

SERVANT

**PRAIRIE
COLLEGE**

**Celebrating
100 Years**

PHILIP YANCEY

**An upbringing under
a wrathful God doesn't
easily fade**

*One man's journey from
fundamentalism to grace*

FULL CIRCLE

**JEANETTE WINDLE'S ADVENTURE
OF DOUBT AND FAITH:**

"I came to know God early—and late"

MARK MAXWELL

Where to go when convictions collide

When convictions collide



“We have an enemy who intends to use these issues to divide the church and have believers battling one another.”

Over the past couple of years, we have seen a clash of convictions—sometimes internally, sometimes with neighbors, and sometimes between Christians. This is a conundrum, a true dilemma: which trumps which?

I'd like to postulate that not all convictions are equal. Allow me to try and thread this needle. In the Christian faith, there are core convictions. We believe in:

- Elohim, the Almighty, the Loving Creator;
- Jesus, our Messiah and Lord, his virgin birth, sinless life, death, resurrection, ascension, and imminent return;

- The kingdom of God and our roles in building it, beginning with love for one another;
- Other great truths on which all Christians agree.

Then there are a large number of peripheral convictions on which believers have different points of view: the end of time, what to eat and drink, music, versions of the Bible, and a host of items Christians debate vigorously. In fact, history bears witness to the sad truth that we can crush one another in the name of our convictions.

How do we know which conviction is core and which is peripheral? One of the

best indicators of a peripheral conviction is whether Christians—good Christians—are arguing over the matter. We have an enemy who intends to use these issues to divide the church and have believers battling one another, wasting time and energy on the wrong enemy.

At Prairie, we have tried not to pit vaccinated against unvaccinated. Our mission is simple: to train Kingdom Builders. We cannot be deterred from that call; we must train people any way we can—in person, HyFlex, online, vaccinated, unvaccinated, in prison.

So where does a call from God fit into this conundrum of convictions? Abraham was called by God to sacrifice Isaac. Would he choose the sanctity of the life of his son or obey God's call? The question is no longer which trumps which. The question is this: Is God almighty? In God's time this conflict was resolved in a way that Abraham could not foresee. Abraham's conflict was internal. But what about conflicts between Christians?

I believe the conviction that should guide these conflicts is the bedrock conviction of love for one another. Love that is founded in the sacrifice Jesus made for each one of us, through his willingness to go to the cross. He was innocent. But he took “the hit,” our hit. Our love in the midst of the conflict of convictions should fly with grace on the wings of humility. If we're right, perhaps our humility will help the other person come our way when we're proven right. If we're wrong, perhaps our humility will help others to forget our (many) mistakes.

We demonstrate our trust in the Almighty when, like Abraham, we walk forward in faith, love, and humility on difficult mountain paths, scaling dangerous heights where the view is spectacular. May you be inspired by the spectacular views painted by Jeanette Windle (p. 4), Philip Yancey (p. 10), and Jan Cinnamon (p. 6).

Along with them, I believe God has breathtaking vistas for each of us to enjoy as we stay faithful to him and walk in love with one another. ❏



Mark Maxwell
President of Prairie College



FULL CIRCLE

"I felt helpless, paralyzed. It hurt to care, to love."



INNERVIEW

Philip Yancey: "I was surely the most reluctant convert on a Bible college campus."

PUBLISHER
PRAIRIE BIBLE INSTITUTE

PRESIDENT
MARK MAXWELL

EDITOR
PHIL CALLAWAY

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
PAT MASSEY

DESIGN
SIDECAR CREATIVE

@ HOW TO REACH US

Prairie Bible Institute/Prairie College
PO Box 4000, Three Hills, AB T0M 2N0
1-800-661-2425 | www.prairie.edu
To donate: www.prairie.edu/donate

Servant Subscriptions
Email servant@prairie.edu
or call 1-800-661-2425

Send Letters to the Editor to
servant@prairie.edu or by mail.

MOVING?

Send us both your old and new addresses
by email at servant@prairie.edu or call
1-800-661-2425

Servant (ISSN 0848-1741) is published two times a year by Prairie Bible Institute, a non-profit educational organization founded in 1922. **Prairie Bible Institute serves the Church by discipling Christians through biblically integrated post-secondary education.** Its motto is "To Know Christ and Make Him Known." *Servant* is dependent on the gracious gifts of Prairie alumni, donors and friends. Its purpose is to edify, exhort and encourage today's Christian. Third class mail, return postage guaranteed. Change of address notices, undeliverable copies send to Servant Magazine, Box 4000, Three Hills, AB, T0M 2N0. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited. Printed in Canada. Scripture taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version © 1973, 1978, 1984 International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.

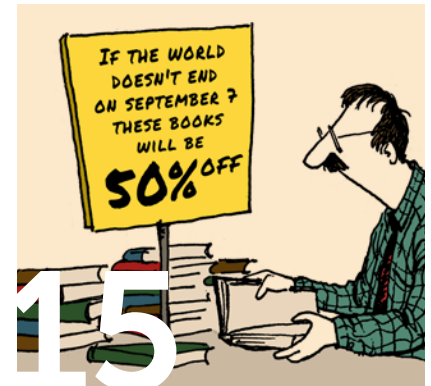


INTERACT WITH US
AND OTHER READERS AT
[FACEBOOK.COM/
SERVANTMAGAZINE](https://www.facebook.com/servantmagazine)



ALUMNI IN ACTION

Heartbreaking ruin and one church's response



LAUGHING MATTERS

The pessimist's guide to the end times



LEGACY PLANNING

A January 2019 article in 'All About Estates' claims that Canada has the most **generous tax incentives** for charitable giving in the world. Along with creating your will, it's important to **develop an estate plan**, leveraging your estate to benefit you now, your loved ones and values you cherish.

SIX BIG BENEFITS OF PLANNING:

MONETARY

– increase income/reduce tax

SOCIAL GOOD

– empower causes important to you

RELATIONAL CAPTIAL

– preserve family unity at a time when it can be most fragile

SPIRITUAL

– the reward of Biblical reaping and sowing (2 Cor. 9:6)

STEWARDSHIP

– leverage assets to maximize benefit and minimize waste

MENTAL WELLBEING

– peace of mind, financial security

Prairie's Legacy Planning Consultant, **Tim MacKenzie**, is available to share his experience over a 20 year span through workshop or one-on-one consultations.

EMAIL: tim.mackenzie@prairie.edu
PHONE: 403 443-5511 ext. 281

For more information see:
prairie.edu/alumni/legacy-gift-planning



**Jeanette
Windle**

FULL CIRCLE

A grand adventure
of doubt and faith

I CAME TO KNOW CHRIST EARLY— AND LATE.

As the daughter of American missionaries, I grew up in Colombian rural zones, now guerrilla hot spots. With four siblings, I canoed Amazon rivers, hiked steep Andes trails, and waded muddy jungle paths, all so my parents could preach Jesus in riverbank villages, coffee plantations and mountaintop hamlets.

At the age of eight, I begged Jesus to save me from my sins, laying sleepless on my cot with smoke from a blown-out candle wafting through my mosquito net. What child's transgression weighed on my heart, I do not remember. But I had no doubt if I stopped breathing in that hot, black jungle night, a just God had every right to send me to hell. So I pleaded for forgiveness.

A few months later, I did so again, in case that first confession hadn't taken. And again. I came in time to understand better the depths of God's grace and that my own uncertainties did not cancel Christ's sacrifice in my place on the cross.

If adventure-filled, life was not always as halcyon as its tropical setting. I remember rushing to my mother's screams, the boa cornering her coiled tall as my four-year-old self. Waking to thieves who'd broken in as we slept, their predations limited only because we possessed little. Corrupt police demanding bribes. Shake-downs at military checkpoints. The miracle of a storm-toppled tree that blocked my father from reaching the evening's preaching point—and the guerrilla ambush set to kill the American missionary.

**IF ADVENTURE-FILLED,
LIFE WAS NOT ALWAYS
AS HALCYON AS ITS
TROPICAL SETTING.**

After age seven, family memories grew scant. The school year was spent at an MK boarding school, my parents busy with ministry during our brief stints home. To us, this was normal life. Just how deeply I was impacted by such separation, I never recognized until I became a parent myself.

Still, I never doubted that the sacrifices missionary life demanded were worth it. The world was an evil place, in need of salvation. My parents were bringing souls to Jesus Christ, a noble profession. Neither they nor the other missionaries were perfect human beings. They never claimed to be. But their unyielding, iron-spined service to others and God, year after year in difficult circumstances, taught me the definition of courage, love, and sacrifice.

I left parents and siblings to attend Prairie Bible College in yet another alien culture, the flat, northern plains of Alberta, Canada, where I learned about forty-below winters, Zambonis, hockey, and chinooks. After marriage to another PBC grad and missionary kid, I became a pastor's wife, then a missionary. I taught children's ministries, women's Bible studies, worked with

other. Husbands hurting wives. Fathers hurting daughters.

And the children. Little girls sold to old men. Little boys turned into cold-blooded killing machines by warlords. Babies dying for lack of a dollar's worth of medicine, food, clean water.

As to the formula, where was its power? For every soul snatched from hell's fires, millions remained in darkness, salvation doled out with seeming randomness to those fortunate enough to live in a place and time they might hear of Jesus. With all my efforts, I could not even save those around me. Street kids I'd rescued spiraled back to drugs and early death. More painfully, an adopted child rejected our love and God's to pursue a destructive life path. Churches seethed with selfishness, materialism, unkindness, infighting.

HOWEVER DARK THE NIGHT, OUR HEAVENLY FATHER REALLY DOES KNOW WHAT HE'S DOING.

street orphans, raised my own children while my husband—like my father and his—traveled through mountains, jungles, cities and villages to preach the Gospel.

It was a simple enough equation. Pour God's love and biblical teaching into human lives, and out would come saved souls for God's kingdom. I could not pinpoint just when I lost faith in the formula or when humanity's lost-ness became too insurmountable a task, this world's pain and suffering too overwhelming.

I'd known the world was filled with sin, but now with each passing year, I saw firsthand what evil human beings



Colombian river church: *"With four siblings, I canoed Amazon rivers...and waded muddy jungle paths, all so my parents could preach Jesus in riverbank villages."*

could heap on each other. The powerful oppressing the weak for their own profit. The weak unleashing injustice on each

Nor did being God's servant offer exemption. By now, I'd survived a brutal personal assault, a child's death, muggings, robberies, injuries of self and loved ones. I never questioned these. After all, why not when others endured far worse? I saw co-workers who'd courageously preached Christ despite terrible persecution lose children to snake bite, an assassin's bullet. Spouses to prison, death. Homes and churches to mob violence.

I felt helpless, paralyzed. It hurt to care, to love. I'd give my life to end the evil and suffering I'd witnessed but I was powerless. And the One who *did* have that power, where was He? Was I more compassionate than the Creator of these people? How could an all-powerful God watch innocents suffering, bad guys winning over and over, without it breaking His heart? Without reaching down and putting a stop to it?

The very hubris of my doubts broke through my paralysis. As I grappled for answers, I faced instead a question God might have thundered at Job. Who was I to think I loved more than my Creator? Where did I think my feeble love for others came from?

And with that came the reminder. God *did* reach down—in the Person of Jesus Christ, Emmanuel, God with us. I was driven back to study this God/Man who'd thundered against injustice. Wept for the



International speakers: *Jeanette and Marty in Sri Lanka.*

lost and broken. Touched with compassionate hand the diseased, blind, hurt. Laid down his life for an ungrateful humanity.

Nor could I ignore the daily miracle to which I was witness. As a journalist, I was privileged to record countless stories of broken lives transformed by encountering a loving, living Savior. I witnessed firsthand God's hands and feet reaching into the planet's darkest corners in the persons of His followers who fed the hungry, healed the sick, gave shelter to orphans and widows. If this world remained a dark place, God had not left it without light, love, hope.

And that brought me to a realization both simple and profound. I am *not* more compassionate than my Creator. Any love I can possibly feel or show is a dim reflection of our heavenly Father's love. With that recognition comes acceptance (whether or not I will ever fully understand this side of Heaven) that the coexistence of a loving Creator with human suffering is no oxymoron, but a divine paradox that those refined in the fires of adversity are best equipped to understand.

And so I've come full circle. The faith and certainty in Jesus Christ that took my parents to a far country is now my own, the bedrock on which I stand. When this world's darkness closes in and questions resurge, I am reminded this is not my home and God is not finished yet. However dark the night, our heavenly Father really does know what He's doing. His ultimate plans for our lives and for all His creation are not only birthed from immeasurable love, but they will not be thwarted.

Yes, I came to know Christ. And if that knowledge remains imperfect like a wavering reflection in a peeling, tarnished mirror, I am assured the day will come when I will know Him fully even as I am fully known.

Only then will I be home. ✠

NINE QUESTIONS FOR JAN CINNAMON

Counting grandkids, Jan Cinnamon and her husband Ken have a blended family of 19. Ken instructs Prairie's Primary Care Paramedic program. Jan grew up in Three Hills, moved, saw the light and returned. She teaches the Practical Nursing Program, makes Prairie's halls ring with laughter at times, and recently accepted a surprising assignment.



Jan and Ken Cinnamon: "When Mark Maxwell asked, I said, 'No!' It was daunting."

JAN, YOU'RE BACK IN THREE HILLS. YOU COULDN'T STAY AWAY, COULD YOU.

My four grandparents, and my parents Norm and Gail Tainsh, were raised here. When I graduated, I swore I'd never move back, but I've been teaching here since 2019 and loving it.

AT WHAT AGE DID YOU CONSIDER A NURSING CAREER?

It wasn't my passion to become a nurse. In grade 12, I sent out applications for Social Work, Animal Health, Sports Medicine, and Nursing and Respiratory Therapy, which thankfully I didn't pursue as mucous is my kryptonite. I was accepted into a nursing program and obtained my BScN, thanks to my parents.

"I have put a lot of things into God's hands lately, and it has kept me relatively sane."

WHAT DID THEY HELP YOU WITH BESIDES YOUR BILLS?

They guided me away from the edge of the metaphorical cliff during many tear-filled phone calls. I learned from them how to prioritize, what needs to be done today, tomorrow, and what can wait until

next week. I tell my students this with their heavy learning load. During 24 years as an RN, I've worked in Cardiac, Neuro, Respiratory, ICU, Emergency, Maternity and Palliative Care. I love people and serving others at the highest and lowest times in their lives. God called me to where I was needed.

HOW DID YOUR JOURNEY TO PRAIRIE START?

In 2017, my passion for nursing was dwindling. Working in the ER re-sparked this passion. Out of the blue came a call asking if I'd ever thought about teaching nurses. I hadn't. Within a month I had an interview and was hired.

YOU WERE ASKED TO ADD COVID OFFICER TO YOUR BUSY SCHEDULE. DID YOU SAY "WOOHOO"?

When Mark Maxwell asked, I said, "No!" It was daunting. There's policy- and procedure-making, interpreting exemptions, putting health service and government rules and regulations into action to keep the school open. With all the controversy over vaccination policies, I didn't want to be involved. But, after much thought and prayer, I felt I was the right person for the job.

HOW HAS IT GONE?

I couldn't have done it without the cooperation of staff, faculty, and students. I have to say, Prairie College rocks! I imagined my time would be riddled with conflict, arguing, hurt and anger. There are days like that, but most are filled with understanding, laughter, compassion and community.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE KEY?

Biologically, we humans are 95% the same, right down to our DNA. Only 5% makes us the unique creations we are. Like the color of our hair and eyes, our emotions and experiences. Each of us has a need to belong in community. This thought helps carry me throughout my nursing career and my teaching, allowing me to set aside personal bias and care for others without judgement. I will love everyone, even if we disagree. Mom taught me that I have control over myself and my actions. The rest I must put in God's hands. I've been putting more into God's hands lately. It has kept me humble and relatively sane.

WHAT ELSE HAVE YOU LEARNED IN LEADERSHIP?

I try to bring unity to the campus by setting an example, but I make mistakes. I react to situations at times instead of responding. Just ask my kids. Letting others know this and being vulnerable brings us closer together. I must just stay faithful, the rest is in God's hands.

WHAT ELSE HAS GOD BEEN TEACHING YOU LATELY?

I think a sense of humor should be a prerequisite for getting into the medical profession. Matthew 7:1-6 speaks to me about how to conduct myself with others with whom I disagree. That and the Golden Rule. Treating others as I would like to be treated and not judging has guided my nursing career. I have tried to carry this into my personal life. God doesn't make mistakes. This outlook allows me to truly love others. ❏

THE GOOD REPORT



CHRISTIANS IN IRAN APPROACHING 1 MILLION

Secular researchers are backing missiologist's claims of explosive church growth among believers in Iran. A new survey of 50,000 Iranians by the research group GAMAAN claims that 1.5 percent—or 750,000—now identify as Christian. The number of Iranian Christians, it says is “without doubt in the order of magnitude of several hundreds of thousands and growing beyond a million.”

But the study also indicates massive secularization. Atheists number 9 percent, no religious affiliation is at 22 percent, and 47 percent said they were once religious but are no longer.

Rapid church growth began in 2004 when the state put pressure on officially registered churches ministering through the Farsi language, says Wybo Nicolai of Open Doors International. Consequently, ministry was forced underground where it “spread like wildfire” through cell groups and house churches.

IN SERVANT 30 YEARS AGO

Conversions to Christianity “Alarming”

HONG KONG, July, 1991—Communist party officials in China's Jiangsu Province are concerned about the growing number of conversions to Christianity by ranking party members. One recent article published by the party's official magazine, *Wei Shi*, singled out with disgust a deputy in charge of the health department who had received baptism while sick in bed, after inviting 20 to 30 believers to come and pray for him. The article claimed, “the situation is in a state of chaos, and it could have a bad effect on people.”

UPDATE: As of 2019, Protestants (800,000) and Catholics (400,000) now represent about 16% of the population. OperationWorld.org calls youth ministries “strong and growing.” “Cru, the Navigators and others are very active, each with dozens of staff on most campuses.” Many denominations also focus on youth ministry and training. A recent five-year period saw a 225% increase in young people attending church.



QUOTE WORTHY



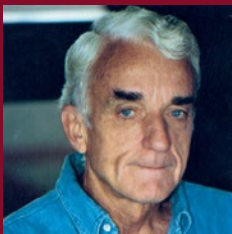
CORRIE TEN BOOM

“Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God.”



RANDY ALCORN

“He who lays up treasures on earth spends his life backing away from his treasures. To him, death is loss. He who lays up treasures in heaven looks forward to eternity; he's moving daily toward his treasures. To him, death is gain.”



BRENNAN MANNING

“He has a single relentless stance toward us: He loves us. He is the only God man has ever heard of who loves sinners.”

NOW YOU KNOW

Total languages in the world: 7,378 (representing 7.9 billion). Languages with a complete Bible: 717 (representing 5.75 billion). Languages with some Scripture: 3,495 (representing 7.04 billion).

Wycliffe Global Alliance

60 random Americans had their belly buttons swabbed. Lurking there were 2,368 species of bacteria, 1,458 of which were unknown to science.

Bill Bryson, The Body, p. 25

Year trachoma was eliminated in Gambia: 2021. In the 1980s, it was responsible for almost 1 in 5 of the country's cases of blindness.

www.who.int

Country with the highest annual growth rate of Evangelical Christianity (19.6%): Iran.

Operation World

Our eyes send one hundred billion signals to the brain every second.

Bill Bryson, The Body, p. 54

In 2000, the literacy rate for women in sub-Saharan Africa was 46%. Today, it's almost 60%, and among those 15–24 it is 72%.

Borgen Magazine



WE ARE TURNING 100 CELEBRATE WITH US!

We can't wait to welcome you back to campus this coming July 13-17 for "Joy in the Journey," five days of praising God for a century of his faithfulness to Prairie.

Come celebrate this once-in-a-lifetime milestone. Enjoy the music of Brian Doerksen, Matt Brouwer, and Steve Bell, and inspiring speakers like Charles Price and Phil Callaway. Reconnect with classmates and friends.

Leading up to the festivities, different Prairie decades will be highlighted on social media and email.

Just visit prairie.edu/alumni-services, subscribe your email, and enjoy.

CENTENNIAL CAMPAIGN

JOIN OUR FOUNDER'S CIRCLE

We thank God for our faithful donors. In this our 100th year, we launched the Centennial Campaign, an opportunity to honor the accomplishments of the founders, staff and students, and to look forward to what God has in store for Prairie.

Through the Centennial Campaign, you are enabling us to refurbish and improve the Prairie College campus where today's students and those of future generations will come to know Christ and make him known. Today is a vital time to build into the lives of tomorrow's Kingdom workers.

We are so thankful for all the gifts received towards this campaign. To date, the total is **\$866,501** and so far **559 have joined the "Founders' Circle,"** those who commit to giving \$100, \$1,000, \$10,000 in one-time gift or a new recurring monthly donation over the next 24 months.

Gifts given to this campaign will contribute to the general ministries, scholarship awards, program improvements, and campus enhancement projects. We have been able to complete these projects (totaling \$149,500):

1. Natural gas line to dorms and the warehouse
2. Fortifying the steam tunnel where it was collapsing
3. New Prairie College Sign
4. Kirk Chapel Renovation
5. Accessibility ramp for Music & Worship Arts
6. Painting exterior Founders Hall accent colors
7. Accessibility Doors for Founders' Hall
8. Update entry to Men's Residence
9. Painting the Women's entrance stairwell
10. Davidson Apartment renovations in two suites

We plan to start these projects this spring:

- | | |
|---|------------|
| 1. Fix Sidewalk/tunnel in front of Dearing Hall residence | \$ 10,000 |
| 2. New Couches for the Maxwell Centre | \$ 7,500 |
| 3. Scholarships & program updates | \$ 30,000 |
| 4. Flagpoles for new sign | \$ 3,000 |
| 5. Lighting for new sign and flagpoles | \$ 1,500 |
| 6. Power Distribution for Events | \$ 10,000 |
| 7. Paint interior walls of Dining Hall | \$ 3,000 |
| 8. Dorm Heating Phase 1 | \$ 800,000 |
| 9. HyFlex classroom upgrades | \$ 8,000 |

Total: \$ 873,000

As we enter this key season of preparing the "ground" in programs and on campus for the coming years, would you join with us in prayer and giving, believing God will provide the funds of \$156,000 to complete the rest of these projects.

To respond, use the form on the next page.



CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

Family-friendly activities for all ages.

Register now, pay later. Join us in person or online.

Early bird deadline is extended to May 13.

Deadline for excursions is May 13. Please confirm your exciting adventures today!

Help us plan even better by letting us know you're coming.

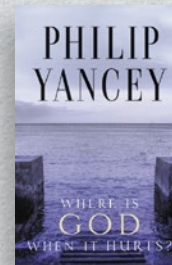


Early Bird Registration is extended to May 13!

Register online now (and pay later) at prairie.edu/centennial. Or use the brochure that came your mailbox. You can also call us at **1-800-661-2425 (ext. 282)**. Don't forget to book accommodations. See you in July!

JUST FOR YOU

WE APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT OF THIS MINISTRY AND ARE PLEASED TO OFFER YOU A COPY OF THIS TIMELESS CLASSIC...



WHERE IS GOD WHEN IT HURTS?

Philip Yancey

"How can a loving God allow this

to happen?" You've heard the question. Perhaps you've asked it. Sparked by a terminal diagnosis, natural disasters, or a loved one's pain, we often wonder why God doesn't fix things.

In this Gold Medallion Award-winning book, Philip Yancey uses examples from the Bible and his own experiences to show us how we can learn to accept—without blame, anger, or fear—that which we don't understand. He answers questions such as:

- Why is there such a thing as pain?
- Is pain a message from God?
- How should we respond to suffering?
- How can we cope with pain?
- Does faith help?

With compassion and clarity, Yancey brings us one step closer to finding an answer when our pain has us wondering, where is God when it hurts?

***TO REQUEST THIS BOOK, PLEASE USE THE FORM ON THIS PAGE. MAKE SURE YOUR ORDER IS POSTMARKED NO LATER THAN SEPTEMBER 1, 2022. OFFER LIMITED TO SERVANT SUBSCRIBERS AT NORTH AMERICAN ADDRESSES. PLEASE ALLOW 4-6 WEEKS FOR DELIVERY.**

✂ Please Cut Here

THANK YOU for investing in **Prairie's Centennial Campaign.**

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Prov/State: _____ Postal/Zip Code: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

My gift of \$ _____ is enclosed.

Please charge my credit card: \$ _____ Visa Mastercard Am Ex

Name on Card: _____ Card #: _____

Expiry Date: _____ Signature: _____

PLEASE APPLY TO:

Centennial Campaign Prison Bible Encounter Program

I would like to make a monthly, pre-authorized donation to Prairie.

I hereby authorize Prairie Bible Institute to withdraw \$ _____ CDN/US on the 15th of each month beginning (mm/yy): _____

Bank Account (please attach a blank, VOID cheque)

Credit Card (complete the information above)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

We cannot process your monthly gift without your signature here!

This automatic withdrawal can be canceled at any time by contacting our office in writing.

Spending of funds is confined to board-approved programs and projects. When the goal for the project has been met, the remaining contributions will be used where needed most.

As an Alberta registered charity, we are planning to raise an estimated amount of \$150,000 in this Fund-raising campaign. It will cost our organization an estimate of \$10,000 to raise this. The money raised will be going to General Ministries, Education/Scholarship Fund, Program and Campus improvements. For further information, please contact Kendi Dyck, (403) 443-5511 ext. 271. Our address is PO Box 4000, 350 5th Ave N, Three Hills, AB T0M 2N0.

You can also **DONATE** online at www.prairie.edu/donate or call **1-403-443-5511**
To donate by eTransfer, visit prairie.edu/donate for specific instructions.

I would like to ...

receive Philip Yancey's *Where Is God When It Hurts*.

As you request this item, we do ask your help in covering the significant costs of purchase and mailing. Thank you. Offer is limited to Servant subscribers at North American addresses.

receive Prairie's email updates.

receive one receipt at the end of the year for all my gifts.

Prairie Bible Institute, in business as "Prairie College," is a registered charity in Canada and the US and issues tax receipts in both currencies.

✂ Please Cut Here

PHILIP
YANCEY

Where the light fell



Philip Yancey has authored 25 books and sold 17 million of them in 50 languages. Raised in Atlanta by an impoverished widow who earned room and board as a Bible teacher, he and his brother experienced what he calls “a toxic faith” that pushed them down opposite roads—one to healing and one to despair. In this, his fourth interview with *Servant*, Philip talks about his gripping memoir and what keeps him gulping at the fountain of God’s grace.

TWENTY YEARS AGO YOU TOLD US YOU WERE CONSIDERING WRITING YOUR MEMOIRS. WHAT WAS THE TIPPING POINT?

I’ve always wanted to capture the unique evangelical/fundamentalist subculture that was dominant for years: summer camps, Youth for Christ, Bible colleges. The tipping point was a rollover accident in 2007 when I broke my neck. The doctor said, “If one of those sharp pieces of bone has punctured your carotid artery, you don’t have long to live. Call the people you love and tell them goodbye, just in case.” I lay there for seven hours, unable to move, and thought about my life. I decided there was really one book I must get down and it’s the story of God working, saving me from a toxic, unhealthy church, and showing me a God of grace and compassion and justice.

“Someone said, ‘An idea cannot be held responsible for those who believe it.’ Don’t blame God for the church.”

READING YOUR BOOKS, I ASSUMED YOU CAME FROM A FINE CHRISTIAN HOME WHERE ALL WAS WELL.

It was a religion-saturated home. But ours was an extreme, fundamentalist church. We believed heaven would be a very small place for members of our church and a few hangers-on. I had no idea what they meant by a God of grace. It seemed like law and judgment to me and it took a long time to get over that. Many grow up with an image of a God who’s just waiting to break people. In my case, it did break my brother, just shattered him.

YOUR MOM REMOVED YOUR DAD FROM AN IRON LUNG WHICH LED TO HIS DEATH, AND DECIDED WHAT WAS BEST FOR YOU AND YOUR BROTHER MARSHALL. IS IT DOUBLY HARD WHEN THINGS ARE DONE IN THE NAME OF GOD?

Yes, indeed. I was raised in a racist church. They called Martin Luther King “Martin Lucifer Coon”—just unbelievable now. I was taught this blasphemous Curse of Hamm theory, that people of color would never amount to much. Knowing the

church lied to me about race sparked a huge crisis of faith for me because how can I then trust what the church says about God, the Bible, and Jesus? I walked away from church and from faith. Part of my pilgrimage is to sort through all the messages and find out which ones I can own as true and authentic, and which ones were wrong and should be discarded.

HOW HARD WAS IT TO WRITE ABOUT YOUR MOTHER?

My mother is 97. I was afraid I would hurt her deeply, but the reverse has happened. My mother and brother had had no contact for fifty years. But partly because I wrote the memoir, we’ve had contact. It hasn’t always been smooth but there have been baby steps in the relationship between them. We’d kept family secrets covered. But when you do that to a wound, it doesn’t heal. It has to be exposed to the light.

I’M INTRIGUED BY THE DIFFERING RESPONSES YOU AND MARSHALL HAD TO SUCH A CHAOTIC CHILDHOOD.

My brother was a very gifted musician, wanted to go to Wheaton College, to the Conservatory of Music. But those closest to him said, “That’s a liberal school like Billy Graham. We can’t let him go there; he’s going to lose his faith.” They said they would pray every day that he would be in a terrible accident and die, or better yet, be paralyzed so he would have to lay and look at the ceiling and realize what a rebellious thing he was doing. For going to Wheaton College! My brother believes they prayed he would lose his mind because that’s what happened. In his last semester, he dropped out and was diagnosed as a paranoid schizophrenic. He’s been a broken person ever since. I watched this as a younger brother and noticed that you always lose when you’re fighting adults. So I tried to create a shell around myself. That’s very unhealthy.

WAS IT SURVIVAL?

Yes. And it got me through about a four-year period when I could have ended up just like my brother. God used things that were not religious to get rid of that shell. A Bible verse or gospel tract couldn’t reach me. I was softened by things like nature, classical music and finally romantic love but I couldn’t reach God through those. I could see where the light fell, the rays, but I couldn’t get to the sun. I needed something from outside. God revealed himself to me in a dramatic and undeni-

able way and changed my entire life in one day. He was not the bully God who was into breaking people. He was a God of mercy and grace and compassion. That changed everything. C.S. Lewis called himself the most reluctant convert in all of England. I was surely the most reluctant convert on a Bible college campus.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN HURT BY LEGALISM?

I took a survey on growing up fundamentalist. It forced me to look back and reflect on the good, the bad, the ugly. To my surprise, at the end of it I was more positive than negative. I had come away with a knowledge of the Bible, discipline, some sense of justice and compassion; and most important, a belief that what we do in this life matters. Those were great gifts. There were things I didn't get to enjoy, like roller skating and dancing. And some sobering things too. A misrepresentation of God, living under constant shame and fear. But as I reflected, the positive outweighed the negative.

ANY ADVICE FOR PARENTS RAISING KIDS AND TRYING TO FIGURE OUT THE BIG ISSUES?

God always tilts on the side of human freedom. He let people in the Bible take their own course. My mother had good intentions. She wanted her sons to replace their father as missionaries to Africa. She gave us over to God. That's not a bad vow to make. But it became a toxic vow because we didn't end up in Africa and she couldn't accept that. So she prayed what seemed like a curse on my brother. I don't see that in Jesus. When the rich young ruler rejects Jesus, Mark says, "And Jesus loved him." He didn't chase after him saying, "What if you die today?" He respected his choice. So parents—chill out a bit. You can't force feed faith. But there will come a time when they have children of their own and the kids want to know: Did my dog go to heaven? Who is this Jesus? And they'll have to come up with some answers. The best thing you can do after you've done everything you could when they were young is pray and support and love. The worst thing you can do is try to be God and steer them in ways they don't feel comfortable with. The goal of parenthood is to produce independent adults who are wise and who make their own decisions. If you try to overrule that by pulling the puppet strings, it will backfire.



Now and then, Philip and Marshall: "My brother believes they prayed he would lose his mind because that's what happened." Facing page: Philip and Janet celebrating 52 years of grace in a marriage.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO "EXVANGELICALS" TURNED OFF BY CHURCH?

Some have nostalgic memories of the subculture, but it just didn't click. Maybe it was the way the church handled science issues or evolution, or how they treated divorced or gay people without grace or compassion. I understand. That stuff is crazy and I try to expose it. It's not part of the gospel. It's not following Jesus. We've gotten a lot of things wrong, so let's correct them. But don't forfeit a chance to live in daily communion with the God of the universe because of how some older person treated you when you were twelve. That's not a good trade. And maybe the church needs you with your ability to discern. Someone said, "An idea cannot be held responsible for those who believe it." Don't blame God for the church. He took an amazing gamble

changed history. Jesus is not that Sunday school cutout that I grew up with; he's brilliant, creative, compassionate, elusive, hard to pin down. And the more I get to know him, the more I want to be like him. And the more I realize my vision of God needs to be corrected so that it looks like Jesus. In God there is no un-Jesus-likeness at all. "If you've seen me, you've seen the Father," Jesus said.

HOW DOES ONE COME TO LOVE GOD OUT OF GRATITUDE AND NOT FEAR?

So many never make that leap. John said that Jesus came full of grace and truth. The church has worked really hard to get across the truth. That's why we have so many denominations and so many creeds. I'll keep piping the tune of grace because I think the world is thirsty for grace, for forgiveness, for love. And we have the answer. Jesus called it living water. Drink. It's free. All you have

"We have messed it up so many times but we have also proclaimed God's love and grace."

turning over the whole message to the likes of us. We have messed it up so many times but we have also proclaimed God's love and grace. Wherever I go in the world, there are orphanages and clinics and wells, efforts against sex trafficking. We have proclaimed the gospel by our deeds.

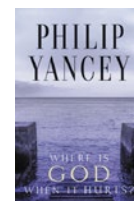
AFTER ALL YOU SAW MODELED IN YOUR CHURCH, WHY ARE YOU STILL A CHRISTIAN?

Jesus. An itinerate rabbi who didn't go to the right schools, in a remote corner of the Roman Empire who was seen as leading a tiny sect of Judaism. He worked about three years, ended up being crucified, and yet he changed the world. He came to show us what God is like, what we *should* be like; he

to do is hold out your hands. And so many religious types have their hands closed to a fist as the Pharisees did in Jesus' day. They're so concerned with trying to get God to like them, that they miss the whole point: God loves *sinners*. Somehow the church ends up saying God loves good people. That's not the message Jesus brought.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE REMEMBERED FOR?

For revisiting old things and dusting them off like an archeologist and finding what to let go—especially from my childhood—and what's worth keeping because it's a treasure. I feel blessed because I've been able to make a living doing that. **IS**



Philip's memoir can be purchased where you buy books online. See page 9 to request a copy of his classic *Where Is God When It Hurts?* For more of this interview, visit and like *Servant Magazine* on Facebook.

"Grace is free but you've got to have your hands open to receive the gift." —Henry Nouwen

When the waters rise

Kyle Nichols with Pat Massey

The year 2021 had taken a terrible toll on the residents of Canada's western-most province. Besides the ravages and restrictions of the Covid virus, devastating forest fires and a killer heat wave in British Columbia had wrought havoc in thousands of lives. With the cooler temperatures of the oncoming winter, there was at least the hope of a peaceful—and uneventful—Christmas season.

Established in 1860, the historic southern BC town of Princeton stood at the junction of the Tulameen and Similkameen Rivers and looked mainly to mining and timber for its livelihood. For the small community of just over 3,000, life was a practical and not overly eventful affair, and people were known for lending a hand when the need arose.

That practical approach to living was reflected in the folk of Princeton's Baptist Church and their pastor Kyle Nichols. Graduating from Prairie College in 2008, Kyle had enjoyed a multi-faceted experience in the school's *Discover* (Intercultural) program. During his two-year internship he served as the community services intern, leading teams of students in practical ministry opportunities like building water filters and helping with church building projects in Guatemala,

El Salvador and California. Having initially come to Prairie with the idea of becoming a worship pastor, Kyle found that his time in *Discover* was giving a better shape to his dreams and that he was increasingly drawn to the idea of practical, hands-on ministries.

After he and his wife Rachel (a grad of Prairie's nursing program) were married, they worked on a native reserve in northern Manitoba and then developed a coffee shop outreach on the beaches of Mexico. Kyle had seen many successful coffee shop ministries in Guatemala and that style of "tent making ministry" appealed strongly to him. "It was hard to leave that dream behind," he admits, "but when we knew we were soon going to become parents, we decided to relocate to be closer to family." That decision resulted in a move to Princeton, BC.

The search for a more direct ministry outlet led them to serve as interns at a nearby Young Life camp. When their daughter was born, Kyle went to work in a coffee shop and began volunteering as a leader for youth and small groups in the local Baptist church. Eventually he was offered an internship as the children's ministry pastor while he studied for his Masters in Divinity, and four years later he became the assistant pastor. Sharing the preaching load and being mentored by the senior minister were good preparation for leadership and when Kyle graduated, the pastor offered him his job.

"I was only thirty," says Kyle, "and we had three young children, but Rachel and I felt very much at home in this church that emphasized community ministry." That included housing the town's food bank two days a week, running a firewood ministry,

and hosting mental health services and a coffee house morning for young families. They also actively participated in town events and festivals, volunteered during school lunch hours, and invested in the children of the community. All of these efforts served to build strong bonds of trust between the church and the town, ties that were about to face their strongest test.

In late fall, the firewood ministry had received a significant boost when the local mill sent them several dump truck loads of logs. The next day, the church received an additional truck load from another donor. "We could barely use the parking lot for all the logs," remembers Kyle, "and volunteers spent days sawing and splitting them into firewood." While the generous community support was appreciated, it was hard to imagine what on earth they were going to do with all that wood.

At church on Sunday morning, the 15th of November, Pastor Nichols reminded his flock that being a person of faith is no guarantee against trials and that faith needed to be attached to love and good deeds. No one could have anticipated the timeliness of the message and how soon the opportunity would arise to put it into action.

Later that evening a freak weather system known as an "atmospheric river" broke over the area and rain began to fall in torrents. Without warning, in the dark hours after midnight, the dykes holding back the Tulameen River broke, sending a deluge of water pouring into the town. Half of Princeton, including much of the downtown, was flooded and hundreds of families were forced into emergency evacuation, with more on alert. In the following

The next day, the church received an additional truckload of firewood from another donor. Volunteers spent days sawing and splitting logs into firewood. Kyle wondered what on earth they were going to do with it all.

days news reports would show images of homes and businesses completely inundated. Cars were submerged. Dramatic boat rescues took place, often "just in time." Heartbreaking ruin was everywhere.

It would get worse. When the main

gas line broke, even homes that were dry had no heat and leaks in the water line made water undrinkable. As rapid runoff and record rainfall throughout the province exceeded the capacity of streams and rivers, the resulting mud slides washed out major highways, cutting off towns like Princeton from the outside world. Travelers were stranded and supply chains ground to a halt, leaving gasoline, groceries and other vital necessities in short supply. It quickly became apparent that the town's efforts would be totally taken up with infrastructure repairs, but who would care for the human crisis? Kyle and his congregation realized that it was time for the church to put feet to its faith.

Since facilities for most of the support services for vulnerable people and young families were underwater, the church food bank, now open daily, became the distributor for those critical supplies as well. Colder weather created a desperate need for firewood and there was no longer any question about why God had sent a surplus ahead of time. A "Do Not Consume" order meant that even boiled water was unsafe so the church offered to manage the water delivery for the town, bringing large tanker trucks to their parking lot where volunteers managed the distribution. Clothing was added to the food bank resources and on any given day there could be as many as twenty people distributing water, food, clothing, blankets and firewood.

People from all over the community came together to offer their help and it soon became apparent that Princeton Baptist would become the centralized location for all things flood relief. Men-

nonite Disaster Service used the church as their base of operations as they helped to muck out and rebuild homes and would do so until the job was done. Christian Aid Ministries offered their services as well, all of which meant, Kyle believes,



The Nichols family: "Anyone reaching out for help after the flood was going to come face to face with someone who loved Jesus."

"that anyone reaching out for help after the flood was going to come face to face with someone who loved Jesus."

The church had spread God's love just by showing up and many residents had their fundamental understanding of Christianity forever changed by the kind of love they saw lived out during the tragedy. Denominational walls came down as other local and national congregations joined in a common focus to love the people of this small BC community in its time of need. Almost everyone had at least one beautiful story to tell about who God is and how he had cared for them through his people.

Sadly, two of Princeton's churches were flooded out and just a week later the only other one to survive unscathed suddenly lost its beloved pastor to Covid, leaving a deep void in the spiritual community. It had indeed been a time of challenge for the Body of Christ with many more hurdles yet to overcome, including homelessness and the desperate need to rebuild.

But this experience of humbly living out a genuine and generous faith would not soon be forgotten. Looking back over those terrible days and weeks, Pastor Kyle could not escape the reality that, in the midst of the pain, God had been at work, bringing something beautiful out of all the hurt and loss, something that even flood waters could not wash away. ❏

MINISTRY SCHOLARSHIP CONTEST



CHURCHES
Nominate your prospective leaders!

WINNER will receive a **FULL-YEAR TUITION** (approx. \$11,000 CAD)

All contestants will receive a **\$500 BURSARY!**

1 **APPLY** to Prairie College's Bachelor of Arts in Ministry Program (pastoral or youth option) at prairie.edu/apply

2 **COMPLETE** the nomination form: jotform.com/Prairie/ministry-contest

3 Through a very short **VIDEO** or **ESSAY**, convey your personal missional philosophy for ministry.

QUESTIONS?

Email us at: admissions@prairie.edu

DEADLINE: JULY 31, 2022

Back to school, again



ANDREW DAVISON WITH PAT MASSEY

Sometimes we find ourselves in unanticipated places. That's me—right here at Prairie College surrounded by gracious fellow students half my age.

I grew up in Nova Scotia on my parents' dairy farm. Not many people left the area and I didn't expect to either. When my girlfriend departed for Alberta to attend Prairie and began sending me her class papers, I realized that the "religion" I thought I had was empty. Soon I was reading the Bible for myself and in November of 1995, I invited Christ into my life.

Tara was surprised. Not only was her boyfriend now a Christian, he felt called to become a pastor and intended to join her at school. In the fall of 1996, we arrived on campus as newlyweds.

I was shocked, however, to discover how limited my knowledge of the Bible actually was and school was a struggle. When our son was born, I found that being a full-time husband, father and student was just too much and I left my studies to begin working full-time for Prairie. Over the next ten years as three more children joined our family, I worked in Recruitment, Marketing and Development, event planning, and as Adjunct Faculty.

When time came for a change, I took a position in the town library and then went to work for a local construction company. Most of the crew were believers and other trades noticed that we were different, that we didn't cuss, and we genuinely liked each other. Definitely an experience in lifestyle Christianity!

When an opportunity came to return to Nova Scotia, we moved back to the family farm where our kids could get to know their extended family. Two years later we returned to Alberta where both of our employers rehired us immediately. I decided

As a young father twenty-five years ago, I could never have imagined a scenario like this.

to become an electrician and was soon back in construction, building hotels and thoroughly enjoying my work.

Then Covid hit. Oil prices plummeted, construction petered out, as did my job. During this time, I had been working at my church as a building project manager and in tech support. It brought my old dream of church leadership back to life and in the fall of 2020 I once again became a student at Prairie College.

Now, at forty-five years of age, I find that my years as a Christian have given me a deeper understanding of my faith and a different perspective. Since many of the faculty are at the same stage of life, we connect easily and, interestingly, I have known some of the students all of their lives.

My oldest son decided he was going to take classes at Prairie too. Then my youngest daughter enrolled, as did my youngest boy, and now Dad is going to school with his kids. It's great to sit together in class, compare homework, hang out with them at lunch, and play games with their friends on the weekend. As a young father twenty-five years ago, I could never have imagined a scenario like this.

It's never too late to learn more about God. I've always worked for someone with a big idea, but Covid and losing my last job have helped me refocus. If Prairie has rekindled anything in me, it's a renewed passion for God's work. I love building things, but people matter more now, and having good ministry-based skills will serve me well whatever my occupation. I'm still building, but instead of hotels, my passion is to help God build up people, for his glory. ❏

Upending Murphy's Law

EDWARD ALOYSIUS MURPHY JR., THE AMERICAN AEROSPACE ENGINEER, CAREFULLY DEVELOPED PROJECTS WHOSE DEMISE COULD SPELL DISASTER.

He knew how to work for the best but plan for the worst. He is credited with Murphy's Law: "Anything that can go wrong will go wrong." Through the years, this old adage has become a favorite of pessimists the world over, and it's given comedians some pretty good lines as well. Like, "Your lost sewing needle will be found by your husband when he is walking around barefoot."

Yes, anything that can go wrong will go wrong. Take for instance, The Doctor's Law. "If you don't feel well, make an appointment to see the doctor. By the time you get there you'll feel better. Don't make

A toothache was killing him, but he refused to visit a dentist. "Jesus is coming soon," he reasoned. "What will I need teeth for?"

an appointment and you'll stay sick." Or the First Law of Shopping: "At a bargain sale, the only suit or dress you like that fits you is the one not for sale." Or, "If the shoe fits, it's ugly." I much prefer Phil's First Law of Shopping: "If the shoe fits, get another one just like it."

You won't live long on this planet before realizing that things have a way of going wrong. Early in life, you find that the shinbone is a device for finding



furniture in the dark. Then you discover that the other line always moves faster than yours. In traffic. At supermarkets. In ice cream shops. Then comes The Law of Mechanical Repair: "After your hands become coated in grease, your nose will begin to itch and you'll have to visit the restroom." And, if something does go right, subsequent events will show that it would have been better had it gone wrong.

Do you know someone who thinks and talks like this? Who sweeps everything with the broom of doom and gloom? It's never been worse and it's getting *worser* by the minute?

Sixty years ago, many thought this way. A toothache was killing one guy, but he refused to visit a dentist. "Jesus is coming," he reasoned. "What will I need teeth for?"

man peace was the result of the fact that the world had been bludgeoned brutally into submission to one central power."

He went on to say that the dominant tone of the letters written to the churches at the time was one of *triumph*. Yes, the conditions were dire and the people suffered, "but," said Morgan, "we never see them...cast down...suffering from pessimistic fever. They are always triumphant. If ever I am tempted to think that religion is almost dead today," he continued, "it is when I listen to the wailing of some Christian[s]: 'Everything is wrong,' or 'Everything is going wrong.' Oh, be quiet! Think again, look again, judge not by the circumstances of the passing hour but by the infinite things of our Gospel and our God. And that is exactly what these people did."

As should we. Let's stop whining about how dark things are and shine our lights as faithful followers of Jesus. Ready to meet him when he returns or when we die, eager to hear his words, "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter into the joy of the Lord." Yes, we will discover the odd sewing needle and some furniture in the dark. But when we're reminded of all that's wrong, let's "be quiet" and focus on the one who will one day make all things right. ✠

In 1961, the British pastor and scholar G. Campbell Morgan responded this way: "I have no sympathy with people who tell us today that these are the darkest days the world has ever seen. The days in which we live are appalling, but they do not compare with conditions in the world when Jesus came into it. Historians talk of the *Pax Romana* and make much of the fact that there was peace everywhere, the Roman peace. Do not forget that the Ro-

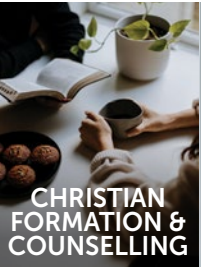
Phil Callaway is the author of *31 Days of Hope and Humor*. He hosts *Laugh Again* radio. Visit him at philcallaway.com



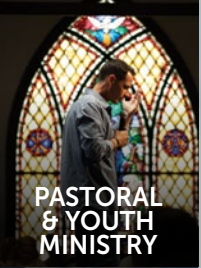
SERVANT
PO BOX 4000
THREE HILLS, AB T0M 2N0
CANADA
Printed in Canada

Return Service Requested

TAKE THE FIRST STEP INTO YOUR CAREER



CHRISTIAN
FORMATION &
COUNSELLING



PASTORAL
& YOUTH
MINISTRY



OUTDOOR
LEADERSHIP



WORSHIP ARTS



PRAIRIE COLLEGE

BIBLE & THEOLOGY



INTERCULTURAL
STUDIES



DIGITAL MEDIA



BUSINESS



PRACTICAL NURSING

www.prairie.edu

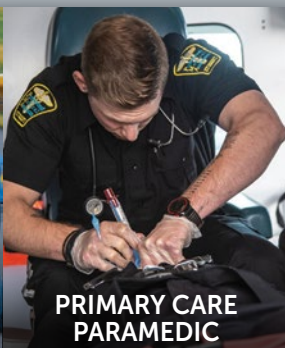
admissions@prairie.edu | Phone: 403.443.5511 | Toll Free: 1.800.661.2425



SPORTS
MANAGEMENT



AVIATION



PRIMARY CARE
PARAMEDIC



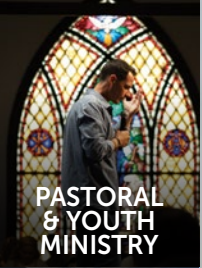
HUMANITIES

CANADA POST		POSTES CANADA
Postage paid		Port payé
Publications Mail		Poste- publications
40064607		

SERVANT
PO Box 718
Shelby, Montana
USA 59474
Printed in Canada
Return Service Requested

TAKE THE FIRST STEP INTO YOUR CAREER

CHRISTIAN
FORMATION &
COUNSELLING



PASTORAL
& YOUTH
MINISTRY



OUTDOOR
LEADERSHIP



WORSHIP ARTS



PRAIRIE COLLEGE

BIBLE & THEOLOGY



INTERCULTURAL
STUDIES



DIGITAL MEDIA



BUSINESS



PRACTICAL NURSING

www.prairie.edu

admissions@prairie.edu | Phone: 403.443.5511 | Toll Free: 1.800.661.2425



SPORTS
MANAGEMENT



AVIATION



PRIMARY CARE
PARAMEDIC



HUMANITIES

