she said.

"There are so many great singers, too. Sunday morning, there is such wonderful music performed in every church in town." Although Zack herself hasn't sung at local churches there, she has performed at a lot of benefits over the years for various good causes.

When Zack first made the move to Nashville eight years ago, she found an amiable atmosphere. "Nashville is really laid back, and a nice town – and really nice people, and really good values."

Soon after her arrival, she got a three year contract with Ash Street Music (ASM) as a songwriter, and got her first song on singer Danielle Peck's debut album. A host of others followed. ASM is one of many small song publishing companies on the two avenues of picturesque and well-known Music Row. "And they're all little houses, because it used to be a neighbourhood," explained Zack. "So it's really neat. Like we're all in this big neighbourhood of six blocks."

Up to five days a week, she would head to ASM's writing room – where she would be put with a co-writer, and they would brainstorm song ideas. "It's quite crazy, but it's very fun," she laughed. Ideas for songs have come from many different sources – everything from her own life experiences to a phrase spotted in a book or ad; everything is fair game.

In Nashville, Zack networks with other songwriters. She has met country stars such as Vince Gill, who is married to another big star.

"I haven't met Amy Grant yet, but she is a wonderful Christian artist. She's probably my favourite one."

See 'Zack,' page 5



Andi Zack has established herself in Nashville.

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Kelowna families help bring clean water to Thai kids

By Dorothy Brotherton



Isaac Koch compares filtered and unfiltered water. Photo: Kirstin Lesosky

WHO are the winners in the game of life?

Not everyone agrees on the answer to that question.

"People in Canada have basically won the lottery just by being born here," said Ryan Detwiller of West Kelowna. But Peter Dove, who has spent the last seven years in Thailand, told *BCCN*: "We feel very honoured to have a part in their lives. Maybe we have won the lottery because we get to live there."

The two bring their perspectives together in a project called Imagine Thailand.

Dove and his wife, Cavelle, head the ministry of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada in Thailand. Detwiller and his wife Meagen are joining the project for a year, to provide media power – to tell the story through pictures and words, both in Thailand and Canada.

Derek and Irislee Koch, with their four children, will head out this summer for at least a year of immersion in the have-not culture. It's part of an effort to help refugees who have fled from Burma (Myanmar.)

The Koch family, also from West Kelowna, will focus on the city of Mae Sot, five kilometres from the Thai-Burma border – where slum communities include many traumatized orphans.

"Some of these kids have seen parents or family members killed. They may have experienced land mines or hiding from soldiers. They have no identification, no protection. They're open to human trafficking," said Irislee.

International efforts have set up schools for these kids, who aren't allowed to go to public schools. The Koch family's goal is to install water filtration systems in the schools, to ensure clean water. The water projects create bridges to the whole community. One system serving 200 kids affects the families they are connected with, reaching some 800 people.

The family will also work in education, and help kids create 'life books' – to keep a connection to their roots, and help them get legal status.

Derek has been a pastor at Emmanuel Church in West Kelowna for 15 years. For him, the experience is about serving the desperate. "To look at a child who has fled from war, to help them get the basic needs of life and see them thrive – there's nothing better."

His son Isaac, 12, is eager to get on the plane and see "everything down below." As to plans when he gets there, Isaac said: "I'll probably play soccer. Me and my dad are thinking of starting a soccer camp."

Isaac plays soccer at the highest level in his age group in the Okanagan; but for now, he is putting aside those dreams.

Eagerness to get going is shared by his sisters: Ellie, 13, Hannah, nine, and Olivia, seven.

"We attended a conference in January, highlighting issues in developing countries – and the kids were saying, 'Let's go,'" said their mother. "They'll miss their friends. Isaac will miss his hamster. There's a little anxiety, but a total buy-in by the kids." Irislee will home school all the kids; she has already homeschooled Isaac for a year.

They will rent out their home. Derek said: "This is the first step. We may sense we want to go long term. This is exploratory." Irislee agreed, calling it a reconnaissance trip.

The couple admitted to some fears. Derek wondered if they would be able to handle the heat; whether communication barriers would be overcome; and where ongoing funding will come from. Irislee admitted to nervousness about emotional impacts: "The need is so overwhelming. How will we handle the tragic stories of children? Many of them have no safe place, and few survival skills."

The Detwillers sold their house last summer, in preparation. They spent six weeks in Thailand to get their feet wet. Meagen said that experience relieved her fears, and now she knows what to expect. She's giving up a job as a nanny; Ryan is relinquishing a job with ICBC.

"There is the fear of being overwhelmed with the scope of the problems," said Ryan. "The big picture is pretty huge."

Peter noted: "It's a life-long journey to conquer fears." He described the instability of the area, saying that if you are found in a no-go zone, the army can shoot you on sight.

Despite the dangers, despite giving up jobs and homes and friends, the two new couples agree with Ryan, who described his motivation: "It's a feeling that we had something to offer. No amount of money or career success is anything by comparison."

Contact: www.kochkamotion.com or www.detwiller.com.

This article first appeared in Westside Weekly.

'Zack,' from page 4

Zack finds Grant a "good inspiration" for her own gospel music. Two of her new secular songs, being released this summer, include: 'Sweet Distraction' (a collaboration with Josh Thompson and Ken Johnson); and 'Beer on the Table' (co-written with Thompson).

Zack said she would also "love to get some Christian cuts on Christian albums," either her own or by other artists. "And I'd love to get songs in Christian movies and in Christian television, somehow. That would be great."

Zack has written more than 500 songs. Sometimes they come easy, and practically write themselves. Other times, "you sit there in silence, staring at the wall for hours. When a song comes fast and easy, it's so much fun, and I can't believe I get paid to write songs."

Zack quoted a saying she once heard: "Love your job and you'll never have to work a day in your life." She said she has learned the truth of that, and said that even if she can't come up with lyrics at times, "it's still great – and I'm so thankful to be able to do what I do."

Now a proven songwriter, she is also trying her hand as an author. When she isn't making music, Zack is working on a book entitled *Give Up the Ghost*, about a tragic loss in her young Christian life when she was just 14 years of age.

Sadly, her brother Christopher died at age 17; he was her only sibling. Understandably, she went through a period of anger – and sometimes that anger was directed at God.

Zack's thoughts often centred on the afterlife, and whether it really exists. "I was so afraid it didn't," she mused, "and it made the grieving process so much harder."

But then, little things started happening, which helped her. For example, the first Christmas without Chris, her mother gave her a gift of a water-filled snow globe with a little cottage inside it, and a card that read: 'This is Chris' house in heaven.'

After Zack shook the globe and the snow flakes fell softly down on the cottage, she wound up its knob to play the accompanying tune – which her mother had not known about. Out of all the Christmas songs in the world, the globe played one especially meaningful to them both: 'I'll Be Home for Christmas.' "It was things like that, little signs, that I knew were only possible with God," said Zack.

Thus, while the loss of her brother caused her to question her belief in God, it ended up reinforcing her faith. It has been a difficult journey for her – but one which she considers a therapeutic and healing one.

Although *Give Up the Ghost* was inspired by the real-life death of her brother, Zack's creative nature has been melded into it as well, and she has added fictional scenarios.

She expects to finish the book within about six months, and hopes to publish it as a tribute to her brother.

Contact: www.myspace.com/andizack

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Avoiding easy fixes in the matrix of the Twitter age

By Len Hjalmarson

IN 1999, film lovers first encountered *The Matrix*. The stop-action photography, bleak dual world and martial arts moves combined to produce a huge hit. But it wasn't just what was happening on the surface that captivated audiences; it was the complexity of the movie, the interweave of multiple levels of metaphor and narrative.

Co-director Larry Wachowski told *Time*: "Every studio we showed it to thought no one would understand it."

I've had a number of conversations in recent weeks around complexity and the need for simplicity. The focus has ranged from church governance structures to the Trinity.

In general, the feeling among pastors is this: "Let's get on with the work. Do we have to get bogged down in complexity when the gospel is so simple?" Like the Hollywood moguls, we have convinced ourselves that, in this complex world, everyone wants – and needs – simplicity.

The question has also cropped up in relation to teaching in the church. The general feeling is: "Keep it simple." We have short attention spans in the blogging/ MySpace/ Twitter age. Besides, there isn't much theological sophistication out there, and we have immediate and practical concerns.

Sometimes this question is framed in terms of narrative versus propositional theology. Since most of the Bible and half of the New Testament just consists of stories, let's not get overly theological.

I am sympathetic to all this. After years of study of the gospel and culture, leadership and spirituality, I'm still learning. And all of that study has had limited impact on my own life. The greater spiritual impact has come through friendship and love.

More than data

I embrace the wisdom of James Houston (*The Mentored Life*): "We forget that the nurturing and caring relationship is inherent in effective teaching. Wisdom, after all, is more than data processing. Activism that is devoted to a cause can also be a poor substitute for relationships."

Yet, to divorce relationships from truth and practice, would also be an error. We are to love God with all that we are: mind, body and spirit. We are to take as our example the church described in Acts 2:41-47.

Key factors we must deal with are fragmentation and information overload. Fragmentation results from pursuing multiple goods in multiple communities, when we're not really sure where we belong and to what we are called. This results in endless debates about what we believe and how we should live. In those debates, each of us can reference some experience or expert or body of knowledge to bolster our arguments. All that information is overwhelming. The 'solution' advanced is to simplify.

The push for simplicity is amplified by cultural forces that push us away from the hard work of wrestling through issues together. Given the fragmentation of our faith culture, what confidence can we have that there is some rallying point greater than 'just Jesus'?

The constraints on our time and energy are already overwhelming. So we seek our solultions in sound-bytes.

The quick fix

Our preference for this option is shaped by our Western media: the sound and video bytes of news on CNN; the text bytes on our cell phones; the limitations of Twitter. However much we decry it, we all want the quick fix.

I'm not immune from all of this. One of the complaints I have heard too often from my wife is: "You like short cuts." I have paid the price for taking short cuts numerous times in my building projects. I have learned the hard way, that a short cut saves time today – but will come back to bite me in two years.

In his book, *Justification*, N.T. Wright suggests that when the puzzle has too many pieces and we are overwhelmed by complexity, our tendency is to put half the pieces back in the box. But this actually only compounds the problem.

In part, this explains the cultural captivity of the church in modernity. We have become pragmatists. Lacking a framework for understanding the interaction of the gospel and culture, we have embraced 'whatever works.'

We have measured success by secular standards, and in the process sacrificed theological integrity and biblical faithfulness. We've lost the ability to remain biblically faithful and at the same time engage our culture, because that task was too complex for us to handle.

The missing pieces

All of this begs the question: What are the pieces we are missing? If we could recover them, what would we look like?

The answers are there in our collective memories, as the people of God. We need to recover ancient practices and biblical functions.

In the New Testament, Paul likens the church to a great building composed of living stones, with the apostles and prophets forming the foundation.

Any builder will tell you that the most important part of any building project is the foundation. Get the foundation right,



and everything else will flow smoothly. But if the foundation is weak or out of square, the building will be a nightmare. There are places a builder can compromise without damaging the integrity of a structure, but that place is not the foundation.

Prophets and apostles lay foundations. Since prophets and apostles are two of the most marginalized gift mixes in the church of modernity, is it any wonder the foundations are crumbling? If we slow down, refuse to embrace the quick fix, perhaps we will begin to remember, to reconnect to our roots – and the days when we existed as a movement, more than an institution. It's that dynamic, apostolic genius that we need to recover.

Biblical leadership

There are five leadership types outline in Ephesians 4: apostle, prophet, evangelist, shepherd, teacher. Maybe it's time to recover the good biblical word 'shepherd,' since 'pastor' has become such a catch-all label that it has become nearly meaningless – and generally denotes an office in a hierarchy, and not a gift.

Missional orders stress two crucial leadership types: apostle and shepherd. This plural leadership, even where it may retain some elements of hierarchy, is a vast improvement over the single pastor model. It empowers the most fundamental rhythm of church life, which is both inward (cleansing and nurturing) and outward (evangelizing).

In modernity, we have marginalized apostles and prophets, those innovative and questioning people. The challenges we face now necessitate the rediscovery and empowerment of these critical gifts.

Can apostle/shepherd/prophet leadership work? Certainly, although this may be more difficult in young church communities – or in established communities that have used a traditional framework (a single pastor or a hierarchy, both of which generate passivity in the community).

Boundary crossers

Within the five leadership types, there are certain combinations that appear uniquely suited to times requiring innovation and adaptation: the boundary crosser, the poet and the synergist.

These types are primarily a blend of prophetic and apostolic, though the boundary crosser may add a strong element of pastor and evangelist. The boundary crosser is a prophetic networker with pastor-at-large overtones.

The poet is especially oriented to helping us recover missional imagination. In *The Sky is Falling*, Alan Roxburgh says the poet shapes words so that what was hidden and invisible becomes known. Poets remove the veil, and give language to what people are experiencing. This is only possible when the poet lives among the people and "listens to the rhythms and meanings occurring beneath the surface."

But the poet also has a prophetic bent: Poets not only see what is beneath the surface, but critique it "on the basis of the memory and tradition of the community." Poets, therefore, "are not so much advice-givers as image and metaphor framers."

They are not "entrepreneurial leaders with wonderful plans for their congregation's life," but rather individuals with the imagination and gifting to help people "again understand how their traditional narratives apply to them today." Thus, "poets make available a future that does not exist as yet."

The synergist is also a role we need again, to counter the fragmentation of modernity and help us bridge the complexity we face at every level. Roxburgh writes that synergists are necessary to help leadership groups "work together across tribal lines."

The synergist is like an abbot, the head of a monastery, a "leader with the capacity to unify diverse and divergent leadership styles around a common sense of missional vision for a specific community."

In this 'Twitter/Matrix' world, we need poets, pastors, apostles, prophets, evangelists and teachers who are embedded in the community, empowering all of God's people to do the work of ministry. If these leadership functions are invisible, like yeast hidden in dough, and are powerfully influencing change by birthing a new world, all the better.

Simplicity isn't working

Every week, I meet another believer who has exited the church-on-the-corner, vowing not to return. The reasons vary widely, but those leaving are rarely naïve; in fact, they are often thoughtful and reflective.

Could it be that, in our push for simplicity, we have demonstrated that we are out of touch with reality? Could it be that we intuitively sense that the answers are more complex than we make them out to be? While we all acknowledge the limits of human ability to grasp the truth, we have become aware that easy answers and quick fixes have not provided solutions – or moved us forward as God's faithful community in this world.

The voices we marginalized, when we compromised the gospel for 'whatever works,' are the voices that are now pushing us back to the sacred text. At the same time, we are digging into cultural texts, trying to reconnect the dots, to remember who we are – and to look beyond the simplicity that has become unsatisfying and unconvincing.

Len Hjalmarson is a Kelowna writer. More of his articles can be found at NextReformation.com.

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Underground

Lakeview Heights Baptist Church in West Kelowna is 'going underground.' Well, not really. What's happening is that this year's Lakeview Vacation Bible School, set for August 24–27, is taking on the theme of 'Paul and the Underground Church.' The idea is to provide children from age five through grade six a way to experience the church as it was in the 1st century. Info about other Lakeview Heights programs, including the August 3 Youth Beach Night for grades 7–12, is available at www.lakeviewheightsbaptist.ca.

Home improvement

Another church which, like Lakeview Heights, is affiliated with the North American Baptist Conference, has recently moved. Osoyoos Baptist Church is now in its new home – formerly the Elks Hall. The address is 6210 Highway 97. Leaders say the new location makes the church more visible and accessible. Phil Johnson has been the pastor since 2003. Previously, he pastored in Lavington, Princeton and Drumheller. www.osoyoosbaptistchurch.net.

No retreat

The Father-Son Retreat usually scheduled for October at Green Bay Bible Camp has been cancelled for this fall. The notice on the Green Bay website, www.greenbay.bc.ca, says the camp management is currently reviewing GBBC's ability to sponsor this retreat – and its companion spring event for mothers and daughters. The notice reminds website visitors to check frequently for updates.

Choice of services

Beginning September 20, All Saints Anglican Church in Vernon is adding a new contemporary service to their Sunday morning worship schedule. The service will be at 9:15 am. The traditional service, which has a good reputation around Vernon for its pipe organ and choir, will move from 10 to 11 am. The traditional Book of Common Prayer service will begin at 7:45 am, 15 minutes ahead of the previous time. Rector Chris Harwood-Jones encourages parishioners to choose between the services. The scheduling of the new service will, among other things, he says, "free up growth for our Choral Service." www.allsaintsvernon.co.cc.

Freedom line

One of the services into which Word of Life United Pentecostal Church in Kamloops connects is The Freedom Line, a North American-wide outreach to people with family, alcoholism and drug issues. The help line, as noted on Word of Life's website (linked to www.churches.kamloops.net), is 1.800.528.0070.

Karate!

Karate is just one of the regular activities that make up part of the week at Kamloops Evangelical Free Church. Each Thursday, there are martial arts classes at the church.

Most of the time, they are at 5 pm. It is advisable to check the church calendar, because sometimes there are two sessions, at 4 and 5:30 pm. The website to check for up-to-date info is www.kamloopsefree.com.

Good career move

Kathy Herbert, the development administrator at Vernon Christian School, has told *BCCN* about how she came to be in her present posting.

"I was in a transition in my life, and found that part of that transition was the search for a new job," she wrote. While waiting to talk to her pastor about it, she spied a copy of *BC Christian News* on a table in his outer office.

One of the vocational ads caught her eye. She submitted her resume and, in due course, was offered the position at VCS. "So I can heartily testify, that God had used *BC Christian News* to direct me in the choices I was to make, regarding my next career move." *– Lloyd Mackey*

The day God used a really crowded subway

By Lailani Mendoza

"LORD, please let us have seats," I prayed aloud while waiting for the subway. It was late Saturday morning, a busy time when the trains, like tin cans full of sardines, would usually be crammed with passengers.

Waiting patiently in line with me was my co-worker Cicy. We worked at a language institute an hour outside of Seoul, where she taught Chinese and I taught English to a group of Korean students. As two outsiders trying to survive in a foreign country, we bonded over pizza, late night chats and Korean dramas.

Coming from Asian families, we discovered that we had a lot in common, except for one thing: she's a Buddhist and I'm a Christian. I didn't see this as a problem.

Having served in a Christian organization that welcomed international students in Canada, I have had many Chinese and Japanese friends who worship Buddha. But, I thought: "It's about time she met Jesus." It prompted me to invite her to my church.

The bell rang announcing the arrival of the train. We stood there as the doors opened, like the gates of heaven. The train divested itself of new arrivals, as a sea of people poured in to replenish the supply.

We managed to squeeze ourselves in. Once the commotion subsided, there they were: two empty seats, side by side – the most concrete answer to a prayer one can get.

When Cicy agreed to come to church the following Sunday, I was ecstatic.

On Sunday, the sky looked gray and dreary when we left home to attend the morning service. While most North Americans can't leave the house without their car keys, most Asians can't leave the house without umbrellas.

As Murphy's Law would have it, we forgot our umbrellas. I prayed that it wouldn't rain. By the time we arrived at our destination, the gray clouds had been replaced with blue skies. "Thank you, Lord," I whispered as we stepped off the bus and into the sunshine.

"You must have prayed this morning. Earlier, I thought it was going to rain," Cicy commented.

"Yeah, I did. Answered prayer!" I replied, happy that she had witnessed God at work.

'Why don't you pray for seats?'

However, my hopes of taking her with me to church every Sunday were crushed as quickly as they had come to life. Five minutes into the sermon, she had both eyes closed. Oh no – she fell asleep! Later, I learned that she did this to concentrate on the pastor's words.

"He speaks too fast," she said. The language barrier made it difficult for her to keep going to church. Although I was disappointed, I hoped God would give me another opportunity to share my faith with Cicy.

Late one night, we found ourselves waiting for the subway yet again. We were exhausted from walking and carrying heavy shopping bags the whole day. The prospect of standing in a crowded train for two hours all the way home was not very appealing.

"Why don't you pray for seats?" Cicy urged me.

I was shocked. God had used the little, everyday things to make the lasting impression on her that I was striving to create on my own. Too drained to even think, I was a bit embarrassed that my Buddhist friend remembered God first.

But more than that, Cicy's statement confirmed to me that she believes in the power of prayer simply because she saw God grant my simple mundane requests.

This gave me the opportunity to say that prayer works – not because of me, but because of the God that I serve. He is a God who plans the 'big picture,' and sets the cosmos in motion. Yet, he is also the one who has the power to grant even the small miracles, like meeting our needs with an empty subway seat.

I wish I could say Cicy has decided to go to church since I left Korea. But truth be told, she has a long way to go in becoming a Christian. God taught me that converting people to Christianity is the Holy Spirit's work. I'm just glad to have been a part of her journey, on her way to knowing God.

I knew the seed had been planted in her heart when, one day, I overheard her saying to a friend: "There was this time at the subway station, and we thought we wouldn't have any seats . . ."

Lailani Mendoza is an Okanagan freelancer.

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advertorial

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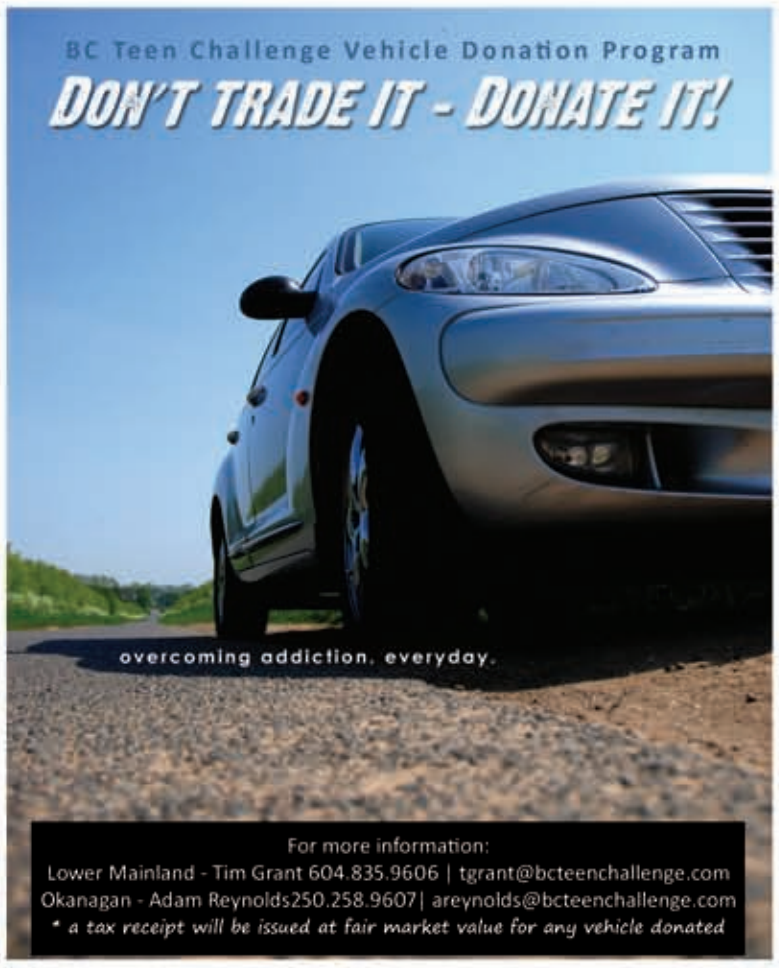

Due to printing deadlines, we were unable to run this last month. BC Teen Challenge would like to thank Greg Palmer for his generous sponsorship at our Golf Tournament held June 19th at Royalwood Golf Course, Chilliwack.

Greg Palmer

celebrating changed lives

my story - Dale

As you can see from my picture *(below)*, I am happy and healthy. To tell you the truth I was not always like this. I was born into a family of alcoholics. At the age of 3, I was placed in the care of the system, the system meaning group homes and foster care. As far as I can remember I was always in the way of flying objects, belts, brooms, fists and feet. The sexual assaults were far too often as well. I found booze and hard drugs and male prostitution as well, my escape from reality. I fell fast and hard losing sight of life itself. My body and soul were broken and beaten. I tried to leave that life and go to an all native treatment center. Upon completing the program, there was still something missing, and I eventually found myself at BC Teen Challenge. As I started to give up my life and will, God has given me a new life. As Revelation 21:4 says *"And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more PAIN, for the former things have passed away."* God has changed my heart, as it says in Ezekiel 36:26: *"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh."* I want to say thank you God for Loving ME.



On behalf of the Chilliwack Men's Centre and the entire organization of BC Teen Challenge, we would like to thank the community of Chilliwack and the local churches for their generosity at the city wide service on Sunday, June 28, 2009.



We want to thank John Harry for the outstanding work he's done for us at Teen Challenge, as both the Church Bookings representative and Special Projects person. John was our first TC grad and has been an important person to the ministry. John is leaving us now, to focus his time and energy on his business venture called Eze-Junk. We want to wish John, Nitu, and Grace the very best for this new season in their lives.

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BC TEEN CHALLENGE is a faith-based rehabilitation program for young men and women, ages 19 and over. We recognize that addiction can take numerous forms, and is not just limited to drug and alcohol abuse. The program is residential-based, and is usually completed in 12 to 18 months.

Please feel free to contact us if you would like more information about the ministry, or if you know someone who would benefit by taking the program.

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