

# live

A BAPTIST RESOURCE FOR WOMEN ON A MISSION

MAY/JUN 2022

## EMBODIED REMEMBRANCE

Moving forward in a better way

## BEING FACED

Ministry at the intersection of hospitality and justice

## OPEN HOMES, OPEN HANDS, OPEN HEARTS

Czech Baptists help Ukrainian refugees



## SEEKING JUSTICE

Confess. Lament.  
Remember.

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# live

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# Proximity



“We cannot create justice without getting close to places where injustice prevail,”

**Dominique Gilliard**, *Subversive Witness: Scripture’s Call to Leverage Privilege*, our May–June book club title.

PROXIMITY IS KEY to effective justice and mission because it means we must ask ourselves the question the expert in the law asked Jesus: Who is my neighbour? (Luke 10:25–37) In this season of truck convoys in Ottawa, war in the Ukraine, lifted social distancing restrictions, and a sixth COVID-19 wave in Ontario, I can’t think of a more timely question. Who is our neighbour?

As Jesus makes clear in his reply, redefining neighbour only happens in and out of the context of loving God with all our heart, soul, strength and might. In the intimacy of that relationship, we begin to grasp that *imago dei* applies to every person, even those we cannot love – we consider them simply too unlovable, too different, too difficult to understand.

I wonder how easy, or hard, it would have been for the priest and Levite (lead worshippers of their day) to pass by – to distance themselves – from the wounded man. I confess that it’s easy for me to pass by. I’d rather pray than put out.

In his words on love, Paul warns that speaking in the tongues of humans and of angels, or having gifts that operate in the context of worship like prophecy and faith, are nothing without love. Doing justice is not enough – if we are not compelled by love.

Faith without works is dead, yes. Works without love, even more so. “If I give all I possess to the poor...but have not love, I gain nothing.” (1 Corinthians 13:3, NIV) We are not able to truly do justly until we truly love.

Love is hard work; a work of surrender and humility. It is a renovation of your heart and mine that begins when we choose proximity; when we choose to draw near to God daily. It begins when we draw near to our neighbours and use all of the advantages we have – health, age, education, money, address, status, skin colour, gender – to truly make a difference in their lives.

Draw close with Baptist Women as you read this issue’s articles all reflecting on our board’s target of social justice. Join us in September when we focus on another target: investing in the next generation.

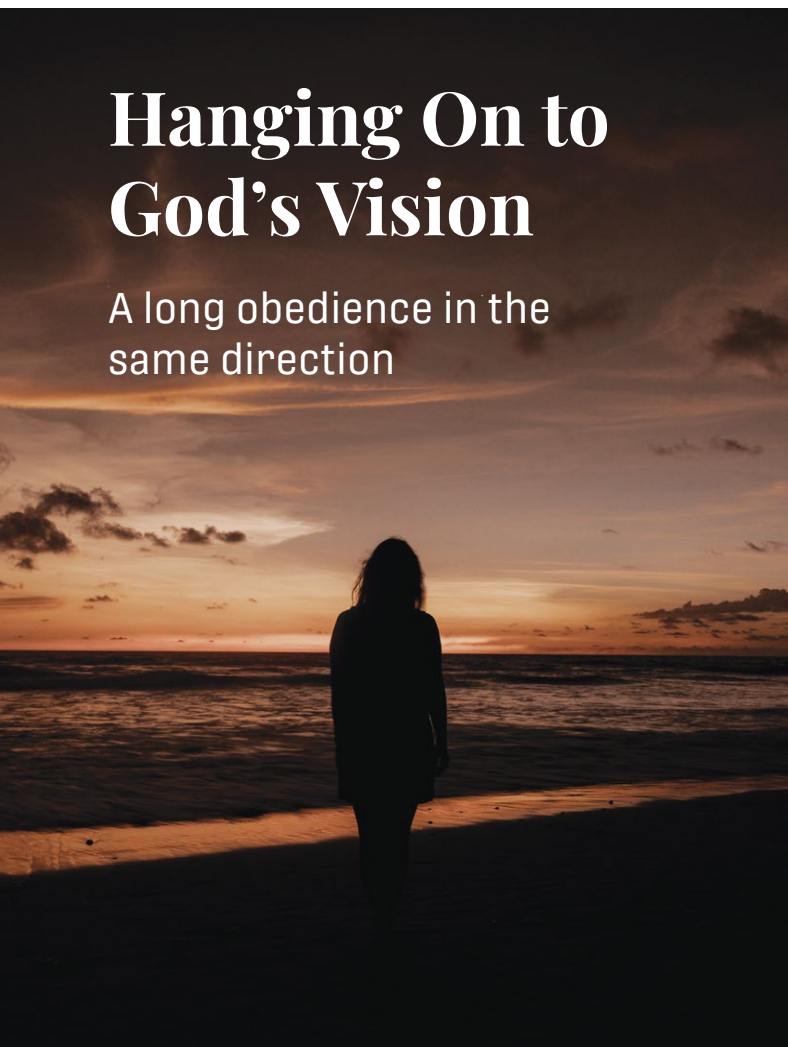
**Renée James**  
*Editor*

We hope you are enjoying *Live* magazine’s updated look, new content and overall general makeover! As a key facet of the ministry of CBWOQ, we continue to carry the magazine of Baptist women while looking at fresh ways of connecting, inspiring and encouraging our readers and revitalizing our subscription base. As a part of this process, we have made the decision that there will not be a July/August issue this year. We will steward this time, instead, towards the long-term vision of *Live*. See you in September!

— **Helena Bergen**, *Executive Director*

# Hanging On to God's Vision

A long obedience in the same direction



BY **VICTORIA MOK**

GRAND VISIONS tire us after a while, don't they? Reflecting on the biblical Jubilee with my small group one day, we heaved a collective sigh, a mixture of high hope and deep disappointment that was caught, helpless, in the already-but-not-yet. It would be so soul-satisfying to witness all the freedom of that fiftieth year, but how in the world would we ever get there? For me, I knew I was filtering my weariness through the many years I've spent working in various areas of poverty alleviation work.

As a fresh grad out of seminary, I was convicted by God's kingdom vision found in Isaiah 58. This passage captivated me to live out its verses through different solutions, including teaching employment skills to homeless youth, living in a low-income community among refugee neighbours, and now working in the food security sector helping to feed the hungry in my city.

All of this sounds good on the surface, but those of us who have engaged in ministry on behalf of the poor

for some time, know how distant the initial vision that captured us can still feel. Maybe I get to serve someone a bowl of stew on a Friday afternoon, but who will feed him on the weekend? For the neighbour I helped craft a resume with, where will she find an employer who will hire someone with basic English skills? Some days, I feel like I have done absolutely nothing fruitful despite the long hours put in, and instead, I've simply accumulated a big pile of sighs and heartaches.

Into this swirl of thoughts came relief through the unexpected ideas of smallness and desperation.

## Smallness

In Loving Muslims Together's Monthly Call to Prayer in February 2022, these beautiful words were shared as part of a testimony: "God is telling you that you are very small. You cannot reach God, but He can be small in order to come to you."<sup>1</sup> Reading these words shortly after the Jubilee discussion, I was reminded that smallness is the way God chose to bring His kingdom to earth. The kingdom itself was inaugurated through a helpless baby. Feeling small against the needs of the world is not something to feel ashamed about. It's a position that allows God to break through. I may not have seen how the bowl of stew impacted that person's life, but in the kingdom economy, I remember again that God uses small acts like these to do His work.

## Desperation

In Luke 8:22–25, the disciples experience a storm rolling in while at sea. Taken by fear, they wake Jesus up, and He immediately calms the storm. In the aftermath, He asks, "Where is your faith?" I always felt embarrassed for the disciples who seemed to have missed some lesson. But I realize the lesson is this: In the storm, Jesus is in the boat with me. He doesn't require me to concoct a way to steer steady in the storm. He also doesn't mind my desperation. My job is to faithfully call on Jesus, trusting that He will act.

This broken world has gotten no less overwhelming, but I've gotten more comfortable with my desperation. Each moment of desperation signals me to ask God for help sooner than I used to. I continue to have moments where I feel like my efforts are fruitless. But the God who saved the world through a baby both directs me and remains anchored in His grand redemptive vision. I may be small and desperate, but God leads me in the way forward. **1**

Victoria is in a season of learning to slow down and rest in the Father's pleasure. She attended Mississauga Chinese Baptist Church for many years.

<sup>1</sup> From *Loving Muslims Together's* February 2022 Monthly Call to Prayer: [imtn.outreach.ca/monthly/details/ArticleId/3765/February-2022](https://imtn.outreach.ca/monthly/details/ArticleId/3765/February-2022)

# Shaped *by* Love Shaped *to* Love



CBWOQ pastor Rev. Debbie Iversen shares about her ministry. She pastors at Little Bethel Community Church in Hamilton.

**Q: How have you and your call to ministry been shaped by Love?**

My mom's love for me as a child was always vibrant, fun and it made the world feel like a safe and welcoming place to be myself and to try new things, without any fear of failure or inadequacy. This is how I was shaped by love. This foundation made it quite easy to understand and accept God's love for me. The love that was imbued into me from young gave me an insatiable love for others and a persistent curiosity about the other. This has shaped my ministry tremendously. I love God and I love people. My love for people makes me marvel at how God has made us all so different and unique, yet all in His image.

"It's not about perfection. It's about the journey and relationship."

**Q: How has that shaping formed your approach to ministry and in particular your call to pastor?**

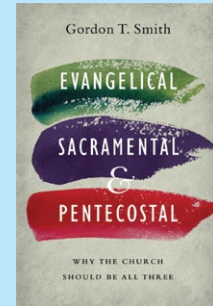
Loving God and loving people has shaped my understanding of what ministry is to me. Ministry is simply walking alongside people to help them find the next step, to help them see God leading and guiding them. Finding the next step is not about perfection. It's about the journey and relationship. It's not about the end product. It's about the here and now. As a pastor, my call to ministry is centered around listening together with people to hear His voice for the next step. The Good Shepherd leads us one step at a time.

**Q: What would you like to say to women who may be feeling a call to ordained ministry?**

I love CBWOQ's theme *Shaped by Love, Shaped to Love*, based on Hebrews 10:23-24: *Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.* God's love is faithful and full of hope. If He calls you, enjoy each step of the way. Always remember He who has called you is faithful and more than able to accomplish His good work in and through you. His banner over you is love. ❶

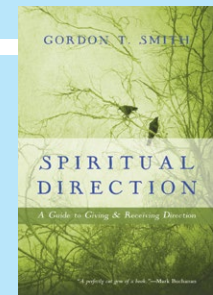


## Bernice's Picks



**Evangelical, Sacramental and Pentecostal: Why the Church Should Be All Three**  
Gordon Smith

**\$18**



**Spiritual Direction: A Guide to Giving and Receiving Direction**  
Gordon Smith

**\$17**

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# The Cry

## A lament from Rev. Dr. Cheryle Hana

### **I wish I could cry, but I can't.**

I have watched the people wander away.  
I see what they cannot.  
My body feels dead. I am naked and alone.

### **I wish I could cry, but I can't.**

I shouldn't cry. It messes with your delicate sensibilities.  
God is leading the procession.  
People are dead.  
Sin is growing among us like stage 4 cancer.  
The only thing left is pain.

Cheerfulness is replaced with grief.

Cynthia, Shirley, Pamela, Sarah, Felicia, Maxine and Marilyn.

Brutally raped, murdered, and lost.

1,017, the number of Cree, Mikmaq and Objawa women and girls murdered over 10 years.

Am I next? Is someone waiting for some perfect spot, time or my stupid mistake?

What if I told you to bring a small picture of your daughter to service next week? What if I gathered those pictures up and placed them in a bucket and just before the sermon light them on fire? Would you care, cry, notice? Would I still have a job?

### **I wish I could cry, but I can't.**

The late Reverend Frederick Sampson would say that tears were the release valves of the heart.  
Tears are automatic, cleansing and helpful.  
God wants to cry but God's tears are blocked like ours.  
God weeping isn't macho, too vulnerable.  
But God cries like God screams; matching our humanness and helping us to name the One beyond every name.

### **I wish I could cry, but I can't.**

I can't do it anymore. I can't watch. I wouldn't watch.

I will let the rivers do my crying. The oceans will spill out enough tears. Let the waters of the earth flow.

I know full well there is nothing. So many women, so many that I never even knew about are missing in action. It's getting to be a daily part of life.

The police know, they know white men sexually prey on Indigenous women and girls but "did not feel that the practice necessitated any particular vigilance."

A Cree woman isn't a woman, is she? A Mikmaq girl had it coming, didn't she?

There is no one who can make me cry. There is no balm in Gilead.

### **I wish I could cry, but I can't.**

If I could but muster the tears, the healing could begin.

If I cry, I am human again.

Crying is a gift I want to receive.

1, 5, 10, 40, 250, 799, 1017 and I will cry with their families.

I cried during residential schools.

I cried during the whole child welfare system thing.

I cried during the jail system, young offender system thing.

I cry with my people as their families are impoverished and broken by failed government policy.

### **One has come who can cry.**

One has come who is the balm I need.

One has given love freely, without expectation of return.

One came and was killed, shattering the dreams and hopes of many for justice and peace.

But death did not have the last say.

### **Jesus loved and wept and died and now lives. Let us go and do likewise. ①**

Rev. Dr. Cheryle Hana is minister of the congregation at Fourth Baptist Church, Ottawa. Based on the style of Jeremiah 8:18–9:3, Cheryle wrote and delivered this lament to the congregation on November 14, 2014.



## Do You See Her?

A reflection on the missing

BY **CAROL PARSONS**

IT SORROWS MY HEART that so many Indigenous women are missing, and not only Indigenous women. Many women of different nationalities and ethnicities are either trafficked or murdered in Canada and around the world.

Have you ever had anyone you know or love go missing? I have. It is hard when it hits home. I always try to educate my girls about the many unsafe situations they may find themselves in. I tell them that there are evil people in the world and an enemy who comes to steal, kill, and destroy.

It seems that every time I open social media I can almost guarantee that my news feed will have a missing person bulletin come up. I share it in hope. And then, the next time I sign in, I see they have been located and are safe. I rejoice! We rejoice. That one made it home.

Yet we are still grieved by the months and years in which Indigenous women still remain missing...or go missing. We grieve them. Jennifer Catchway is from my town of Portage la Prairie and she has been missing for 14 years this June. In November, Amber MacFarland will have been missing for 14 years. That is a long time for no proper goodbye or even burial so that they

Have you ever had anyone you know or love go missing?  
I have.

may rest in peace. Jennifer and Amber are out there somewhere. I personally know two women who went missing in 2021 and another who was murdered.

How long, Lord? How long? is the everyday lament cried out by the families and friends of missing and murdered Indigenous women. Our burdens are heavy and we are weary souls. We know that God our Creator hears our deepest groaning; our deepest longings. It grieves Him to see all the evil that happens.

Do we see? Do we see her – sitting at a bus stop; walking down the street; standing in the line to cash out at the grocery; lying in hospital. Do we see her? She could be walking home after school. She may be your child's friend. She could be silenced. She can be heard. She may be in arm's reach.

We do not fight against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, darkness and principalities of this world. ①

Carol is Metis, from Peguis First Nation Treaty 1 Territory in Manitoba and has always identified as Indigenous. She is a past president of Heartland Baptist Women (formerly Women In Focus, Manitoba) and she is a leader on CBWOQ's racial justice team.



# THE PATH TO HEALING



**HOLLY FORTIER**, a Cree/Dene from Ft. McKay First Nation, Alberta, was born in Treaty 7 Territory. Since 2007, her business, Nisto Consulting, has developed and delivered of Indigenous Awareness Trainings to thousands participants who come from government, industry, agencies, schools, businesses. Her audiences hold a variety of positions such as stakeholder relations, administrative personnel, scientists, machine operators, supervisors, managers, human relations, health workers, teachers and police/fire.

*Live magazine* spoke with Holly in January and February about the hard work of justice.

**Q:** Tell us about Nisto Consulting and why you began this ministry.

**A:** We've been negligent in Canada about sharing true history. We focus on pre-colonization and on the beauty of our land, but at the same time we must account for the 150 years of colonization and unilateral decision-making by the federal government that are part of our history. We need to look at that time and that place, so we can all have healing.

My intention is to bring Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians together and to not be another divisive voice.



**Q:** You speak to a wide audience that wields influence – government officials and oil company personnel to name a few.

**A:** God has taken me, someone who is not able to do this in my own strength, and used me to build this business. I'm not an editor, politician, historian, academic or any of that but I do have a heart for people to understand that they may have misconceptions about Indigenous Peoples.

I also deliver heavy subject matter with a kind tone so that people receive the training as coming from a place that's not accusatory. There are so many issues from which we all need to be healed.

**Q:** Tell us about your healing process.

**A:** One common thread that all Indigenous people share is historical trauma – and personal trauma. Indigenous women endure poverty, violence, barriers in education, high dropout rates from school, no generational models of how to love.

My mother went to a residential school, run by a church. I've had a life faced with many challenges. In 1982 our family had a house-guest from Bible school in Australia who'd sing and pray. During his stay with us he told me, in a kind and gentle way, about Jesus and about God and I decided to follow the Lord.

**Q:** How did you forgive?

**A:** When I was younger I used to be so angry. I was militant in my activism. I was at every protest. But I was becoming a bitter person. After I became a Christian and began reading Scripture I realized that God made us all equal. Something happened. My heart opened up and I began to study the topic of forgiveness extensively. I learned that I needed to let things go and I've been able to do that because of Jesus' love: He was so loving in the way He talked with people, ministered to women and helped those in need.

**Q:** It seems that your mother's story is part of what you're redeeming through your ministry.

**A:** When I began to read about God's approach to humans – loving, compassionate, merciful, generous – and about Jesus' life, death and resurrection I knew I'd been given a way of living. I want people to not feel the pain I did.

**Q:** What shapes your advocacy work and activism on behalf of Indigenous Peoples?

**A:** I've experienced racism from Canadians and from the Church. Canadians need to have a different approach and a different understanding. We don't do the gospel any favours by wrapping its message in ethnocentrism. I suspect that's why so many Indigenous people oppose anything to do with Christianity.

I hope that Indigenous people will see the true God who is loving and a Jesus who is brown. I pray that one day, being Indigenous and Christian will make sense. All of us have to learn what reconciliation is truly about and how we can do this work. ①

**Q** What are some concrete ways that we – the Church – can start that work of learning and reconciliation?

- **Stop saying: "What can I do?"** and shift the question to: "What can I learn?"
- **Remember** that 500 years of mission hasn't worked in presenting God's love to Indigenous Peoples. Let's own that.
- **Understand** that Indigenous Peoples don't separate the natural world from the spiritual. They have a strong faith that expresses itself in ceremonies, prayer and more.
- **Indigenous Peoples believe** that Creator God placed them here on Turtle Island (North America). Find out the name of the territory and the ancestral lands you're on.
- **Research** the history of the land pre-contact (before settlers came).
- **Learn** about what happened to Indigenous Peoples after the Indian Act. We must learn true history.
- **Visit** museums and cultural sites.
- **Pray.** Pray for shalom. It starts with the individual; with every Canadian saying that reconciliation starts with her. We always think that reconciliation is a big movement, but it starts with one person. So what can you do? Study the Truth and Reconciliation Report. Do your own research so when opportunities come you'll be well equipped to teach and to learn.



# GOD IS OVER THE CHAOS

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light.

GENESIS 1:1-3 (NRSV)

BY **REV. DR. CHERYLE HANA**

Over the last two and a half years we have experienced and continue to experience a great lack of predictability, a formless void of sorts, a chaos.

George Floyd's murder. Inept and partisan politicians and politics. Missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. The discovery of children's bodies on the grounds of residential schools. Islamophobia and Anti-Asian racism. The pandemic. Now war.

Confusion is how many of us feel watching and wondering about our place in all this. We attempt to sort out our feelings and responses, wishing to do no harm in the process. Where do we start?

GOD CREATED US

Let's start here. God is not of the chaos. God has not given over sovereignty of the earth to pandemonium. God is not careless, casual or accidental in His response. God acts and God cares. God is in control. God is here. God is over the chaos. God is over it.

The first three verses of Genesis are generally believed to have been written during the period of Babylonian exile. God's people had witnessed the destruction of the Temple, the fall of their sovereignty as a people, and had been dragged away from the land of their birth and birthright. The Babylonian gods seemed to control the future and it appeared that those same little 'g' gods had crushed the dreams of the God of Israel.

The people of God desired and desperately needed to make this claim of God's sovereignty. In 2022, much like the people of God in exile in Babylonia,

we continue to be subject to the Babylonian gods of racism, over-policing, worldwide viruses, poverty, unemployment, and loneliness.

"When God started creating, God made the heavens and the earth," is another way of translating the Hebrew text of verse 1. No reason is given for Yahweh's unuttered act of forming an earth that is viable for life. Unlike the little 'g' gods that need to control everything and manipulate people and situations to suit their desires, Yahweh has no such need. He focuses on making a world for us. The exiles in Babylon understood this for the first time. They were in awe of the gracious generosity of God and wished to celebrate it. Today, like them, we are called to look beyond our selves, beyond our current circumstances, beyond the tedium of the day-to-day tasks that consume us and instead, to look at God.

This setting of creation in Genesis 1:1-3 asserts that Yahweh is still God. God still watches over creation and will bring all that has been created to wellbeing. God is over it.

GOD INVITES US

Generously, God invites each of us to participate in the continuation of creation. We have a part to play and a place in the story. We can recapture our prophetic zeal and successfully keep Jesus and justice together in the same sentence as God always ordained. We can, because in words written by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. over 60 years ago, "Deeply rooted in our religious heritage is the conviction that every man is an heir to a legacy of dignity and worth, referred to as the 'image of God.' The worth of an individual does not lie in the measure of his racial origin or social position.

Human worth lies in relatedness to God. An individual has value because he has value to God."

WE HAVE MUCH TO DO

We have a future and the future can be bright. Not because racism, sexism, Islamophobia and gender bias no longer exist, but because the people of God – *we* – are willing and interested in listening to, and not talking over, those who have been historically abused and mistreated. Because *we* are ready to accept the role our collective organizations, structures and systems have inflicted on hundreds of thousands. Because we are ready to be courageous enough to say something and do something about it.

It may not be enough to use the hashtag #BLM, yet not write a letter to your elected officials demanding changes in policies and laws affecting those lives. It may not be enough to say, "I am pro-life," and not be willing to have a portion of your government's funding pay for affordable day-care and equal quality schools in low-income communities. It may not be enough to be disgusted by the over-policing you witness on television, yet ignore the same in your own backyards. It may not be OK to encourage females to work outside their homes and then pay those females 67 cents for every dollar a male is paid. It may not be the best course of action to recite land acknowledgements at the beginning of our public assemblies while we walk past First Nations members begging on the streets.

We are better and can do better. God is over the chaos. ①

Cheryle is a biblical scholar and minister of congregation at Fourth Baptist Church, Ottawa. She has led workshops and been plenary speaker at Baptist Women Conferences.

**MOVING FORWARD IN A BETTER WAY**  
A reflection on National Truth and Reconciliation Day –  
September 30

# EMBODIED REMEMBRANCE

BY DR. DANNY ZACHARIAS

**IN 2015**, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) concluded its eight-year long process. The TRC hosted seven national events across Canada to share and honour the experiences of former students and their families. We heard the stories of over 6,500 witnesses. Out of this Commission came an extensive historical record about this dark chapter of our shared history along with 94 Calls to Action directed at every level of society – because our shared history in these lands shapes us at every level. We must always remember that our history, and the stories we tell about ourselves and about our history, shapes us as individuals, as communities, and as societies.

Theologian Chris Green said something on a podcast that has stuck with me. He said, “The future is nothing but what we tell or don’t tell about the past, [and] the future will be as good as the telling of our past is truthful,” (InVerse Podcast, Jul 19, 2021). How do we walk with integrity and humility and wisdom into an unknowable future? We speak the truth about our past and we move forward in a better way. It is into this reality that we have come to this new national day of commemoration. Under the sub-section of Commemoration, TRC Call to Action #80 called upon the government to create a new statutory holiday to honour the children, and to help us not forget.

## COMMEMORATION

The work of commemoration is an important one, a vital one. We are forgetful. And in an individualistic society such as ours, we are especially forgetful about things outside of our

lifetimes. But we are shaped by our past both individually and collectively in profound ways, ways that we do not often recognize. And so we are called to commemorate. To remember.

As readers of the Bible, we should understand the importance of acts of commemoration. In the Old Testament, the Israelites were often told to remember events that happened way before they were even born! Why? They were invited to listen to the stories that had been passed down in both oral and written form. They were invited to make the old story their own. They were invited to recall, for instance, that God had brought their ancestors out of Egypt, and that this event still had a profound effect on their lives – even generations later.

## EMBODIED REMEMBRANCE

But the Israelites weren’t invited to simply recall events to their minds. They were called to embody that remembrance. By eating lamb during Passover they would remember the Exodus. God also told them to live in tents for seven days to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles and to remember the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness recorded in the book of Numbers. These acts of remembering were not of events that had happened to them, but *it became about them* as they ate lamb and lived in tents. These were embodied acts of remembrance. Today, as people of the New Covenant, we commemorate the life of Jesus with our holy days, with communion, and with our immersion into the waters of baptism. We enter into the story of Jesus through embodied acts because we are embodied people.



**WE ARE SHAPED BY  
OUR PAST IN WAYS THAT  
WE DO NOT OFTEN  
RECOGNIZE.**

### **GOOD WAYS TO REMEMBER**

We are forgetful people, and we need to remember in good ways. Not simply to recall something to mind, but to enter into an embodied act of remembrance. To educate ourselves and to listen to the stories. As Chief Justice Murray Sinclair said, “this nation must never forget what it once did to its most vulnerable people.” And so we remember that we have benefitted and continue to benefit from injustices of the past – injustices that were intentionally and expressly done to the Indigenous peoples of these lands.

As we commemorate for years to come, we will remind ourselves of how the evils of the past have shaped this nation and we will seek a better way forward. And this day will become a catalyst in our education systems, when our children will learn for the first time about Residential Schools. Reconciliation will become a path we continually walk, a new ethos of our country. It will confront us with the question “*Who do I need to be, given what I know now?*” Let’s not shy away from hard truths. Let’s own up to the ways in which this colonial legacy has shaped us at the expense of others. Let us not shy away from speaking prophetic truth to power even when those powers reside within our own house, or even within our own hearts. Because “the future is nothing but what we tell or don’t tell about the past.” And “the future will be as good as the telling of our past is truthful.” **1**

Danny Zacharias serves as Professor of New Testament Studies at Acadia Divinity College, in Wolfville, NS. This is the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi’kmaw peoples. He also serves as an adjunct professor with *NAIITS: An Indigenous Learning Community*. He writes as one originally from Winnipeg in Treaty 1 territory. The land where his maternal ancestors lived for thousands of years falls into Treaty 1, Treaty 2, and Treaty 3 territory.

# Being Faced

Ministry at the intersection of hospitality and justice

BY RENÉE JAMES

WELCOMING REFUGEES runs in Danielle Steenwyk-Rowaan's DNA. Her family, home church and denomination have a long history of welcoming refugees and sponsorship. So in 2016, when the climate around refugee welcome began to shift in Canada and the US, something in Danielle also shifted. "I saw refugees – people fearing and fleeing for their lives – being feared as terrorists. I've volunteered at Micah House in Hamilton and I count refugees among my friends. It broke my heart to how refugees were now being treated."

She remembers when writing one more reply to scathing Facebook commentary on refugees coming to Canada became too much. "I didn't want to fight church people on Facebook anymore," she remembers. "I didn't want to spend time with people having to argue that refugees are human." Instead, she left her communications job, began raising support and worked with friends to launch Open Homes, Hamilton – a home-based ministry of hospitality to refugee claimants in the Hamilton area. The ministry, now a program of IAFR Canada, invites refugees – guests – to live in the homes of Canadian hosts for up to four months while they get settled. "I needed to live the example of welcoming refugees and hope that people would join. I just decided I'd put up signposts to the gospel."

In her seminal work *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*, scholar Christine Pohl makes the case that hospitality is not optional for Christians. It is a necessary practice, closely connected to love and it is oriented toward strangers. Hospitality embodies God's heart for justice and as such requires us to reflect on priorities, possessions and power. Danielle agrees.

*"It is in the shelter of each other that people live." — Irish proverb*



## LEVERAGE PRIVILEGE

For her, the work of welcoming refugee claimants became a call to spiritual transformation first. "Justice isn't out there," she reflects. "It starts with my heart, especially as someone who is privileged. I am white, young, middle-class, addiction-free with strong supports around me. I have had to become aware that I can contribute to the injustice of white supremacy by not recognizing the power dynamics at play in welcoming refugee claimants, almost all of whom are people of colour and some of whom may not speak English fluently."

She readily admits that Open Homes leadership, hosts and the majority of volunteers will not experience discrimination the way their guests will. "We don't live in their bodies. We won't see society nor will we experience discrimination the way they do."

## LEARN THE THEOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE OF BECOMING A GUEST

Hospitality also means the re-learning of what makes a successful ministry focused on refugee claimants. "People sometimes need a defined role or task to feel comfortable," Danielle shares, "when what is really needed is simply to



Interested in creating a Christ-space in your home? Is your church open to launching a home-based hospitality ministry to refugee claimants?

- 1 **Seek connection.** At Open Homes, Danielle and her team love connecting people to other churches and other resources beyond what they offer.
- 2 **Be open.** Where can you be stretched? Where can you be learning? Could Christ be showing up in the face of your guest? It's in those spaces that you'll be seeing Christ.
- 3 **Communicate.** Don't try to do everything yourself. Be part of a team. Communicate well with the other people who are supporting the guests. You cannot do this all on your own.

show up, sit on the couch and have a cup of tea." She and her team train Open Homes volunteers or Companions on the importance of that one simple act. "We help them shift from 'Let me help you with a task,' to 'Show me something.' They learn to become guests themselves, like Jesus so often did. That's when the real magic happens."

Part of that shift though means volunteers learn to be comfortable with the awkwardness of navigating language and culture. "When you're willing to enter that awkwardness then that reduces the power dynamics," Danielle believes. "Being willing to be uncomfortable can be a delightful place. There's only so much performing you can do and facades you can put on when you have to build relationship with a refugee across language and cultural barriers."

### BE FACED

It's in the stripping away of those pretensions that refugees help us – the Church – remember who we are. When a refugee claimant faces you and asks for your help, that encounter can be the beginning of a discipleship journey that will take you from the tyranny of internal strife, fights

and one too many Facebook posts for example, to a focus on what matters – *doing* the work. Mary Jo Leddy, the founder of Romero House calls this *being faced*.

Refugees need us to be who Christ calls us to be, regardless of how fatigued or unholy or stretched we feel.

Refugees call all of us to remember that they are not just people in need. "It's easier to forget that they have lived full and rich lives before arriving to Canada," says Danielle. They come to us with histories, lives populated with accomplishments, joys and sor-

rows. Like our histories.

Christine Pohl writes that the contemporary Church hungers for models of more authentic Christian life in which glimpses of the Kingdom can be seen and the promise of the Kingdom embodied. "More than words and ideas – the world needs living pictures of what the gospel looks like." Three years after launching Open Homes, Danielle and her husband have just moved out of their one-bedroom basement apartment into a larger living space. They're getting ready to welcome their first guest. 1

Learn more at [iafr.ca/open-homes-hamilton](http://iafr.ca/open-homes-hamilton)  
Danielle presented a workshop at our April Conference.  
Find her presentation at [baptistwomen.com/resources](http://baptistwomen.com/resources)

*I needed to live the example and hope that people would join.*



# Kids & Social Justice

*The Lord has told you what is good. He has told you what he wants from you: Do what is right to other people. Love being kind to others. And live humbly, trusting your God.*

MICAH 6:8, ICB

BY REV. TANYA YUEN

“THAT’S NOT FAIR!” Anyone who has spent time around children has probably heard those words. Kids as young as four can understand the concept of inequality and the need for fairness. When it comes to the biblical social justice however, Scripture teaches us that it is more than simply equality. It is a concern for the poor, oppressed, and vulnerable. More than surface level fairness, biblical social justice requires compassion and generosity. Developing this type of justice must begin in childhood.

It is a developmental journey that requires adults to lead by example. It does not have to be complicated but it does have to be intentional. It is important to note, that while we can do ‘acts of justice’ regardless of our relationship with Jesus, biblical social justice emerges as a result of our relationship with Jesus.

As someone on this learning journey of how to do this practically with kids I invite you into a bit of my story. When I was given the privilege of becoming a mom, I recognized that as a mixed-ethnicity girl, my daughter would encounter inequalities and injustices related to her gender



and her ethnicity. I also recognized that she would have certain privileges because she is able bodied and born into a family that includes highly educated, dual income parents. As a follower of Jesus, it is important to me that she and her two younger sisters, grow up in an environment in which both the injustices they personally encounter or witness, *and* the privileges afforded them, are engaged intentionally with a biblical social justice ethic.

## *We began to equip her with the skills to move toward the brokenness around her rather than hide from or ignore it.*

For me, this began with surrounding them with books and stories of diverse women inventors, scientists, doctors, astronauts, artists and books that had themes of kindness, empathy, compassion. It meant we had intentional conversations about racism. It also meant building relationships with and extending hospitality in my home to people of diverse backgrounds, religions and ethnicities.

Entering junior kindergarten, my oldest daughter became aware of bullying, racism and poverty and we began to equip her with the skills to move toward the brokenness around her rather than hide from or ignore it. I discovered that simply surrounding her with diversity is not enough.

Some of the skills she began to learn were as simple as giving her a “Colours of the World” Crayola crayon set and teaching her to speak up to her peers when they refer to one particular shade as the “flesh colour.” Together we practiced how, instead of staying quiet and accepting the assumed flesh colour, she could respond with, “We all have different colours of skin, which colour of flesh would you like to use?”

When my daughter’s fourth birthday was approaching, we began planning who to invite to her birthday party. She surprised me by saying she wanted to ask her friends to give her hot chocolate packages and pudding cups to donate to a food outreach ministry at church instead of presents for her.

She is seven now and more learning and experiences lie ahead for her. I hope and pray for her and her younger sisters that they will continue to learn what it means to “do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God”. ①

Tanya works with CBOQ as their associate for children and family ministries.

## Practical Ideas

### **Ages 0–4**

Expose children to a diversity of people, cultural festivals and food. Read books like *Have You Filled a Bucket Today?* By Carol McCloud, *Our Skin: A First Conversation About Race* by Megan Madison and Jessica Ralli, *Mixed: A Colourful Story* by Arree Chung. Read board book biographies for kids.

### **Ages 5–8**

Teach kids the definitions of words like stereotype, bias, and discrimination, and guide them in identifying these themes through children’s books, toys and news media. Begin to teach them to be conscious consumers by learning about supply chains and fair trade certification – help them learn more about where their food and clothes come from. Teach them to care for the environment by recycling, donating toys and clothing.

### **Ages 9+**

Engage kids in compassion experiences such as volunteering at food banks, soup kitchens, seniors’ residences, etc. Be proactive in conversation about injustices and ways to address them. Guide kids in both learning about and giving a portion of their money to support local causes. Check out CBM’s *Hopeful Gifts for Change* catalogue and engage them in conversation about meaningful gift giving.

### **More Resources**

For some tips and key resources specially around the topic of racism and developing an anti-racist children’s ministry, check out [cboqkids.ca/resources/antiracism](http://cboqkids.ca/resources/antiracism)

I highly recommend CBM’s *It Starts Today* Educational resource [cbmin.org/product/it-starts-today](http://cbmin.org/product/it-starts-today)

# WE ARE ONE

## Racial justice is not an option

BY JEMELL MORIAH

### In the beginning

#### GENESIS 1:26–28

God created all human beings and He made us all in His own image and likeness. In God's view, all human beings are equal. No one ethnicity is superior to any other. All humans have the same rights and privileges. God's other creations were not made in His image and likeness and indeed, humans are given the responsibility of caring for the rest of creation. All humans have the same responsibilities. We are one.

*If all humans are made in the image and likeness of God, how do you give witness to that? What characteristics of God are imprinted in us?*

### God's heart for justice

#### LEVITICUS 19:15

God tells His people how to live with each other. He commands them to live justly and not show favouritism, either to the poor or to the rich and powerful. They are to judge their neighbours fairly.

*What does this command about fair judgement mean to you?*

#### LEVITICUS 19:33–34

Further, God tells His people what He expects of their relationship with the foreigners living among them. He warns them not to take advantage of foreigners but rather, treat them as they would treat native-born people. In order to do that, they must love the foreigner as themselves.

*What does it mean to that God desires you to treat foreigners justly? How can you share His love with foreigners?*

#### DEUTERONOMY 1:16–17; 10:17–19

God loves righteousness and justice. He doesn't play favourites or take bribes. He tells His people that

orphans are to receive just treatment and foreigners are to be treated with loving care. His people are to see that their needs are met and to remember that they were once foreigners. God seem to be setting the standard by which His chosen people should live.

*How is God using you to touch the lives of the vulnerable in your community?*

#### JOHN 3:16

John 3:16, speaks about God fulfilling His redemption plan for all of His children. It tells us that God so loved the world (all humanity regardless of ethnicity) that He sacrificed His only Son to save us all. He created all peoples of all nations equally, then He showed that He loved all ethnicities equally. He died for the whole world.

*As you read this scripture, reflect on God's love for all humanity. What does loving all people mean to you?*

### Jesus' teachings on justice

#### MATTHEW 22:37–40

During His ministry, Jesus continued to teach about the oneness of the human race. When He was asked which is the most important commandment, He quoted the Old Testament teaching about how His Heavenly Father expected His children to live: they were to love God with all their heart, soul and mind and love their neighbours as they loved themselves. In fact, Jesus clearly affirmed that all other commandments rested on these two commands.

*How do you demonstrate love for God and love for your neighbour?*

#### LUKE 10:30–37

In responding to a question by an expert of the Law who asked Jesus, "Who is my neighbour?" Jesus tells the parable of the good Samaritan.

*What has it meant or what will it mean for you to be a neighbour to a stranger?*

As Christ-followers, created in the image of God, we are called to renew our relationship with each other through Christ's redemptive death and resurrection. Doing this means we *will* seek justice. We will correct oppression. We will bring justice to the fatherless. We will plead the widow's cause. ❶

Jemell is a past president of Atlantic Baptist Women and is the vice-president, Day of Prayer, for Baptist Women of North America.

# Open Homes, Open Hands, Open Hearts

A glimpse into how Czech Baptists and their friends are serving Ukrainian refugees

BY ESTHER BARNES

“WE’VE LET a Ukrainian woman, her three-year-old daughter, and her mother stay in our rental apartment,” Tereza told me. “They worry about an aunt who couldn’t leave Ukraine because she wasn’t fit to travel. Her water supply has been destroyed, and she can’t afford bottled water.”

We were meeting on Messenger on March 17, a week after I would have fulfilled my promise to return to the Czech Republic to teach English in partnership with the Baptist church in Litomerice. The “Ukraine Situation” had suspended a lot of promises, including mine. Online tutorials from Toronto were my Plan B, and Tereza was my first student. Our conversation made me realize that God had opened a window through which I could share how Christians and other compassionate Czechs were embodying Matthew 25:35.

I learned that at least two Litomerice companies had filled transport trucks with donated food and essential supplies, sent them to Ukraine (about 1,400 kilometres away), and provided a safe means of escape for desperate Ukrainians. Jana shared how her pastor was exhausted by long days of ministry to trainloads of refugees flooding the newly-established regional assistance centre. Milena showed me four bags of toys and games she was giving to refugee children. Marketa said one Ukrainian girl was attending her school, and communicating in the one language both she and her teachers had been taught in school: Russian. And the Litomerice Baptists? Katerina told me how they had met for an hour after church one Sunday, and brainstormed so many ideas for meeting Ukrainians’ needs that she couldn’t keep track of them. Petr, the “engine” driving the church’s refugee ministries, popped onscreen during his daughter’s lesson to tell me he was heading to “my” English classroom to start teaching Czech to Ukrainians.

Those classes were one of the Baptists’ “Five Fingers for Ukraine” strategies that emerged from their brainstorming. The other four were spiritual counselling (led by Pastor Jarek Pleva) and collections of funds, food, and bedding. In addition, three church families were housing refugees in spare bedrooms and empty granny flats. My friend Monika, recognizing refugees’ psychological need for employment, had arranged for one of these guests to clean her home and two others in her village. Two Christian refugee families had found the church and were experiencing some similarity between Czech and Ukrainian worship vocabularies.

But not all the news was good. Some students spoke of stresses caused by Putin’s war and natural causes, such as drought, that were jeopardizing the food supply chain. Jarda, a Mondelez sales rep, lamented the bombing of his company’s Ukraine factory, which had produced one of its most popular snacks. Radek worried that his employer, a Czech family firm, might not obtain enough grain to make its popular muesli. Jana feared that the refugees could be exploited as underpaid labour and resented because of the government’s generosity toward them.

By the end of March, the Czech Republic had welcomed about 300,000 refugees – one for every 35 Czech citizens. Half of them were children; four-fifths of the adults were women. Tereza’s four-room apartment had become home to seven refugees: another mother, daughter, and grandmother, plus a woman they had met on the train. All hoped to return to still-intact homes in Ukraine, where the stranded aunt had obtained water. But for now, one could speak with Tereza in good English, and all had become her friends. ①

After writing CBOQ’s history, Esther found a new calling as a volunteer English teacher in the Czech Republic. This spring would have been her thirteenth three-month term.

# Inspiring Dignity

## Helping Soura Widows in Odisha, India

BY JESSICA BANNINGA

A FEVER had left their husbands dead. This is a story all too familiar for Lila, Sirati and many other Soura women. Living in remote villages in East India, the Soura have little access to good medical care. Something as common as a fever often turns deadly.

Lila and Sirati are both 35-year-old Soura widows belonging to one of the oldest tribes in India. In the early 1900's, the Souras were viewed as lower than the lowest caste, the “untouchables”. They were rejected from society and treated as unclean, facing poverty, malnutrition and illiteracy as a result.

In 1905, God led Canadian Baptists to India and this region. Canadian Baptist field staff, then called missionaries, embarked on a journey to embrace India through word and deed. The work started with the building of a hospital, the provision of health programs, Bible translation into local languages, leadership training and education. Today, the partnership between Canadian Baptist Ministries (CBM) and local churches in India continues to flourish, helping to empower Soura widows like Lila and Sirati.



Lila Raita with her family

### Lila

Lila, along with her son and daughter, live in a tin house in a small village in the Odisha region of East India. Her village has no modern transportation or communication methods. In addition, there is no health or education centre. Lila has a small plot of land and a few cashew trees, but this is not enough to provide for her son and daughter. Lila was struggling financially and worked as a day labourer.

The local church invited Lila to enroll in the Empowerment of Soura Widows program, funded by CBWOQ (Baptist Women) and CBM in partnership with Soura Baptist Christian Mandali Sommelani Churches. Since joining the program, she has received financial assistance to start rearing goats. Lila purchased two goats, and soon these two goats turned to four goats. Lila then sold one of the goats and repaired her home. The remaining money she saved for her children's education.

Lila now attends the local church for Sunday services and prayer meetings. The church staff has seen her dedication and has invited her to serve in the church.

With two goats, Lila's life has been transformed. She can now provide for herself and her children and is able to pay for their schooling. “I want to be an example for my community,” said Lila. “I want to show the other widows that they can be a part of this program. I am thankful that I can provide quality education for my children.”



Lila Raita with her family and goats

## Sirati

Sirati has one daughter and two sons and also lives in a tin house. Like Lila, she also has a small plot of land for cultivating food and some cashew trees, but this does not provide enough income for her family.

Seeing her need, Sirati was approached to join the Widow's Empowerment Program. Through the program, she was given financial assistance and training to start a tailor shop in her house. Now, by stitching clothes she can earn a daily income! "Within two years, I had saved enough to open a bank account and start depositing my earnings," she shares. "Because of this new income, I can send my daughter to school. I am very thankful that I can sustain my own future."

Both Sirati and Lila have become an inspiration in their communities. Attitudes have changed and the widows are living a dignified life. Villagers are even showing concern and helping widows, instead of looking down on them. Other widows are seeing that change is possible and are looking to Sirati and Lila as role models in how they can develop their families.

The Empowerment of Soura Widows program is empowering widows like Sirati and Lila to find ways to break the cycle of poverty and better care for their children by earning an income. By using locally available resources, widows receive the tools and training to begin small business enterprises such as purchasing and selling local goods, creating handicrafts and raising animals. Microenterprise, savings support and training are provided for up to 40 widows a year, many under the age of 40.

There are many more Soura widows who want to provide for their family and build better lives for themselves. Thank you for your support of this project. ①

Jessica Banninga is a Communications Specialist with CBM.

This ongoing ministry is one of CBWOQ's strategic giving projects for 2022. Learn more about the project and meet some of the widows you help with your support. Visit [baptistwomen.com/causes](https://baptistwomen.com/causes) or browse through 2020 and 2021 issues of *Live* magazine. Then consider making a donation at [baptistwomen.com/donate](https://baptistwomen.com/donate).



Sirati Raita  
stitching

## BOOK CLUB REVIEW

# Subversive Witness

## Scripture's Call to Leverage Privilege



BY **RENÉE JAMES**

WITH *SUBVERSIVE WITNESS; Scripture's Call to Leverage Privilege*, author Dominique Dubois Gilliard gifts the Church with a profound and timely call to justice. In its pages, Gilliard offers *all* of us a biblically grounded and expansive space in which to face our privilege.

This is not another text that bashes our White brothers and sisters. Yes, Gilliard discusses systemic racism. But he goes beyond that because privilege comes in so many forms – skin colour yes, but also gender, citizenship, education, income-earning capacity, geography, age, health and mobility. The list goes on.

Gilliard shows us that church conversations about privilege needn't end in the usual places: denial, mired in controversy or stuck in the weight of the topic. The Bible shows us another way!

And so he unpacks the stories of Pharaoh's daughter, Vashti and Esther, Moses, Paul and Silas, Jesus and Zacchaeus to show how all of us can leverage our advantages – our privileges – to resist systemic sin, stand in solidarity, birth liberation, create systemic change, foster social transformation and proclaim the Good News.

I work at the intersection of gender, colour and age in a ministry space that is largely White, though this is changing. I read this book with gladness – for its grounding in Scripture and for the gentle firm way in which Gilliard invites me to consider that though I know what it means to be marginalized, I'm also privileged. This book gave me the gift of hope.

May this book become mandatory reading for any individual, group or church feeling God's call to work for social justice. 📖



### An Invitation

Perhaps your book club may want to join CBWOQ staff and volunteer leaders online for three sessions of book discussion plus prayer and Scripture reflection.

Wednesday June 1, 8 and 15  
at 7:30 p.m.

### Additional resources for you and your group

In early May, do visit [baptistwomen.com/resources-2022-book-club](https://baptistwomen.com/resources-2022-book-club) for links to videos and prompts to help your group discussions.

## A HISTORY MOMENT

# The Door to Angola Closes

Revolution erupted in Angola in the early 1960s, just as the Canadian Baptist mission is becoming firmly established. In November 1963, CBM tells remaining couples in northern Angola that their work is being closed.

“ALTHOUGH WE HAD HEARD RUMORS that such a thing might happen, nevertheless it was a sad moment for us,” Winnifred [Johnson] tells the 1964 Atlantic Baptist women’s convention. “We were aware that we were in a war-torn country and many times did not know what was going on around us...We left some of the finest Christians we shall ever meet...We left folk who are afraid, for, as is the case in any war, the innocent often are the ones who suffer.” ❶

—*Our Heritage Becomes Our Challenge, A Scrapbook History of the Baptist Women’s Movement in Ontario and Quebec* by Esther Barnes (p. 237 and 238)

\**The Link & Visitor*, the previous name of this magazine.

## We Remember

Each generation has the opportunity to fuel mission for the next. We are thankful for the following gifts:

### IN HONOUR OF

Ruth E. Brown, Peterborough

### IN MEMORY OF

Rev. Phil Brown, Peterborough

Phyllis Harabee, Wallaceburg

Geraldine Klatt, Peterborough

Carol Lemelin, Port Hope

Kenna Morron, Wallaceburg

Dorothy Vannatto, Wallaceburg

“

For the first thirty minutes of every day, we make a declaration to ourselves and to God that the first work of seeking justice is the work of prayer. It is the work of being still before the God who knows more of the reality of injustice than we will ever know, the God who alone can move and act through us to bring about greater levels of transformation than we could ever even begin to dream of on our own.”

**Bethany H. Hoang**, from *Deepening the Soul for Justice*

**live**

How we connect with each other has had to change, but *Live* magazine keeps our bonds lively and strong. Let a woman in your community know about *Live* magazine. A subscription costs just \$20. Pay at [baptistwomen.com](http://baptistwomen.com) or call the editor, Renée James. Choose from three formats: print, audio (CD) or online.

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