

EMCCTOGETHER

The Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada Family Stories

2024

GROWING IN **CHRIST-LIKE CHARACTER**

Walking the talk

Searching for Joy in the Midst of Grief

Janice Franzen
P. 10

6 Ways We Collaborate with Others for the Kingdom

Tim Bryson
P. 16

Character Over the Long Haul

Durwin & Angel Gray
Keith & Ruth Ann Elliott
P. 28



And we all ... are being Transformed

(2 Corinthians 3:18)

BY KATIE GUTIERREZ

In 2023, our leadership believed that God was leading the EMCC to focus on developing “Christ-like Character.” So, in this issue of the EMCC Together magazine, we asked our pastors, leaders and global workers to share what God is doing in their ministries, churches, communities, or personal lives relating to “Christ-like Character.”

As you read these stories and reflections, we pray you will be encouraged to discover ways God is already transforming your character and also challenged in new ways that He might want to build deeper Christ-like character in you and your church.

If you have a story or reflection to share that relates to the theme of the year and can be an encouragement to others, contact communications@emcc.ca to have your story considered for our next publication.

Katie Gutierrez is the Interim Communications Manager of the EMCC.



Evangelical Missionary
Church of Canada

EMCC TOGETHER 2024

EDITORIAL TEAM

President **John Cressman**
Interim Communications Manager
Katie Gutierrez
Communications Editor **Jean Winker**
Marketing & Communications Coordinator
Ciara Brannan

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS

John Cressman, Sunday Olukoju, Tim
Bryson, Martin Nieuwets, Janice Franzen,
Anthony Does

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Wai-Lam Liu for her direction and
assistance compiling content, designing
the cover image, and graphics throughout.

COVER IMAGE

Designed by Wai-Lam Liu

ADDRESS CHANGES

info@emcc.ca or 1-877-375-7600

GIFTS IN SUPPORT OF EMCC

Donations can be made online at
emcc.ca/donate. The Evangelical
Missionary Church of Canada carries the
Canadian Council of Christian Charities
Seal of Accountability. Our donors can give
confidently, knowing that we adhere to
high standards and operate with integrity.

To download a digital copy of this
magazine, scan the QR code below or visit
emcc.ca/emccctogether:



© 2023. The Evangelical Missionary Church
of Canada.

The Evangelical Missionary Church of
Canada is a registered Canadian charity
and member of the Evangelical Fellowship
of Canada.



CONTENTS

04 SHORE TIME

by John Cressman,
President of the EMCC

06 A CALL TO SHINE OUR LIGHT

by Martin Nieuwets

08 PRAYER, PREACHING, AND PRESENCE

Timeless Essentials
by Jean Winker

10 SEARCHING FOR JOY IN THE MIDST OF GRIEF

by Janice Franzen

14 WHAT CHRISTLIKE CHARACTER AND WALKING THE TALK HAVE DONE

In Emmanuel Fellowship
by Rev. (Dr.) Sunday Akin Olukoju

16 WHY SPIRIT FILLED LANGUAGE MATTERS

by Anthony Does

20 INFOGRAPHIC:

What Global Workers
& Partners are Doing in
Ethiopia, Haiti & South Africa

26 6 WAYS WE COLLABORATE WITH OTHERS FOR THE KINGDOM

by Tim Bryson

28 CHARACTER OVER THE LONG HAUL

Reflections on 25 Years at
Hillside Church

by Durwin and Angel Gray

Reflections on Many Years of
Service in Ecuador

by Keith & Ruth Ann Elliott

Our Ministers

33 NEWLY CREDENTIALLED

34 RECENTLY RETIRED

SHORE TIME

BY **JOHN CRESSMAN**
President of the EMCC

As I write these words, I am sitting in an Adirondack chair along the shore at one of our camps. The water is relatively calm. There is a slight breeze. The sun is setting. Sitting here is cathartic. Calming. God's voice seems amplified. By the way, EMCC has six amazing camps (Charis Camp-BC, Rivers Edge Camp-AB, Whispering Pines-AB, Echo Lake Camp-SK, Mishewah Camp-ON and Stayner Camp-ON). All unique. All beautiful settings where, over the years, many lives have been spiritually transformed and shaped. Camps remain an important leadership development pipeline in our denominational family, where campers become counsellors who become leaders in our local churches and communities. I am one of those who have followed this path into ministry. Please consider contributing and participating in our camps. By doing so, you are investing in future leaders of our EMCC family and the Kingdom.

Back to the shore...I am looking across to the other side of the lake. It is a fair distance. In the past, I have canoed across. The paddle can be challenging if the wind kicks up. We often use the imagery of the "other side" to describe heaven or, for our sake here, the future—full of exploring and hope.

Joshua and the whole nation of Israel arrived at the shore of the Jordan River, where they camped before crossing (see Joshua 3 for the full story). This

three-day shore experience was part of God's preparation work before they crossed over to their Promised Land. Joshua told the people, "Consecrate yourself for tomorrow the Lord will do amazing things among you" (Josh. 3:5, NIV). The instructions to consecrate themselves included physical and spiritual cleansing. Since they had never been this way before, they must first purify themselves.

The EMCC family has had some "shore work" to do before crossing over into God's amazing future. Our focus in 2023 was on the theme of growing in Christ-like character—being holy as He is holy, clean vessels for His use. Some time ago, at a fall retreat (again at one of our camps), pastors, spouses, and denominational leaders sat in a circle and talked about the kind of leaders our culture and churches would need post-pandemic. As leadership qualities were listed, it became abundantly clear that God is calling us to be men and women of Christ-like character.

This year, after a courageous battle with Parkinson's Disease, Rev. Mark Bolender crossed over to the other side to be with his Saviour and Lord. Pastor Mark had an influential ministry as a long-time beloved pastor in our EMCC family. He served our denomination as its first "volunteer" president. He has left a legacy of character. Yes, he was gifted. Yet, at his memorial service, it was the character of Christ that he reflected that everyone celebrated. I remain grateful to God that I had the privilege of being mentored by him, not only in ministry skills but also in character formation.

The world needs followers of Jesus who act like

Jesus. Character must never be an afterthought. Our strengths and abilities do not justify nor excuse bad conduct. If I may be honest, we must admit the Church has, at times, acted "out of character." We have not looked anything like Jesus. Victims of spiritual abuse as well as sexual abuse are coming forward with stories that are calling us to repentance and restitution. Jesus is walking through our camp today with the same instructions, "Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow I will do amazing things among you."

The EMCC has received a fresh call from the Spirit, at this moment of time in our culture, to be people of Christ-like character. Our churches don't just need preachers who can preach; we need leaders who are above approach. We need disciples whose lives are worth following.

This magazine highlights and celebrates the character of Jesus, seen through the stories and actions of our people and churches. We are learning to be like Jesus in our attitudes, behaviour and character. ●




John Cressman is the President of the EMCC. He and his wife, Melanie, experience joy from grandparenting, supporting the local Junior-level hockey team, and walking together.



To learn more about our Camps and connect with one near you, visit emcc.ca/camps.

A CALL TO SHINE OUR LIGHT

BY MARTIN NIEUWETS, PASTOR OF FAMILY LIFE, BETHANY ST. CATHARINES



There is an urgent need for Christ-followers to come alongside and invest in emerging generations. This isn't an issue to simply discuss but to prioritize and take steps to address. The more postmodern we become as a Nation, the more irrelevant religion feels. As Cathy Grossman explains, younger generations "aren't [merely] secularized - they're not thinking about religion and rejecting it; they're not thinking about it at all."

You've likely noticed this in your church. Perhaps you've noticed a few more empty pews in recent years, seats vacant where a family or a middle-aged man once sat. Granted, a few have moved on to other churches, some are watching online, but others have stopped gathering altogether. Statistics from across Canada and the US tell us, "Overall, there are more than four former Christians for every convert to Christianity."

These aren't just statistical numbers or theoretical feelings, they are people that I've known in my 25+ years of being a pastor to families in our denomination. I've seen more than my share of young adults deconstruct and ultimately pack in their faith. Youth groups needing buses for retreats now fit into just a car. I've seen churches once bursting with people, struggling to find creative ways to pay the bills. And if you're being honest, you've

probably experienced this too.

If there are less Christians around this year than last year, the natural by-product of this decrease means that the emerging generations are having less and less opportunity to hear and see the gospel lived out in front of them.

SO HOW ARE WE GOING TO TURN THIS TREND AROUND?

Jesus gave us some direction to follow in Matthew 5:14-16 (MSG):

You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand. Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine!

Those of us who know Jesus (light bearers) can collectively turn these disturbing trends around by pointing others to Jesus! He doesn't want us to hide under a bucket; He placed us on a hill for all to see the Good News we have! This means we need to be where the next generation is and live as light-bearers.

Jesus implored us to shine our light, but He also showed us how to shine our lights, "Keep an open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you'll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:16) Too often we've used our light to expose and shame, but that's not what Jesus is calling us to here. Two words stand out in these verses: generosity and authenticity. These two words are a welcoming fragrance to our

emerging generations. Marty Bennet said, “Unless we intentionally give this next generation access to our lives and build authentic relationships with them, we will fail to have a significant place to actually speak into their lives.”

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- » How am I being generous with those around me?
- » How are we, as a church, practicing generosity towards the families in our communities?

Authenticity requires humility and vulnerability, even curiosity. So...

- » How am I practicing humility and vulnerability with the teens and young adults around me?
- » Am I allowing the natural differences between us to make me curious?

At Bethany, where I’m the Pastor of Family Life, we wanted to shine God’s light in our community here in St. Catharines in a tangible and generous way. We looked for practical ways we could add value to the families in our community. In addition to our Sunday school and youth group, we now offer 10 weeks of affordable day camps to kids in JK through Grade 6, and recreational sports programming for kids in the fall and spring. We also offer mental health support to kids and teens through programs specifically geared to meet these needs. And we are currently working with our city to start a daycare out of our building. The great thing is our community is responding. Through these programs, we were able to show the generous nature of God this past year to almost 500 new families covering over 1300 kids!

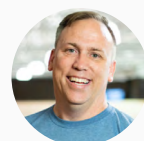
You don’t need to do what we are doing, but you should do something! Our EMCC church in Collingwood ON is located across the street from a high school, so they open their building for students to come and enjoy lunch. Dave Young, serving in the Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, opens his home as a safe space for kids and teens struggling with mental health. Jed Gorham in our Eau Claire church started a cooking class. I can

guarantee there are families living in your town who have some real needs that you as a church can meet. Take time to pray and ask God for wisdom and then, consider going to your mayor and asking, “How can we as a church add value to families in our community?” (That’s what we did!)

ALL THIS MAY TAKE TIME AND PLANNING, BUT HERE ARE A FEW THINGS YOU CAN DO PRACTICALLY THIS WEEK:

- » If you are a parent, start where you are with the kids God has given you. You have the next generation in your home with unfiltered access to your life—let your light shine! Learn how to verbalize the hope you have in Jesus. Share with them what He has meant for you, how He is walking with you now and why you are sticking with Him. They need to be encouraged to meet Jesus for themselves.
- » If you personally know a child, teen or young adult, take a minute and write a short note to encourage them and let them know you love them and are praying for them.
- » Have minute-long conversations with the youth and kids at your church. Pray that each conversation leads to a longer one, which the Holy Spirit can use to influence a young life.

The next generation is asking three big questions: Who am I? (Identity) Where do I fit? (Belonging) What difference can I make? (Autonomy) We can leverage this knowledge in our conversations and prayers. As we pray for our emerging generations, we want those wrestling with identity questions to know that Jesus makes them enough. When teenagers wonder where they fit, we want them to rest in the truth that they belong to God and with His people. And as young people seek to find their vocational place in the world, we hope they lean into the powerful truth that they are part of God’s story. ●



Martin Nieuwets is the Pastor of Family Life at Bethany, St. Catharines. He is also part of the EMCC Next Gen Team of Coaches where he helps EMCC Next Gen leaders thrive in our rapidly shifting culture.



BY JEAN WINKER

PRAYER, PREACHING AND PRESENCE

TIMELESS ESSENTIALS

Cremona Country Fellowship has been a presence in Cremona for around 100 years. Cremona is a small town of 400, part of Mountain View County, with the area around Cremona home to a population of about 2000. In 2020, an interim pastor had been assisting at the church for five years, and between 20-30 people regularly attended. But the Cremona congregation pressed on and God was preparing the ground. Today, up to 140 people attend services.

In a conversation with Matthew Rowley, he shared how he became Cremona's pastor, how God is drawing new believers to Himself, and his thoughts about partnering with God in disciple-making.

The maintenance man at Canadian Baptist Theological Seminary, where Matthew Rowley had done his MDiv, was an elder at the Cremona church. His name was Ed Allen. In 2019, Ed asked Matthew if he would candidate for a pastoral position at Cremona, but at the time, Matthew needed another year to finish his Ph.D. dissertation at McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, ON. He defended his dissertation on the morning of March 13, 2020, and the school closed down because

of COVID-19 that afternoon. Matthew officially earned his Ph.D. in Theology in May. By then, he was living in Cochrane, Alberta, a half-hour drive from Cremona.

With his studies behind him, Matthew accepted the request to candidate, was interviewed on Zoom, and accepted the invitation to pastor at Cremona. His first services were on camera, but in June, when bans were lifted, the congregation started meeting in their church building.

Matthew said, “My primary focus is to preach the gospel. In this time when so much is changing, God is bringing us people looking for the gospel rather than dealing with the problem of the week. We don’t want to be the ‘religion police.’ The gospel itself holds us all to a biblical standard. I am systematically preaching through Scripture. I take what comes, speak, and the Lord works with that. New people say they feel like they have a family and hear the gospel, so they stay.”

Matthew noted that this growth is not simply a shuffling of saints. It is more like a chain reaction. Believers are inviting unsaved friends.

He also spoke of the need to be approachable, comfortable with people’s questions, and conversant with the culture so there is a place to start when talking with others. “We sit down and talk. People are waking up to the need in their life. They need room to ask their questions and have them answered biblically. They need our patience as we spend time and help them to see.”

Sometimes, people think they can’t share their faith because their personality stands in the way. But Matthew said, “I was so shy when I was a kid I wouldn’t even operate the overhead projector because I had to stand while others were sitting. In my Bible school testimony at age 18, I said: ‘I’m not academic, and I will never be a front-

of-the-church kind of person.’ Now, I’m a pastor and a theologian. Bottom line—If He’s called us, He will equip us. Every believer has this call. Pray and ask for boldness.

“We offer a ‘Knowing God’ class. It’s for everyone and is about equipping the saints. You don’t have to believe you are smart. When believers study the Word, the Spirit within will give the words to share with others. Ask God, ‘What does that mean?’ ‘What does the Bible mean by that?’ As we do this, it unfolds before us. God wants us to know Him.”

In addition to the class, Matthew notes that discipleship is very personal, and one-on-one time is essential to discipleship. “You need someone who can point people to God, apply Scriptures to your situation, and share God’s wisdom. We also pray a lot, which has done more good than anything.”

Referencing church history, Matthew points out that the successful pastors of old all have a few things in common: they prayed, preached the Word, and were with their people. “I think my job as a pastor is to sit with people, drink tea, and talk with them. This builds trust. When people know you love them, you can say things you otherwise couldn’t.”

Matthew is away from time to time on ministry trips to Europe, Africa, and elsewhere in the world. He is president of an organization called Training Leaders International, Canada. While away, he is grateful for mature elders and board members. “When I am gone, Godly, wise people carry on the ministry.”

“New issues come and go, but the gospel is forever. The truths of the Word are timeless. When you know it and believe it, preach it with boldness.” ●

SEARCHING FOR IN THE MIDST OF GRIEF

joy

BY JANICE FRANZEN, NATIONAL TEAM EVENT COORDINATOR

Just as we had done hundreds of times in the past, one year ago, we set out into the darkness across Lake Malachi to start our long journey back to Calgary. Only this time, we had just received the devastating news of the sudden loss of our youngest daughter, Teresa, at the age of 31, leaving behind four heartbroken young children and countless loving family and friends. With my back to the wind, I glanced into the northern sky to see the most stunning Northern Lights. Behind me, a sliver of moonlight lit the path forward, guiding us through the dark toward the landing. Shocked and despairing, I was flooded with confusion.

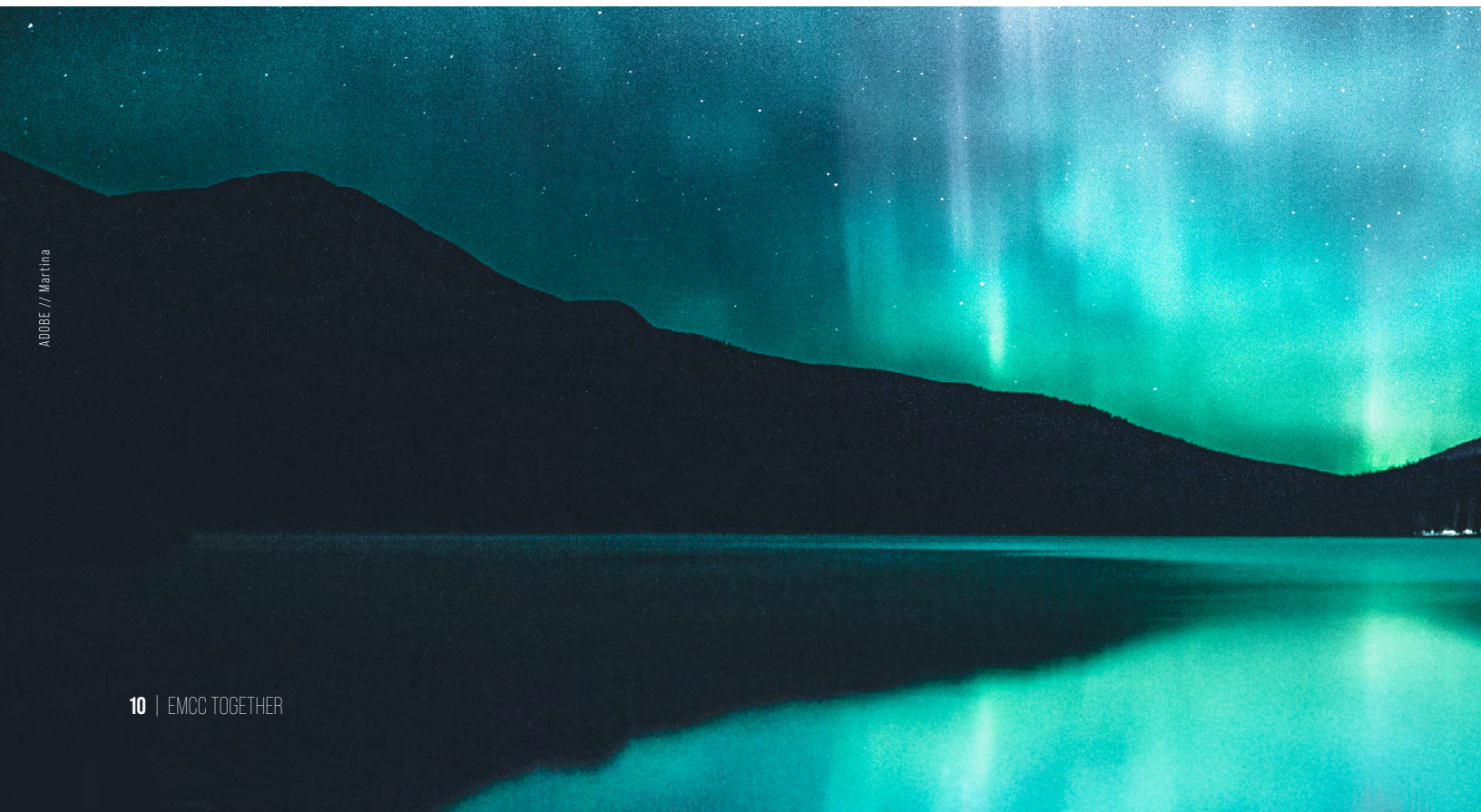
I don't understand! God, why?

What happened?

This is too much for me to bear... what about her children?

Where are you, God?

I had so many questions. I tried to pray. I tried to absorb the unbearable loss. As I stared into the night sky, I tried to grasp a glimpse of heaven, hoping that would console me.



“How majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory in the heavens.” (Ps. 8:1, NIV)

Amid my disorientation, I knew I needed God. I knew God was with me. I knew God was faithful and merciful. Therefore, He could be trusted with this too. *I hoped!*

I have often found myself living within opposing tensions. Now, more than ever, I waver between holding onto the promises made by a good God on the good days and being consumed with grief on the hard days. In unexpected ways, I've often felt my faith and character are being tested to reveal what I truly believe about Jesus. Seeing, knowing, and trusting God's nature in all circumstances and not questioning His ways is a tension that requires a daily response. While I know despair and joy coexist, it gets complicated when each family member is processing grief differently and I want to comfort them in the hope that their pain will stop. Who knows what memory will send someone spiralling, causing me to question God's ways. How do I explain Jesus' love and goodness to grieving children who are young in their faith and dealing with trauma?

Ultimately, I believe—and I cling desperately to the truth—that even during heartbreaking circumstances, God is good and His ways can be trusted for me and my grieving family. I know His presence and constant care have been with us and are being revealed in astounding ways daily. But sometimes, the grief is too much. It takes time and space to grapple with our reality. Hence, the tension.

Looking back, I am grateful for a solid foundation in learning about Jesus and my deep faith in Him. I am also grateful for leaders and friends in the EMCC family along the way who have been inspiring mentors and role models. Was this sufficient to carry me through my grief?

Raised in an Anglican home, my faith was based on religious intellect prompted by weekly attendance at church and the moral code instilled in us by my parents. That was my childhood. I remember the moment years later when my wavering belief in Jesus became personal. We were hosting a family who was staying with us to attend their nephew's funeral. As I





overheard the despair in the grieving family's conversation about heaven, I also heard God whisper, *"If God's heart is to comfort us in our grief, wouldn't He also desire a relationship with us in our joys?"* That small yet powerful prophetic voice led us to Bonavista Church.

The community at Bonavista became family to us as we seized every opportunity to engage in learning about Jesus and serving as a family. We attended family and children's events, and we later led family and children's events. We attended Rivers Edge camps and then led camps. We attended mission events and later went on mission trips. Teresa was always an enthusiastic participant, especially supportive of children's advocacy organizations, frequently travelling to Africa. I absolutely loved serving with our girls. The collection of stories accompanying our family photos provides volumes of memories yet also speaks to our reality that a significant chapter in our life is now closed—another opposing tension. I am sad, and I am thankful.

As we have returned to Lake Malachi this summer with our family and with our grandchildren who tragically lost their beautiful momma, I am surprisingly and genuinely grateful. In my prayer time this morning, as I watched the eagle stoically perched in the tree above us scanning the waters for its next meal, I was reminded of the promise from our everlasting God in Isaiah 40:31:

"Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."
(Is. 40:31, NIV)

I thank Jesus for the remarkable revelations of God in our lives and the beautiful moments of remembrance of Teresa that we hold in our hearts as we walk through grief together. I praise God for the unexpected and tender conversations with Teresa's children. I thank Jesus for their childlike faith, giving them hope and strength each day. I marvel at the testimonies of friends who knew Teresa and have now decided to follow Jesus. I am thankful for the followers of Jesus in our EMCC family whose deep love for Jesus and steadfast Christlike character continue to inspire me. I am grateful for the invitation to serve again with the EMCC National Team, to be part of the Bethel Carstairs Community, and to be actively involved at Rivers Edge Camp.

Grief is still my reality, yet as I look into the searching eyes of our precious grandchildren or as we spend time together as a family, I pray I will be fully present to love them as Jesus does. And, I pray I will be able to humbly and joyfully serve the next generation with the message of God's infinite love, even in the midst of despair we don't understand, but God does. ●



Janice Franzen is the Event Coordinator on the EMCC National Team.

The background of the poster is a collage of images related to church gatherings. At the top left, a man with a beard is shown in profile, looking down with his hands clasped in prayer, set against a magenta background. To his right is a solid yellow vertical bar. Further right, a blue-tinted image shows a crowd of people with their hands raised in the air. The central part of the poster features a large, semi-transparent image of a church service with people sitting at tables. The text is overlaid on this central image.

REGIONAL
GATHERING
2024

EAST
APRIL 19-20

Country Hills Church
Kitchener, ON

WEST
APRIL 26-27

CrossRoads Church
Red Deer, AB

REGISTER TODAY
emcc.ca/rg2024

THEME:
**Collective
Impact**

What Christlike Character & Walking the Talk have done in Immanuel Fellowship

BY REV. (DR.) SUNDAY AKIN OLUKOJU, PASTOR OF IMMANUEL FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

The command to “live as Jesus did” (1 John 2:6) has become our guiding principle in Immanuel Fellowship. Let me share the story of a servant of God in Immanuel Fellowship who serves as a cop in the city of Winnipeg as an example of how this principle guides our lives.

When she joined the Police Service, her faith made her different. She refused to join group gossip. She was quick to ask God for forgiveness over job-induced anger, especially when confronted by hardened criminals using racial slurs to taunt her. Her commitment to live out Christ-like character in the workplace enabled her to seek out like-minded people who walked the talk, like the police Chaplains who she would, from time to time, meet for coffee, where they would have good chat, encourage, and pray for one another. In the process, she also exemplified the Christlike character of fellowship with other believers. While doing this, she connected with a 30-year veteran. This person was able to understand her journey, and subsequently became her encourager and also offered prayers where needed.

There was a time when the morale of her team was low. They had just lost two members, and this took a toll on the entire team. But due to her fervent faith in Christ, she stood up at the briefing session and offered a word of encouragement and prayer. Her prayers brought energy and rekindled hope. Faith in Christ was the only spiritual elixir that could bring healing to the dying souls in such a circumstance. The only hope that propelled her team to full healing was their faith in God through prayers.

Through this experience, she became passionate about reaching out to the needy. She would pursue her colleagues, asking how they were doing physically, emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually, and sought to know how their family members were doing. She would follow up by praying for them after getting their permission to pray for divine intervention. Just as Jesus Christ went out to a quiet place to pray, this faith-filled cop used her department’s bathroom as her get-away quiet place for solemn prayers. She created a place of solace where she could shut the door and breathe and thank God, say sorry to God, or just ask for help.

The character of Jesus, of love, humility, patience, commitment, wisdom, self-control, gentleness, forgiveness and faithfulness have all taught her to show love while policing the tough parts of the community. She was able to see offenders and criminals through the eyes of Christ, and this helped her to treat all community members with respect no matter the kind of crime committed or reported, or how she found the offenders when apprehending them. In her words, “I remind myself that they are at their lowest and God is there with them.”

When her colleagues frequently suggest that all her team members should hang out on a Sunday when they are off duty, she says: “I tell them I’m sorry I can’t hang out today. I am going to church. It’s not that I have an appointment, no, I am going to the one place where I find peace. It is not easy to ‘walk the talk’ but I can say God walks with me.”

Immanuel Fellowship is known within the city of Winnipeg as a church where all church members live in self-awareness of their identity in Christ—not only in the way they dress and talk but also in the way they live their private and public lives. For us in Immanuel Fellowship, 1 John 2:6 reflects in our daily lives:

“Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.” (1 John 2:6, NIV) ●



Rev. (Dr.) Sunday Akin Olukoju, is the co-lead pastor of Immanuel Fellowship Church, Winnipeg, MB.

**“The only
hope that
propelled her
team to full
healing was
their faith in
God through
prayers.”**

Why Spirit-Filled Language Matters

BY ANTHONY DOES, PASTOR AT BETHANY CHURCH





What do we say when what we say matters so little in our modern world?

In a time when church attendance is in decline across Canada, we have a colossal challenge to clearly and convincingly explain why participation in a church community is still vital to a vibrant Christian life.

Our culture is chronically distracted and restless and most people struggle to balance work and family obligations with the ur congregational commitments. This is a recipe for societal estrangement with anything resembling organized religion.

In the middle of this culture, the church is in danger of basing our entire church communities and communication on fear; fear that our Christian subculture is becoming irrelevant. If our actions and our words are based on fear of irrelevance, then our relevance is misplaced. The gathering of the church is necessary because our identity and thereby our testimony are found as the living and loving Body of Christ, not because church is culturally cool. We don't simply believe that God is in heaven; we know God is also on earth. Hence, our faith is always as much about engaging with each other as it is about engaging with God.

If our creeds are correct, as truth bears out, then we are destined to spend eternity with countless multitudes in God's glorious heaven. And heaven, the scriptures convince us, will be experienced with billions of people of every race, background, and ideology imaginable. A forgiven heart will be the only requirement to live there. Accordingly, in this life, it is good to put this into practice, good to be regularly in situations that uncomfortably stretch our hearts and scratch our heads,

wondering what we say to a world so vastly unique from us.

Few things—and we certainly all admit this—stretch the heart as painfully sometimes as church community. When we avoid the ache and muddle of these encounters to walk a less painful private road or to gather with only persons of our own liking and language, the heart need not and generally does not develop. Going to church is one of the best spiritual cardio exercises there is.

Jesus said: 'In my Father's house there are many rooms' (John 14:2, ESV). This is not a portrayal of a type of real estate in heaven but a revelation of the expanse of God's heart. As Greek writer, poet and philosopher Nikos Kazantzakis once wrote: "The bosom of God is not a ghetto". God has a wide heart, all-encompassing, broad enough to display His love and goodness in any, and every language. Therefore, any talk of the church communicating the gospel in this modern era needs to emphasize braver language and wider loyalties.

Finding a new vocabulary for our faith is essential to clearly communicate the gospel. Christian faith,

The gathering of the church is necessary because our identity and thereby our testimony are found as the living and loving Body of Christ

timeless in content, needs to struggle to articulate itself meaningfully today. Eternal truths must still find a vocabulary so that they can be spoken, heard, and practiced within a particular time and culture. The principal missionary task for us in the Western world is no longer that of sending missionaries to far-off lands but that of trying to evangelize our own kids, of trying to communicate the language and the lifestyle of faith within our own homes.

That's no easy assignment. We've all been trying to do it for years with little success. More and more, even our own no longer walk this path of faith.

Christians cannot afford to be lazy with our words. Whether in the pulpit or in the world, what we say and how we say it matters. Spiritual growth demands the sacred task of handling the sacred text well so that hearers become doers. So that what is taught is also caught. Spirit-filled words then become spirit-led works.

Might I suggest we endeavour to be simple, without being simplistic; express deep sentiment, without being sentimental; be self-revealing, without being a weirdo; be profoundly personal, yet deeply universal; be clearly Christian, without using the inner-circle table-talk of the church world; be prayerful, without being pious; speak from a plainly resolute stance, without being condemning. Attempting to be contemporary, without being full of trending cliches means we speak constantly of God's invitation yet always respecting where people are at.

Spirit-filled talk carefully uses the language of critical thinkers and at the same time embraces the language of the artist, both prophet and poet together.

Christians cannot afford to be lazy with our words. Whether in the pulpit or in the world, what we say and how we say it matters.

Spiritual growth demands the sacred task of handling the sacred text well, so that hearers become doers.

So maybe I'm just a dreamer and full of hope thinking we see the Spirit of God fill our spaces and places with a dialect deeply sensitive to human weakness, even as it challenges weakness and invites us towards what is sublime, and alive to faith. ●



Anthony Does is the Lead Pastor at Bethany Church in downtown Kitchener/Waterloo. He is an author, speaker, and always daydreaming about the things that we could see.





Want to support the EMCC?

Your donation supports the mission entrusted to us.

There are several ways to support workers,
projects and programs in the EMCC:

- ▶ Our National Team
- ▶ Our Global Workers
- ▶ Our Global Projects & Immersion Learning Experiences
- ▶ The Development of Our Leaders
- ▶ Our Future Initiatives
- ▶ Emergency Care

Thank you for considering this opportunity to help us make a difference.

For more information, visit our website at

emcc.ca/give

WHAT GLOBAL WORKERS & PARTNERS ARE DOING IN...

ETHIOPIA



WITH
Church & Community
Transformation
(CCT)

270

LEADERS IMPACTED



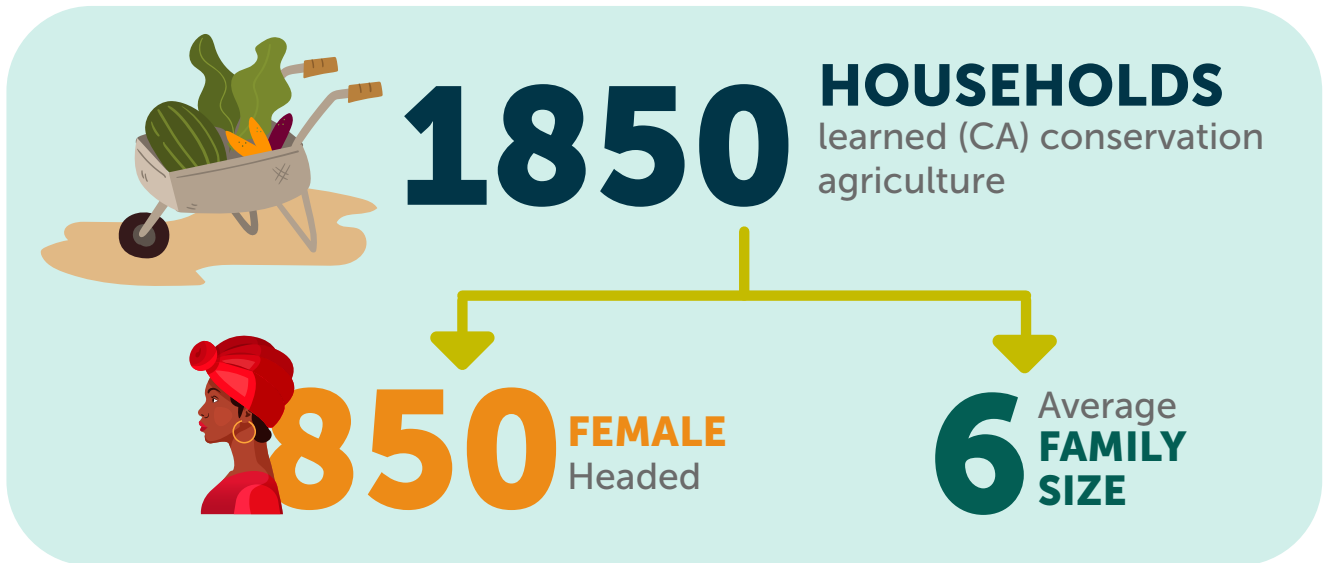
CCT helps churches mobilize their untapped resources to participate in sustainable development with the community based on the skills gained through these trainings.



CCT is about to bring the church back to its original foundation to bring a holistic transformation within the body and beyond, to the community.

ETHIOPIA:
Resilient Agriculture and Local Empowerment

CONSERVATION AGRICULTURE (CA)



SELF-HELP



WHAT GLOBAL WORKERS & PARTNERS ARE DOING IN...

HAITI



**FARMING GOD'S WAY (FGW),
Education and Community**
An integrated development initiative in Gens de Nantes (GdN)

50
FAMILIES



BENEFICIARY FAMILIES

participate in Gardens of Faithfulness



CHILD

in each family attends GdN
Elementary/ Middle School



school books
and backpacks
for students



other school supplies
for teachers



ADULT BENEFICIARIES

on-going training in FGW/
Gardens of Faithfulness
techniques



seeds and some
equipment provided
for the beneficiaries



teachers follow-up
with adults on their
gardening journey



67

GARDENS WERE PLANTED
through FGW training in August 2022

Auberge de Vieillards
HOME FOR SENIORS AND DISABLED INDIVIDUALS



\$3,325

Average monthly expenses in 2022





 **HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS (HCPs)**
Centre de Sante, GDN



(3 HCPS) Providing monthly care for



JULY - SEPTEMBER 2022

571 TOTAL PATIENTS

251 CHILDREN
received Vitamin A doses

13 BABIES
delivered

21 PATIENTS
referred to hospital

62 VACCINES
for babies 0-11 months

 **HEALTH SCIENCES SCHOLARSHIP STUDENTS**
attending Universities in Haiti

2011

Since inauguration of
YVONNE MARTIN
MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP



3 MEDICAL
DOCTORS
graduates



2 LABORATORY
TECHNICIANS
completed studies



11 NURSES
graduated from
4 years of training

2022

GRADUATED

Completed their 4-6 months of service at GDN Centre de Sante



DR. SAMUEL
Medical Doctor



WISLANDE & EDLINE
Nurses

STUDENTS



3 NURSING

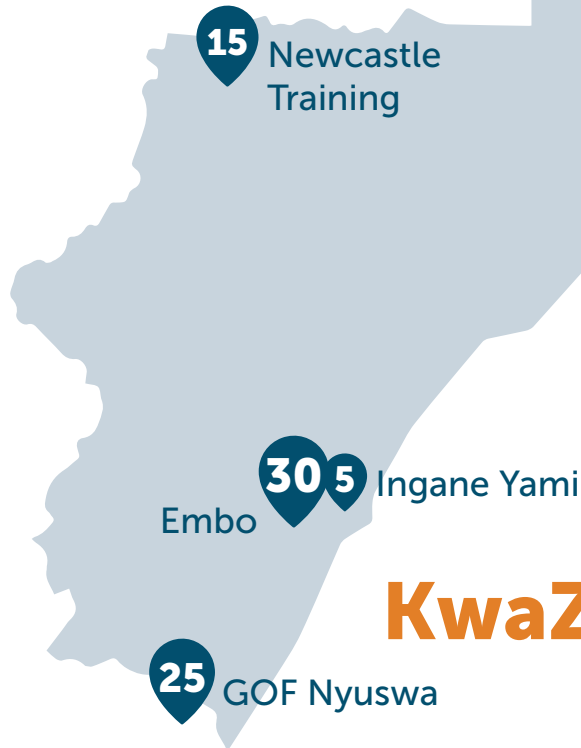


1 LAB TECH

WHAT GLOBAL WORKERS & PARTNERS ARE DOING IN...

SOUTH AFRICA

Gardens of FAITHFULNESS



Total 75
Number of people trained offsite

KwaZulu-Natal SOUTH AFRICA



Total 55
Number of people impacted in site visits



4 communities extended
by Inundo Development

PRODUCE & ASSISTANCE



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING



195 people trained

EVENTS



Consider connecting with and supporting our workers and partners. See our directory (emcc.ca/world-partners/workers) of global workers and partners.

6 Ways We Collaborate WITH OTHERS *for the Kingdom*

BY **TIM BRYSON**, PASTOR OF ST. CLAIR CHURCH & RIVERSIDE CHURCH

When God called my family to leave a small city in Southwestern Ontario and move to the east end of Toronto in 2014, I had no idea what was ahead. We were stepping out in faith. I had served nearly ten years as an associate pastor at a large church and the last four years as a full-time children's pastor. Having grown in ministry experience on a pastoral team of 5 (plus support staff), God led us next to Scarborough, where I would serve as a part-time, solo pastor of a tiny, struggling congregation.

It took me only a short time to realize that serving in this new context required reimagining some things and collaborating with other people and ministries in order to see Kingdom growth in our corner of the city and beyond.

MONTHLY BREAKFAST WITH PASTORS

Among our first connections in the community were other EMCC pastors and congregations in the Greater Toronto Area, meeting monthly for breakfast, encouragement and prayer. These gatherings have continued, sometimes more or less frequently, and are always a blessing as we share how God continues to lead within the contexts of our churches and ministries.

PARTNERING TO RUN A VBS

Before my arrival, St. Clair Church had not run Vacation Bible School in several years. Our first summer at St. Clair, we ran a two-day VBS. By the second summer, I had connected with the pastor of the Anglican Church in our neighbourhood. Together, we reached out to many community families with

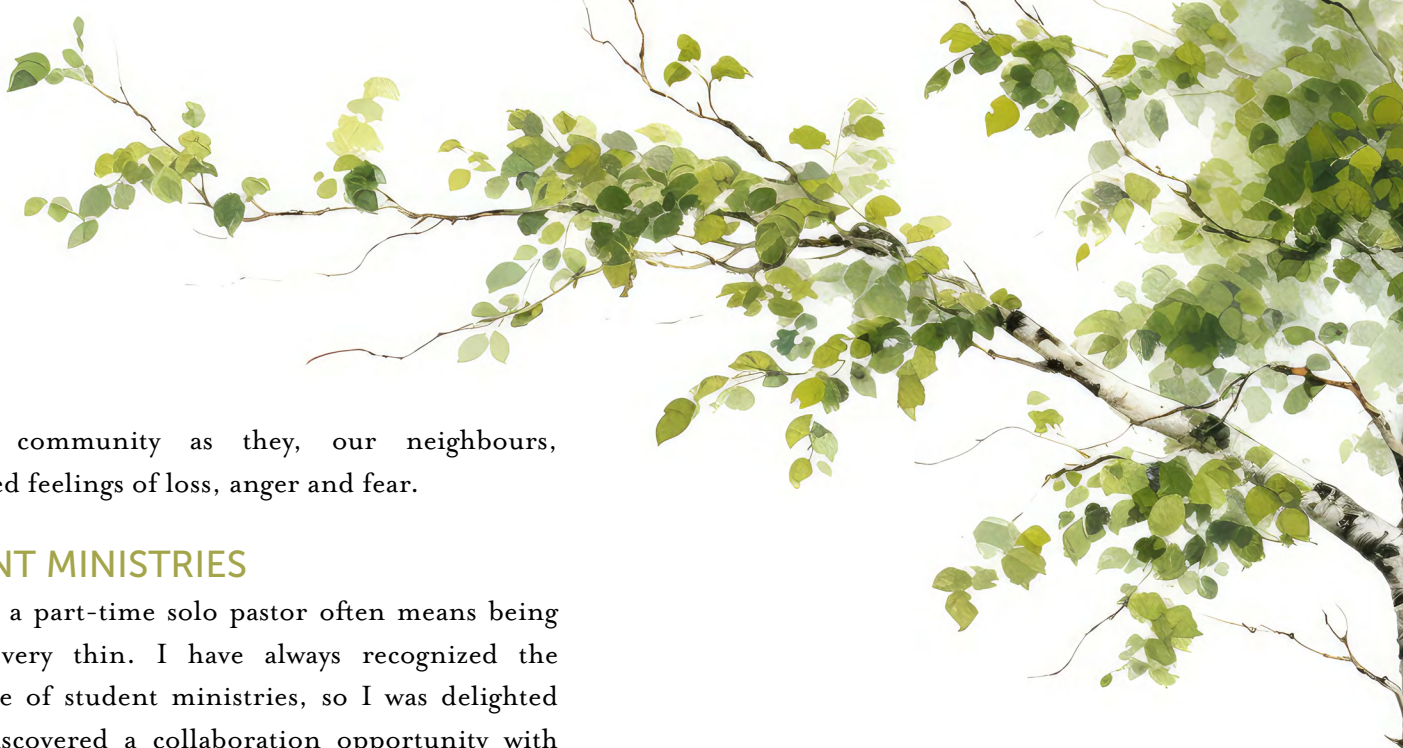
our Summer VBS program over the next several years. More recently, we have connected with Youth Unlimited, which has run multi-week Summer Day Camp programs at St. Clair Church, reaching out to more local children than ever before.

CHRISTMAS IN THE COMMUNITY

Christmastime is often a season when many hearts are open to hear the good news of Jesus. Six churches in our neighbourhood collaborated a few years ago to offer "Christmas in the Community." We gathered at two churches for carol singing and a brief gospel message. We walked, candles in hand, through the neighbourhood, ending up at a parkette, where we sang more carols, held a "live nativity," and enjoyed hot chocolate and sweets. Even the City of Toronto got involved with a tree-lighting ceremony in the park. As people walked by or waited at the busy bus stop nearby, many joined in our carol singing, accepted a cookie, or paused to contemplate the nativity scene.

RESPONDING TO GRIEF IN OUR COMMUNITY

In June of 2021, following an anti-Muslim attack in London, Ontario, which left four family members dead and a 9-year-old boy injured and orphaned, our local ministerial pastors collaborated in an effort to help bring healing to our Scarborough community. We purchased flowers and signed a sympathy card, which I had the opportunity to deliver to our neighbourhood mosque. I was honoured to be invited onto the platform at their Friday prayer service, where I shared our sorrow and solidarity on behalf of the combined



Christian community as they, our neighbours, experienced feelings of loss, anger and fear.

STUDENT MINISTRIES

Serving as a part-time solo pastor often means being stretched very thin. I have always recognized the importance of student ministries, so I was delighted when I discovered a collaboration opportunity with Youth Unlimited through their Scarborough Youth Network called “Doxa.” Since making this connection, our students have enjoyed interacting with other youth from across the city, gathering once a month for worship, fun activities and a gospel message. We’ve also participated in Doxa youth retreats and evangelism workshops for students. I had the opportunity to go with Doxa to the Dominican Republic in 2022 on a mission trip, and we hope that some St. Clair students will visit the D.R. with Doxa in the next few years.

FILLING THE GAP AS INTERIM PASTOR

In October of 2022, St. Clair Church stepped out in faith by collaborating with Riverside EMC in downtown Toronto when they needed an interim pastor. In partnership with EastRidge Church in Stouffville, Ontario, which provided prayer and financial support, we have collaborated, serving the needs of our sister congregation. St. Clair and Riverside Churches have been worshipping together through Facebook Live, and I have served as pastor of both congregations. We’ve gathered together for Christmas and Easter celebrations, and in June, both congregations enjoyed 70th anniversaries, celebrating together on back-to-back Sundays.

BEING TREES STANDING IN WATER

Nine years ago, God led me and my young family to

Toronto. He has sustained me through the last year, serving two congregations. Several months ago, God gave me these verses from Jeremiah 17:7-8:

“But blessed are those who trust in the Lord and have made the Lord their hope and confidence. They are like trees planted along a riverbank, with roots that reach deep into the water. Such trees are not bothered by the heat or worried by long months of drought. Their leaves stay green, and they never stop producing fruit.”

(Jer. 17:7-8, NLT)

I recently learned the name “Toronto” is derived from the Mohawk word *tkaronto*, which means “where there are trees standing in the water.” I desire that wherever God calls me, and whatever God’s plan is for His Church in this city and beyond, we, His people, would reflect these truths. That we would be planted along the riverside, “where the trees are standing in the water,” deeply rooted in the trust, hope and confidence that only Jesus can provide, undisturbed by the “heat” around us, evergreen, bearing continual fruit for His Kingdom. ●



Tim Bryson, is the Pastor of St. Clair Church, Scarborough and Riverside Church, Toronto.

ADOBE // Marita



Character Over the Long Haul

There is a phrase that was made memorable by Eugene Peterson and is attributed to Friedrich Nietzsche; “A long obedience in the same direction is what makes life worth living.” Peterson explains, “It means going about our assigned tasks, confident that God will provide the meaning and the conclusions.”¹ Author, Mark Buchanan reflects in his book, *God Walk*, “my bent, maybe yours, is to find the easy way every time: the shortest distance, the widest path, the quickest route, the cheapest means, the safe way. Yet the times I’ve stumbled upon the hard way—the long stretch, the costly journey, the twisted path,

the route that doubles back, circles round, crisscrosses, detours, skirts the precipice—those have been the best.”² Character is formed over the long haul. It is God who provides meaning and purpose over time. The halls of EMCC’s past are filled with portraits of long-haul leaders and servants. In this article, we celebrate the obedience of two couples that have grown in character as they have served over the long haul. In their own words, these are personal reflections on their journey of long obedience.

- John Cressman, President of the EMCC

¹ Peterson, E. H., & Peterson, L. (2021). In *A long obedience in the same direction: Discipleship in an instant society*. essay, IVP Books, an imprint of InterVarsity Press.

² Buchanan, M. (2020). In *God Walk*. Zondervan.

A LONG OBEDIENCE IN THE SAME CHURCH

Durwin & Angel Gray - Reflections on 25 Years at Hillside Church in Coquitlam, BC.

As my family would tell you, it takes quite a lot for me to be surprised. But a few Sundays ago, it seemed like my entire Hillside Church community had secretly conspired to honour me for the twenty-five years I've served as a Hillside pastor. I was truly overwhelmed by their outpouring of love and affection. Twenty-five years at Hillside has simply been my reality. I've considered moving to other churches or opportunities over the years, but God has kept on confirming my call, both to my church and the larger community.

Just this last weekend, the Tri-City Pastors Network here in Coquitlam which I help give leadership to, hosted a City Prayer Breakfast for representatives from all levels of government, MPs, MLAs, City Councilors, Mayors, School Trustees, along with fire and police services. We have approximately twenty Tri-City churches represented at the event each year. The feedback received from the community leaders around this annual event has been overwhelmingly positive, and it has built amazing connections between our city leadership and the Christian community. All this to say, I have been to twenty-five of these Prayer Breakfasts, and I'm so grateful for the relational connections and favour that grow out of those long-term relationships. The honour of serving a particular community cannot be understated. The benefits of a long tenure have made for long relationships, that have truly seen the good, the bad, and the ugly. With considerable mobility in the Greater Vancouver region, we have seen a lot of people come and go over the years. I feel like I have pastored about four different congregations, and it has been wonderful to observe the unique characteristics of each Hillside generation.

Twenty-five years in one congregation has meant I have had to be very intentional about my own personal and family renewal. I've flirted with the edges of burnout on an occasion or two, and I now am fastidiously dedicated to rhythms of rest and work that will hopefully sustain me in the long haul. I have taken two sabbaticals during these twenty-five years, and another is coming soon. I believe these have helped prepare me for the next season of shepherding and leadership. In a sense, my commitment to my context has forced me to grow and develop. My 'bag of tricks' got used up in about year seven and I quickly found I had to go deeper if I was to have anything to offer. My hope and desire are to continue to faithfully walk out my pastoral calling in whatever context that may be or for whatever length. For now, I'm still here. Grateful and still growing in character.

A LONG OBEDIENCE IN THE SAME COUNTRY

Keith & Ruth Ann Elliott - Reflections on Many Years of Missionary Service in Ecuador.

These reflections were recorded during Keith and Ruth Ann's final visit to Ecuador in November 2023. A visit that included several pastor and spouse retreats and individual pastoral care visits in the homes of those they have mentored and served over the years. The Elliotts will retire as EMCC World Partners Global Workers in the spring of 2024. So, in a long car ride from Chone to Santo Domingo, Ecuador they offered the following reflections.

We are so grateful to God for His calling on our lives. It has been a joy and privilege to serve our Lord. We wish to thank all the people who have believed in us and have supported us in so many ways. We marvel at the open doors to serve in Ecuador and Mexico over these many years. In these latter years, we have focused on the personal lives and soul needs of pastors and their families, what a blessing to be able to listen, care and lift up pastors and their families in prayer and



encouragement. Over the years, we have focused on church planting and pastoral training. Now, to focus on the character development and inner healing of pastors in their varied and challenging contexts has been so meaningful and timely. Finally, we are grateful for EMCC World Partners who have provided the support and mechanism to serve faithfully.

The benefits of serving the same leaders in the same country over the years have been so worth it. We have had the joy of seeing young people grow up to be leaders in the church. Each one with a unique story of calling, healing, and development. Over the long haul investing in the same people, in the same country, we can actually see the growth and maturity of the church in Ecuador; from turmoil in the 80's to a mature church today focused on multiplication.

Over the years, we have learned many lessons and grown in our character. The longer we have been in ministry the more we listen and the less we feel the need to talk

“The benefits of serving the same leaders in the same country over the years has been so worth it.”

and teach. The longer we know someone, the deeper the ministry. Over the long haul, we have been humbled to get to the deep stuff in people's lives. We see now that we are role models and that our way of life, our trust in Jesus, matters even more than our words.

This recent visit has been an emotional journey, filled with many hugs and tears but much joy at investing in the country of Ecuador over the long haul. We are blessed. What an adventure!

A Story for the Road

In the early years, when our children were young, we often ventured out as a family to a nearby village to lead small group Bible studies. On one occasion, we met a few believers in a home near the coast that was built out of bamboo and sat on stilts to protect it from flooding. On the way there, our baby daughter finished her bottle. We climbed the stairs to their simple, humble abode and sat around a table for a meal and then the Bible study. Keith was teaching on the parable about the wise person who builds his house upon the rock. The sun had set and the house was dark except for the lighted lamp on the table.

The baby started to fuss and Ruth Ann attempted to console her by bouncing and rocking her in her arms. So as not to disrupt the study, mother and baby backed their way to the corner of the room. It is known among those who live in bamboo structures to stay away from the walls and edges as the floor is weaker. As Ruth Ann stepped back, the floor all of sudden gave way and she fell through the floor and landed in the chicken pen. As she landed, the baby fell from her arms and landed safely in a pile of hay. It was pitch dark but mother and baby were okay. They looked up through the hole in the floor to see the silhouettes of several faces peering down the hole, inquiring if they were hurt. The study ended appropriately with the practical reminder to build our lives on a firm foundation—Jesus. This story continues to bring joy and laughter every time it is told in Canada and Ecuador. ●



LEARN TO COACH WITH

GC2 COACHING

Be equipped to help others discern next steps in life and ministry.

NEXT SESSION:

MARCH 12-13, 2024

REGISTER AT emcc.ca/gc2-2024

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

Are you, or someone you know, searching for ministry employment? Find a ministry opportunity in one of our EMCC churches on our website.

emcc.ca/ministry-opportunities

RESOURCES

FOR YOU AND YOUR MINISTRY

Thrive in your inner life as a leader, enrich the ministry and organizational strength of your church, connect with your community.

emccenrich.ca



Find out what's coming up!

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR E-NEWSLETTER:
emcc.ca/newsletter

FOLLOW US




2024 NEWLY CREDENTIALLED MINISTERS*

	Chardon Canonayon	Nova Church	Surrey, BC
	Jayne Duldner	Bethany Community Church	St. Catharines, ON
	Justin Fox	Bonavista EM Church	Calgary, AB
	Arleen Gomez	Church at the Mission	Toronto, ON
	Edith Green	Bonavista EM Church	Calgary, AB
	Melanna Heebner	Centre Street Church	Calgary, AB
	Kevin Hegeman	Hillside Community Church	New Westminster, BC
	Jeff McCrea	Bethel EM Church	Wellesley, ON
	Katherine Milum	Centre Street Church	Calgary, AB
	Barry Oram	CrossRoads EM Church	Red Deer County, AB
	Paul Quantz	EMCC	Sturgeon County, AB
	Tomas Ruhland	Centre Street Church	Calgary, AB
	Joshua Sissons	CrossRoads EM Church	Red Deer, AB
	Michael Stanley	Huron Chapel EM Church	Goderich, ON
	Becky Timmons	Centre Street Church	Calgary, AB
	Eli Van de Laar	Faith EM Church	Swift Current, SK
	Paul Vickers	Mountain View EM Church	Didsbury, AB
	Moses Yu	Centre Street Church	Calgary, AB

 Ordained Minister

 Licensed Minister

 Provisional Licensed Minister

* As of November 30, 2023.

RECENTLY RETIRED MINISTERS



Retired Ordained Minister
December 31, 2022

BRIAN MORRIS

Many joys come to mind as Brian reflects on over 38 years of ministry. To name a few, “There were the stories of changed lives, the relationships we formed and maintained, the professional relationships, and the Romanian Mission trips.”

Brian was born, raised, and trained in the Fellowship Baptist denomination. Beginning in 1984, he served three Baptist churches before transitioning to EMCC in 1996. He then pastored Ontario EMCC congregations in Owen Sound, Hanover, and Aylmer.

Shortly before retiring, Brian and his wife Beth sold their home in Aylmer and moved to Tillsonburg, a community half an hour away.

“This is a season of rest, recalibration and retooling,” he says. “We know we are sent by Jesus to bless people, and we’re getting to know our new neighbours to see what we can do. Being committed to our

neighbourhood is something we see as very important.” Brian has also met the pastors in the local ministerial. “I want to make a contribution ministry-wise wherever we live.”

As he looks ahead, Brian hopes to be available for transitional ministries. And now, on the other side of full-time ministry, he wants to be someone whom pastors can come to for encouragement.

“There is great joy in engaging with people. Be patient with them and love them. Understand that ministry is a life-long learning project.”

Brian and Beth retired together from Aylmer Church where Beth was also heavily involved. They have a married daughter who lives nearby. Brian is a self-taught musician who plays the keyboard, piano, and drums. He is a voracious reader and may dust off his neglected golf clubs in the spring.

RECENTLY RETIRED MINISTERS



Retired Certified Minister
December 31, 2022

LORNA (WORONIAK) WACHAL

“When I took a part-time administrative job at Albright Church in 1993, I thought it was temporary. I had no idea God intended it to be my second career.” Thirty years later, at the end of Dec 2022, Lorna retired and started down a new path.

At Albright, her responsibilities grew; she was involved with financial and facility management and the myriad tasks that fall on the shoulders of an administrator.

“My biggest joy was working alongside of, and serving people. It was usually behind the scenes, and I watched for what I could do to help ministries.”

In July 2021, Lorna began planning for retirement. A change began happening in July of 2022 when Lorna began dating Randy Wachal. Randy, his late wife, and family had been part of the Albright church family for twenty years. “Early in our relationship, we knew there was a together future for us.” Things also began falling into place for her retirement at work.

Now, left in her former office is an armchair, a place of ministry now for the use of the new administrator. Many sat in that chair and found a listening ear, encouragement, and timely words of prayer.

Lorna and Randy got engaged Nov 11, and their wedding and reception at Albright Church on December 28, 2022, was an opportunity for celebration.

“I don’t know how God is going to use us, but I know who I am going to serve alongside. We think we may help couples, and hope we can be a good example to the young folks. I’ve felt God’s involvement from the get-go. I was single for 30 years and led a very satisfied, content and fulfilled life. What’s ahead will be for God to determine.”

Lorna and Randy live in the country, and there is a large garden to tend. Between them, they have five sons and daughters-in-law and nine grandchildren.

RECENTLY RETIRED MINISTERS



Retired Ordained Minister
February 2, 2023

TONY GEENSE

On August 8, 2020, a serious car accident abruptly ended Tony's pastoral ministry at Paisley, EMC. Among Tony's numerous severe injuries were several head injuries, which have left him unable to focus and read. Tony's spouse, Gloria, also sustained injuries, including a broken neck and multiple arm fractures. After six weeks in the hospital, Tony came home in a wheelchair to join Gloria, who was discharged first.

"I am very thankful to the people at church who rallied around us. And, for 12 weeks, our daughters looked after us."

Progress is painstaking, and it was apparent that ongoing assistance was required. In 2021, at the invitation of their daughter and son-in-law in Onoway, Alberta, Tony and Gloria moved into a house right next to their family, who assist them with tasks of daily living. Days fill up with physio, massage therapy, and speech-language pathology.

"The end of pastoral ministry has meant having to adapt, the loss of nearby friends,

starting new and grieving. I am thankful for my faith; as hard as it is, my identity is not in being a pastor but in Christ. I've anchored my life in Christ, who sustains me."

Tony was pastor to several EMCC congregations. First, at Bethel, New Dundee, ON, from 1983-87. Then he planted a church in Winnipeg, MB, in 1987-89. After pastoring in Colborne, ON, from 1989 to 1993, he took a break and was a funeral director in Fort Frances, ON, until 1999. He served as Pastor at Bethel Baptist Church in Fort Frances from 1999-2006. And finally, to Paisley, ON, from 2006-2020.

"Over the years of ministry, my biggest joy was the people I met and ministered with, and I involved myself in every way I could with the community."

"As I look ahead, I am thankful for every day I get and for my family. Each day, there is a new challenge, and new opportunities to share with others." I feel Jesus saying to me, "Lean on Me, trust Me."

RECENTLY RETIRED MINISTERS



Retired Licensed Minister
June 1, 2023

STAN STARKEY

Stan's career choices have included farm worker, head baker, herdsman, youth worker, business owner, and pastor.

He enrolled at Heritage Bible College in Cambridge, Ontario, in 1980 and while there, interned at a Baptist Church and then worked for Youth for Christ for two years in St. Thomas. Stan and Lori had three children by the time he finished school, and he was holding down three part-time jobs. He went into business and pastored Sundays in a non-denominational church in London.

Later, Stan and Lori became the pastoral couple at Evangel CC in Kitchener for 17 years. With Stan's encouragement, the congregation prioritized and carried out frequent community events and overseas ministries. Seeing the need for a larger facility and more parking, Stan led the way through the complicated procedure of a church merge. Three years ago, Evangel and Lincoln Heights EMC in Waterloo came together and formed Verity, which benefited both churches. Verity seeks to be a hub of community-friendly activity. Services are usually held outside to maximize visibility and neighbourhood participation.

When Stan's retirement drew nearer, the

church hired Nathan Weber, who became Stan's assistant. In the fall of 2022, the two switched roles.

Stan and Lori are commuting in a 5th wheel between Kitchener and the farmhouse they are renovating near Port Rowan. With his entrepreneurial spirit alive and well, Stan and Lori are brainstorming ideas to make their small farm profitable.

"I like to create new things. See new things grow. That's why I've always loved farming." They already own chickens and a few turkeys and hope to tap about 500 trees for maple syrup. One of their sons, daughter-in-law, and grandkids also live on the property.

They currently attend church in Ingersoll, where Stan does some teaching, and they also return to Verity part-time, where he teaches and is involved in worship. Although officially retired, Stan feels far from done and feels Jesus is saying: "It's not the end. Here are the next steps, and some amazing seasons are ahead." Stan is thankful for opportunities to pass on wisdom gained and lessons learned from life experience. To see the change in people whom Jesus has transformed is his biggest joy in ministry.

RECENTLY RETIRED MINISTERS



Retired Ordained Minister
June 30, 2023

CONRAD NEUDORF

On Father's Day, June 19, 2022, Bear Creek Church and Life House Church in Surrey, BC, merged and held their first service together as Nova Church. Conrad was the pastor on the Bear Creek Church side of the equation. Just three months into Nova's existence, tests revealed that the symptom Conrad had gone to see his doctor about was caused by Parkinson's Disease. With no inkling of this during merger talks, Conrad is amazed at how God was setting things in place for the good of both churches.

"I had not intended to retire so soon, but I'm at peace knowing God knew the right timing," says Conrad. Nova has given him the title of Pastor Emeritus. "I'll preach now and then but will be in the background, cheering Pastor Chardon on."

Graduating in 1986, Conrad prepared at Canadian Bible College in Regina, SK, where he earned a Bachelor of Religious Education and then at Trinity Western University in Langley, BC, earning a Master of Theological Studies with a major in Apologetics.

He was ordained in 1990 and served several Alliance churches and an MB church. He then helped churches in transition until

he began at Bear Creek in 2010. This was also a transition ministry, but he agreed when the church asked him to stay. He was ordained in the EMCC in 2017.

A lifelong writer, Conrad now has time to pursue this passion like never before. He's writing Christian fantasy books and novels for ages 9-16 and is working on a three-book series. Part one has been published and is titled *Mighty Troy of Salem—The Oats Mission*. He has also published an apologetics book titled *Truth is not Plural*. Both are available on Amazon.

"This is a ministry. When I write, I am able to use my degree and my gifts."

Conrad and Debbie have Landed Immigrant status and will soon move to the United States. They plan to live in their own home on the property of their daughter and family in Washington State.

Looking back on pastoral ministry, he reflects on the blessing it has been to see first-hand the major workings of God and the miracles He has done in people's lives. As he looks ahead, he senses Jesus saying, "Trust me," to which he responds, "He's been faithful thus far. This is a new chapter, direction, and chance to trust Him. I'll do that." (Jer. 29:11) ●

OUR VALUES

We follow Jesus

We value His ways, His words and His life as our example.

Have this same attitude in yourselves that was also in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 2:5)

Therefore, God elevated Him to a place of highest honour and gave Him the name above all other names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow...and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord.

(Philippians 2:9-11)

We depend on the Holy Spirit

We value listening to the voice of the Spirit. We seek to walk in the power of the Spirit.

There is fellowship together in the Spirit.
(Philippians 2:1 paraphrase)

We genuinely care

We value relationships. We strive to live as the family of God. We seek to compassionately care.

Do nothing out of selfish ambition...rather, in humility, value others above yourselves.
(Philippians 2:3)

We humbly serve

Like Jesus, we value humility and servant-leadership.

Though He was God, He did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, He emptied Himself and took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When He appeared in human form, He humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on the cross.
(Philippians 2:6-8)

We collaborate together

We value being together, learning together, working together and being on mission together. We value the multiplication of disciples, leaders and churches.

Then make my joy complete by being like-minded, loving one another and working together with one mind and purpose.
(Philippians 2:2)





Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada

Following Jesus Together

1-877-375-7600
info@emcc.ca

ONTARIO OFFICE
160 Lancaster St. E.
Kitchener, ON N2H 1N2

CALGARY OFFICE
3900 2nd St NE
Calgary, AB T2E 9C1


@emccnational
emcc.ca