

THE MORNING STAR

THE WYCLIFFE COLLEGE COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

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How by doing what churches told them to do, they failed their kids

By Judy Paulsen

Esther was one of many gracious life-long members of our church. A real salt-of-the-earth type, who with her husband had raised three kids to be successful, fully-launched adults. She was now thoroughly enjoying a bunch of grandkids, most of whom were already teenagers. But Esther was troubled by something. The focus of the sermon that week had been on God's call to teach the faith to the next generation. I noticed her waiting, as other parishioners cleared out, so she could have a private word with me at the back of the church.

"You know we did everything the church told us to do. We got our kids baptized. We brought them to Sunday School and youth group. But now only one of my kids goes to church and none of my grandkids does. Several of them aren't even baptized. We did everything the church told us to do. What went wrong?", she asked.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

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Theological, and Moral
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Public Lecture—

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or Dystopian Reality, p.3*

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*At Home, brought to you
by Student Council—
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Esther was right.

She and her husband had raised their kids in the 50s and 60s and done exactly what the church of her generation had told her to do. This was the age of a professionalized model of Christian education when Sunday Schools were packed and Youth Groups flourished. Mid-week children's programming also thrived, with large percentages of kids enrolled in Cubs, Scouts, Brownies, Guides, or Girl's Auxiliary. Parents dropped their kids off, confident that they were doing the right thing to help shape their children's spiritual lives. Trained leaders would teach them what they needed to know.

So what did go wrong? The children who packed Sunday Schools across Canada in the 60s are the same people largely absent from churches today, and their own children are even more likely to be missing. While a myriad of factors likely contributed to this situation, simply put, the professionalized model of Christian education obviously failed. The fruit (or lack thereof) of this approach was first seen in the mainline churches but is now also becoming obvious in evangelical communities of faith.

Here are some questions many churches are beginning to grapple with.

How did we let go of the home as the centre for kids' spiritual development? How did Sunday School teachers and youth group leaders replace parents as the primary spiritual educators of their children? And most importantly, what needs to change so that the Church can pass the Christian faith to more of the next generation?

One thing is clear; it's time to hear again the words of Deuteronomy 6:6-9,

"Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."

Simply put, let's find a way to do the following:

- (1) equip parents to teach their children about the faith through their everyday conversations and practices, and
- (2) involve children together with their families in the full worshipping, studying, serving, and playing life of the church.

Of course, there are no guarantees that a given child will embrace the faith as their own. Nevertheless, we all have a sense that the church can do better at encouraging this. Let's more intentionally help Christian parents parent as Christians. Let's not fail tomorrow's Esthers. Instead, let's equip, empower, and celebrate them in that crucial role as disciple-makers.

ABOUT

Judy Paulsen is Professor of Evangelism and Director of the Institute of Evangelism at Wycliffe College.



Student Event



ST. AUGUSTINE'S SEMINARY / WYCLIFFE COLLEGE EXCHANGE— THE FUTURE OF THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION PROCESS

Wednesday, March 18, 2020, 3:15 p.m.—7 p.m. at St. Augustine's Seminary of Toronto, 2661 Kingston Road (at Brimley Road), Scarborough

Join us at this special Wednesday event with speaker Fr. David Reilander, President, Catholic Missions In Canada. Dr. Alan Hayes will preach. Wycliffe Students and Faculty are asked to **RSVP by March 11, 2020** to Karen Baker-Bigauskas at principalsoffice@wycliffe.utoronto.ca , or 416-946-3521.

Here is the schedule of the day:

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|-----------|----------------------------|
| 3:15 p.m. | Gathering and refreshments |
| 3:45 p.m. | Lecture followed by Q&A |
| 5:15 p.m. | Evening Prayer |
| 6:00 p.m. | Dinner |

Public Events with Stephen Williams



WORKSHOP — TRANSHUMANISM: ETHICAL, THEOLOGICAL, AND MORAL DIMENSIONS

Friday, March 13, 2020, 9 a.m.—11 a.m. in Leonard Hall, Wycliffe College

In this workshop with Dr. Stephen Williams, we will discuss the ethical, theological, and moral dimensions of transhumanism. This is a free event and no registration is required.

PUBLIC LECTURE — TRANSHUMANISM: UTOPIAN OR DYSTOPIAN REALITY?

Friday, March 13, 2020, 7 p.m.—9 p.m. in Leonard Hall, Wycliffe College

Join us at this public lecture with Dr. Stephen Williams: *Transhumanism: Utopian or Dystopian Reality?* This is a free event and no registration is required.

DR. STEPHEN WILLIAMS

Dr. Stephen Williams is Honorary Professor of Theology, Queen's University, Belfast. He holds MA degrees from Oxford University (Modern History) and Cambridge University (Theology) and a doctorate in Theology from Yale University (Department of Religious Studies). Subsequently, he has held chairs in Theology at United Presbyterian Theological College, Aberystwyth (Wales) and Belfast from 1993-2017. He has published in several areas, including theology, ethics, and intellectual history. His books include *Revelation and Reconciliation: a Window on Modernity* (Cambridge University Press); *The Shadow of the Antichrist: Nietzsche's Critique of Christianity* (Baker Academic) and a revised version of his Kantzer Lectures, delivered at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in 2009, *The Election of Grace: A Riddle without a Resolution?* (Eerdmans). He has lectured in various parts of the world and has had a particular link with Central Europe, notably, Poland. Dr. Williams has long been involved in the field of bioethics. He has served on the Editorial Board of Ethics & Medicine and spoke at the inaugural CBHD conference in 1994.



From the Registrar's Office



Barbara Jenkins
*Registrar, Director of
Enrolment Management*

TST SCHOLARSHIPS

Applications are now being accepted for the TST Board of Trustees Scholarships, Bursaries and Awards. Applications must be submitted by 4:00 p.m. EDT, Thursday, March 26, 2020.

A general flyer and individual award flyers are posted to the notice board. More information and application forms are available on the TST website at <https://www.tst.edu/academic/scholarships-and-bursaries>. (Select "TST Board of Trustees Scholarships, Bursaries and Awards").

There are two awards open to non-Ontario residents/international students. These are the Marjorie Watson Powles Award and the David Cameron Memorial Award. All the rest are for students who are Canadian citizens, permanent residents or Protected Persons, and are residents of Ontario.

Please note, only currently registered TST students may apply, incoming students are not eligible.

Key academic dates

- Mar. 2: Ontario Graduate Scholarship (OGS) application due. <https://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/awards/ontario-graduate-scholarship/>
- Mar. 27, 2020 - Last day to defend theses (Spring Convocation)
- Apr. 3, 2020 - Absolute deadline for TSpace submissions to be approved for Spring Convocation (Note: students are given individual deadlines based on defence date)
- Apr 24, 2020 - Last day to submit doctoral theses to TST for examination (Fall Convocation)
- For more academic dates, visit <https://www.tst.edu/academic/key-academic-dates>.

Lenten Devotionals

Lent is a time of solemn reflection leading up to the celebration of Christ's resurrection at Easter. As a tradition, Wycliffe College reflects on the self-sacrifice of Christ together as a community through weekly Lenten devotionals written by our students.

You receive them in your email inbox (starting Feb. 26) only if you sign up specifically for these devotionals. Sign up at <https://www.wycliffecollege.ca/newsletter> and check the "Weekly Lenten and Advent Devotionals" option.

Merchandise



Purchase your Wycliffe College sweatpants for \$24.99 each! You may order them from the UofT Bookstore. Go to wycliffecollege.ca/merchandise for more details!