

CONNECTION

NEWS FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF THE KING'S UNIVERSITY | 2021-2022



**Love Thy
Neighbour**



THE
KING'S
UNIVERSITY



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Cover

Sometimes loving your neighbour requires extra effort; intentional actions to brighten the lives of others, new initiatives that force ripples in our complacency, perspective and mindset changes that dislodge us from comfortable thinking. When they dare to do so, Christian universities have limitless capacity to love their neighbours.

Cover art by Ella Poworoznik



Dr. Melanie Humphreys

Message from the President

Could there be a more relevant theme for this edition of *Connection* in our deeply divided times than “love thy neighbour?” As I put pen to paper for this message, I am keenly aware of the state our world is in. Russia has invaded Ukraine, destroying European peace. Canada has witnessed weeks of protest and opposition to COVID-19 restrictions and vaccine mandates. Images of flooding and destruction in British Columbia this fall are still fresh in my mind.

What does it mean to love thy neighbour? What can we do in the face of so much bad happening? I am reminded of Samwise Gamgee’s quote from the *Lord of the Rings*

films, “There is some good in this world . . . and it’s worth fighting for.”

In this edition of *Connection*, we’ve gone looking for what really matters—the stories that stay with us. The stories that are worth remembering. The stories of living out the call to “Love the Lord your God, with all your heart, mind, and soul, and love your neighbour as yourself.” This edition of *Connection* is focused on stories of social justice, investments in people, and intentionally supporting one another.



King’s ENVS students map urban heat islands in Edmonton

King’s environmental studies students Emmanuel Auta, Kristy Dupuis, Julia Gesshe, and Jessica Young mapped urban heat islands within Edmonton to see where heat is most prevalent and to brainstorm creative solutions. The students shared their findings on January 26 in an hour-long online conversation with project partner Shrub-scriber about how a strategic urban tree canopy can be used to mitigate extreme city temperatures at a community level. 🇺🇳



Festival City Winds collaboration provides new opportunities for student instrumentalists

A new collaboration with Edmonton’s Festival City Winds (FCW) provides new opportunities for King’s students to earn credits playing in a large ensemble setting. With bands ranging from novice to advanced, the collaboration ensures that students have access to suitable placements and rehearsal times. FCW hosts two formal concerts each year, along with performances at events throughout the Edmonton area. 🇺🇳

Mental health research aims to assess campus needs

With support from a Bell Canada grant, King’s standing committee on campus mental health has developed a research project to ensure the university has the right information to meet the evolving needs of students.

Using guidelines and tools established by the Mental Health Commission of Canada and Standards Council of Canada, the project will explore factors that predict student flourishing or poor mental health.

“We want to continually refine our services,” says Dean of Students Megan Viens. “Our goal is to be comprehensive in our understanding of a student’s experience on campus. By leaving the process fully open, we can ensure we’re getting the best results for students, not simply results that confirm our assumptions.”

The grant funding has allowed King’s to hire an external research coordinator and interviewer to ensure unbiased findings and participant confidentiality. A final report from the committee is anticipated in summer 2022. 🇺🇳



New course explores place and identity

In June 2021, King’s facilitated a new course at Lady Flower Gardens called “A Place to Belong” in which students explored key questions about place, identity, justice, and our relationship to the land. One highlight included a visit from local scholar and artist Dr. Lana Whiskeyjack, who led students in a lesson using items gathered from the land—sticks, dirt, stones, feathers, grasses—to make a piece of art that answered the question, “How do I belong to the land of Treaty Six?” 🇺🇳

New Canada Research Chair to move sustainability work at King's forward

With climate change, sustainable development, and circular economies in the public dialogue, King's is pleased to announce Dr. Adrian Beling as the new Canada Research Chair in Transitions to Sustainability.

With an interdisciplinary background in economics and sociology, Dr. Beling is well-acquainted with social and political conditions impacting sustainable development in diverse contexts. He completed his graduate studies and first work experience in Argentina and his postgraduate academic training in Germany.

Beling has co-authored dozens of peer-reviewed articles, academic books, handbook chapters, and numerous conference papers, reports, essays, and blog contributions.

The appointment of Beling will enable King's to better coordinate and enhance its existing research efforts in sustainability as he joins several faculty members who are already committed to the topic. Beling's own area of expertise will complement this research by exploring the what conditions are necessary for a successful transition to sustainability, as well as how politics and governance themselves may be transformed by key concerns such as the pursuit of social equity and having respect for environmental limits.

Additionally, the Canada Research Chair position will allow for a new institutional research focus on how organized religion can help mobilize public advocacy, cultural-practical innovation, and individual action to support a sustainable future. 🇺🇳



King's hosts lectures on reaching net zero by 2050

In February, King's hosted Dr. Phil De Luna, a Director of the National Research Council of Canada, who is leading a seven-year, \$57 million dollar collaborative R&D program developing disruptive technologies to decarbonize the Canadian economy.

The series focused on the role chemistry plays in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and accelerating progress towards a sustainable future. 🇺🇳

Sharing this land as neighbours

Indigenous Initiatives Circle inspires community to live into the call of reconciliation

BY JONATHAN NICOLAI-DEKONING

EACH YEAR, King's Indigenous Initiatives Circle (IIC) supports the university's commitment to justice, reconciliation, truth-telling, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. The Circle includes Indigenous and non-Indigenous employees and students and partners with local First Nations.

In 2021, IIC focused its energy on two main initiatives: organizing events for Orange Shirt Day and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, and updating King's territorial land acknowledgement.

In the weeks leading up to Orange Shirt Day—organized to remember victims and survivors of Canada's Indian Residential School system—IIC sold t-shirts in partnership with the Orange Shirt Society.

King's also welcomed Rev. Travis Enright, Cree leader, priest, and archdeacon for

Indigenous Ministries for the Anglican Diocese of Edmonton, to lead a reflective chapel service. Along with local Cree elder Russell Auger and two young Cree helpers, Enright led students and employees through an interactive learning and reflection experience titled 'Reclaiming Our Losses, Reviving the Circle.'

IIC looks forward to further engaging the wider community on the key question that land acknowledgements raise: how do we share this land well with all our relations, considering our tragic shared history and the challenges of our common future? 🇺🇳



Rev. Travis Enright

The King's University is located in Amiskwaciy-waskahikan, a gathering place and home, past and present, for many Indigenous peoples, now part of Treaty Six territory and the Métis homeland.



Students and employees participate in an interactive guided-learning experience as part of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

Biblical justice begins where you live

King's Justice Fellowship equips students through experiential learning

BY REBECCA MEDEL

A ONE-YEAR DEEP DIVE into what justice looks like in a hurting world is midway through its second run.

The Micah Centre began offering the Justice Fellowship in 2019 to small groups of students who spend the year as a cohort taking classes together.

"What we wanted was an experience where students could have something like a study abroad experience but they could do it at King's and integrate it right into their major," Micah Centre Director Jonathan Nicolai-deKoning says.

The Justice Fellowship requires students to take two courses in the fall semester, as well as a history course, independent study, and Quest Mexico—a 10-day

experiential learning course in central Mexico. The trip doesn't have a service component, rather it's about learning from people experiencing injustice and poverty, and from their allies such as feminist activists and those working for labour rights.

Back in Edmonton, students are challenged to think about injustices happening at home. Topics include issues of marginalization, poverty, and racial inequalities.

Michelle Roseboom, B.A. '21 says that being part of the Justice Fellowship opened her eyes.

"The program challenged me to learn more about injustices that I normally would not have considered."

And that's the point: learning to pursue a better world by using biblical principles and considering unfamiliar points of view.

"One of the themes we think about throughout the year is the relationship between acts of advocacy and change that I can do on my own," says Nicolai-deKoning. "Like the way I spend my money and the way I relate to the people that I encounter on the street. Also bigger questions like what sort of policy and legislation is shaping our city and province, and how it affects me compared to my unhoused neighbour or someone who has survived residential schools."

It's about students discovering how to pursue justice through a year of community building and learning. 🇺🇳

Starting the day off right

Meet Bethany Snaterse, student volunteer at King's

BY REBECCA MEDEL

CLASS STARTS AT 8 A.M., you've already hit snooze a few times, and you're now running out the door to make it on time—breakfast is an afterthought at this point. Thankfully there is, at least once a month, an option to grab a quick bite to eat on the way to class. King's Commuter Breakfast sets up shop in the North Academic Building between 7:30 and 9:00 a.m. on the first Wednesday of each month to offer fuel for the day.

"I got involved with the Commuter Program because I really wanted a way to be able to serve other students and to give them opportunities to connect with each other. I think that community is super important, especially at a small university like King's," Commuter Breakfast Lead Bethany Snaterse says.

The biology major is graduating this spring and helped out with the program as an assistant last year.

"The Commuter Breakfast is a way for people to connect over food, which I think is the best way to create genuine conversation," she adds.

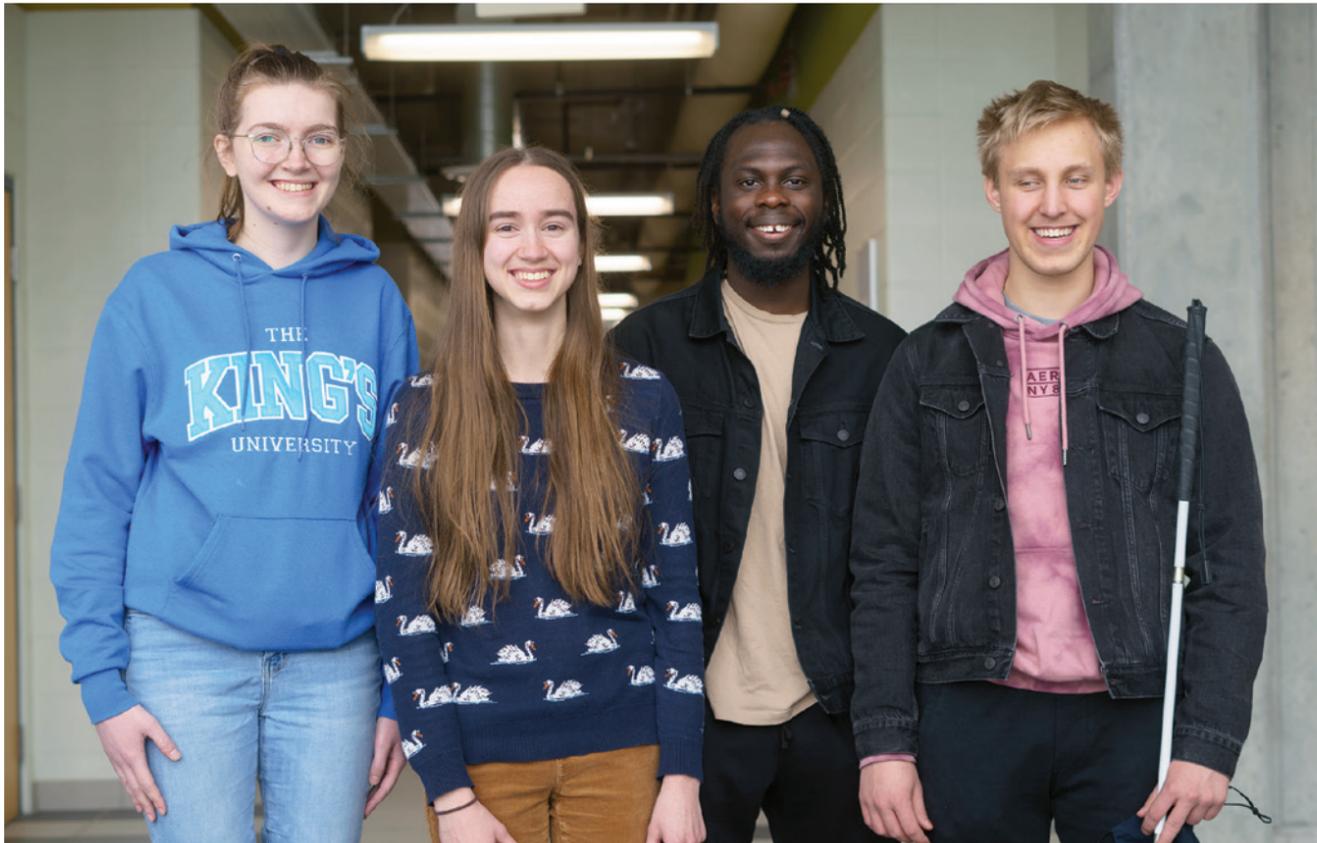
COVID-19 restrictions last year meant that the group was unable to serve their usual hot breakfast. Alternatives like individually wrapped muffins unfortunately made for a grab-and-go mentality rather than sitting down to converse.

This year, however, the team has been able to serve heartier meals like breakfast sandwiches and pancakes. Those who can't stick around to chat over their breakfast often take a coffee to go.

"We have a lot of profs who also just grab a coffee on the way to class. So it's a good way to serve them, too, and let them know that they're appreciated," Snaterse says.

"So many people have given to me by putting effort into my education and making me feel comfortable here. I just want to be able to pay it forward and show the profs and other students that they matter and are appreciated." 🙌





Members of Discipleship and Resistance, from left: Kathryn Oostenbrink, Emma Hutchinson, Honour Temple, and Jonathan Sieswerda

Discipleship and Resistance group wrestles with uncomfortable Christian topics

BY REBECCA MEDEL

WHAT IS MONEY and how do you feel about it? What were you taught about it growing up and what does the Bible teach us about it? A rabbit trail of questions like these are a standard night for the Discipleship and Resistance group.

D&R isn't a typical Bible study or small group, but it does contain aspects of both. It's a place where students gather weekly to share their views on things that relate to Christian life—sometimes topics that are not discussed in polite company.

"I think the main purpose of D&R is to be a space where students can come and discuss topics relating to faith and life, especially topics that don't get talked about a lot in faith circles or that are particularly relevant to university students," third-year history student Emma Hutchinson says. As

one of the group's leaders, she is responsible for facilitating conversations.

Fellow student leader, second-year psychology major, Jonathan Sieswerda adds, "The whole point is to learn about God, learn about the Bible, learn about what it means to live out our faith and apply it to our everyday lives."

After a topic is introduced, the group breaks off into smaller groups to discuss before rejoining together to share thoughts and perspectives.

"When we come back as a large group, we dig a bit deeper into the topic and whoever is leading will guide the conversation using scripture passages and insights from theologians. The idea isn't really to have consensus, but to engage deeply with

whatever we're talking about, and especially to listen to each other well when we disagree," Hutchinson says.

A safe space to challenge long-standing beliefs is what a university ought to be about and D&R provides the space for exactly that. Memorable topics include: "Who Are You, Really?" (about social media and identity); "Unity? With Them? Really?" (about living in unity with other Christians when we deeply disagree about many things); and "Does God Have a Plan for My Life?" (about God's will and how we can come to know it).

"I find that I always leave D&R with a feeling of peace because I know that I'm in this together with other people and that there are always more things to learn," Sieswerda says. 🙏



Does it matter where you land?

Sociology professor explores differences in settlement resources available across Canada

BY NIKOLAS VANDER KOOY

WHEN YOU ARRIVE in Canada as a new immigrant, does it matter where you land?

In the early days of Confederation, immigration often involved docking in Halifax harbour or travelling up the St. Lawrence River to Montreal. From there, new Canadians hit the rails, hoping their destination offered a better future than what had been available back home.

Today, there are three main streams by which a newcomer might arrive in Canada: the family reunification stream, skilled labour/provincial nominee stream, and the refugee stream.

The family stream locates you to where your family resides; the skilled labour stream to where your employment resides; the refugee stream to wherever Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada decides you ought to reside. Newcomers don't have a lot of agency in choosing where they first settle.

While technically an area of federal jurisdiction, much of the responsibility for immigration is downloaded to the

provinces and even municipalities to meet the unique socioeconomic realities of local communities. The approach has strong advantages but has also led to siloing of information and best practices.

Enter Dr. Jennifer Braun, professor of sociology at King's, and her colleagues at the University of Alberta who have received a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) to study the Canadian immigration landscape. When completed, the multi-year research project will paint a better picture of how immigration supports and services differ across the country. In particular, they will learn if newcomers are equitably equipped to establish themselves.

"We want to get a comprehensive picture of the resources available to newcomers across the country. What is spent on immigration services and community integration directly, but also indirect costs such as health care, trauma services, education, and more," Braun says.

"Anecdotally, we know that there are significant discrepancies. Our research involves reviewing public accounts and

policies to understand the dollar figures associated with these investments. It can be hard to get this information. We file numerous Freedom of Information requests, but these often go unanswered or are rejected," she continues.

Despite the challenges and tedium of sifting through layers of bureaucracy and red tape, Braun and her colleagues are making good progress. Once the team gets a clear picture of the immigration landscape in Alberta, they will apply the lessons and skills they learn in the process to other provinces and jurisdictions across Canada.

At the same time, the team will reach out to key figures in the immigrant-serving community to understand what funding inequalities represent in terms of service delivery as well as how findings can be effectively disseminated and applied.

"Does it matter where you land?" Braun asks. "It shouldn't. It's unfair to newcomers and if they ultimately have to resettle elsewhere in Canada to access the services and community they need to thrive, it makes for less successful communities and a less vibrant nation." 🙏



Remembering right relations

Solutions to gender-based violence founded in Indigenous knowledge and values

BY NIKOLAS VANDER KOOY

HEALING COMES THROUGH an authentic expression of oneself and their relationship to traditions and community.

That's the approach the Indigenous-led Creating Hope Society of Alberta and Dr. David Long, professor of sociology at King's, are taking on a community-based participatory initiative exploring supports available to Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQ+ persons who have experienced gender-based violence (GBV).

Their project, titled "Remembering Right Relations" (RRR), is years in the making but has recently picked up steam thanks to a grant of \$500,000 from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research which will allow the team to advance next stages of the project.

The first phase of RRR involved interviews with GBV support organizations, meetings with elders, and most importantly, sharing circles with survivors to understand how available supports were being experienced. They discovered that Indigenous supports for women and girls who had experienced GBV were few and far between. Indigenous supports for gender-diverse individuals were virtually non-existent.

It was uncovered that what was needed most of all—and what simply did not exist—was a sense of Indigenous community and support for those that experienced GBV. Survivors needed access to elders and cultural programming; land-based activities, traditional gatherings and ceremonies; being out on the land, being together.

The team has a clear idea of where their work needs to go next.

The idea is to develop and test a series of interventions that will include culture camps, sharing circles, and digital storytelling workshops where participants can gather and celebrate their shared history and ways of knowing. The camps will be welcoming places where survivors can find rest. They will be places for refreshment and peer support free of discrimination, social barriers, and the potential for revictimization. The digital storytelling workshops and sharing circles will provide safe, relationship-building spaces for participants to share, support, and learn.

The project is still in its infancy, and much work remains to determine the exact form each part of the project will take, but

what sets RRR apart is that each of these interventions will draw on traditional Indigenous values and practices. They will prioritize land-based interventions that reclaim Indigenous wellness and healing practices.

There will be sacred fires tended to throughout the duration of the camps; teachings from Indigenous elders and knowledge keepers on topics such as gender roles in traditional culture, traditional childrearing, medicines, and protocols. There will be tipi teachings, drum and rattle making, dance, and song.

"At a time when western medicine is strongly promoting the benefits of cognitive behavioural therapy and other forms of counselling, it might not seem immediately obvious how a culture camp or digital storytelling workshop can address gender-based violence," Long says. "We have a ways to go in terms of figuring out how this all comes together, but if you have and use the language of remembering right relations for those that have experienced GBV, we know that community and healing

"Loving your neighbour is not a welfare model...it's about realizing that I have so much to learn from my neighbour."

come through an authentic expression of oneself and their relationship to traditions and community."

Long uses residential schools as an example of how remembering right relations is a very real tool in addressing the needs of those who have survived acts of violence.

"Indigenous peoples adapted to challenging circumstances for thousands of years before colonizers arrived, during the horrors of residential schools, and they continue today as they have always done, to draw on the strengths of their relations. In these contexts we see that healing looks like connection to their peoples."

Beyond the title and theme of this project, remembering right relations is a principal Long applies to all of his research. It's also a lesson he strives to impart upon his students through the many of the courses he teaches.

"Loving your neighbour is not a welfare model," Long says. "It's not about having resources and saying, 'I'm going to help someone I see as less advantaged than me.' It's about realizing that I have so much to learn from my neighbour." 🏰

As a member of the sociology faculty at King's, Dr. David Long has been engaging the concept of loving your neighbour for more than 25 years. His research interests include masculinities, gender, and relations between Indigenous/settler peoples.

Long's extensive research portfolio delves into topics such as causes behind high male suicide rates, the range of support services and resources available to Aboriginal males involved in the criminal justice system, and an extensive collaboration with the Creating Hope Society on their "Aboriginal Fathers Love Their Children Too" and "Aboriginal Boys Matter Too" projects.

A deep breath, a deeper understanding

Len Fehr, King's writing success coordinator, meets students where they're at

BY NIKOLAS VANDER KOOY

WRITING AND ACADEMICS didn't always come easily to Len Fehr, King's writing success coordinator.

As an undergraduate student at a large public university, Fehr struggled to keep up with his studies. In those days, there were no accommodations for those struggling with disabilities, and that included Fehr, who at the time, was legally blind.

"At one point, a professor came up to me and suggested quite frankly that I wasn't university material," he says. "That's the sort of thing that sticks with you."

And it did. Fehr dropped out. After an agonizing two years filled with stress and anxiety, he felt there was no other option.

Fehr moved on to a successful career, spending 15 years working at Environment Canada, and another 10 years working in the private sector, but he couldn't shake the feeling that he wasn't finished with university. So, in the fall of 2009, Fehr attended his first day of classes as an English student at King's.

His transcript provided transfer credit from his time in university 20 years prior but also forced him to begin the year on academic probation.

"At the beginning, my confidence was shaky. Those familiar feelings of inadequacy came rushing back one day in the library, but I found the support I needed to succeed as an adult student."

Fehr credits supportive professors and a great cohort of classmates at King's for his success in turning his academic career around. After graduating in 2012, Fehr went on to complete his master's degree in Modern and Contemporary Literature at Newcastle University in England.

Each day, between 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m., Fehr meets with students at various stages of their academic journey. They may be ESL students struggling with English language and expression, those needing a nudge to take that next step in thinking critically, or a student at any stage hoping to increase their mastery of the material ... and their GPA.

It can be a challenge determining the first steps to take with a student, but it's never difficult for Fehr to empathize.

"Every now and then a student comes in anxious, and stressed, and scared; I say, 'just breathe, we'll figure it out, we'll get through this.' Fehr's aim is student success. He doesn't want to see students with a desire to learn and grow miss becoming the person they were called to be.

"There are moments when you're explaining how literature works and you watch a student move from the surface to the depths of the content. That's exciting. The first time they realize a short story is more than 15 minutes wasted, or when a student starts coming up with great insights and ideas and I have a hard time keeping up with them—that's a lot of fun." 🏆



On the highway just a few miles south of Stettler, AB is a little spot called Fenn. In the ditch at the roadside is an artesian well. Its water is cold and delicious, a pure treasure from deep in the earth. The spring feeds a marsh filled with thousands of waterfowl.

Oil and gas development, irrigation agriculture, and a growing population are tapping out Alberta's groundwater supply.

Gushing Treasure, 2004

Daniel Van Hyst,
Emeritus Professor of Art and Drama

Being Christian scholars in dangerous times

How neighbour-love might shape Christian scholarship

BY DR. JOHN HIEMSTRA

SERVICEABLE INSIGHT was a great way to summarize what loving one's neighbour meant in scholarship and research when I started at King's 32 years ago. Christian scholars generate and share serviceable insight with churches, Christian communities, and society in general. Loving our neighbour in scholarship meant, in part, discovering knowledge to enable society, the economy, and nature to flourish.

Professors at King's do this remarkably well, conducting research in many disciplines and interdisciplinarily to alleviate poverty, understand the chemistry of oilsands tailings ponds, make the economy more sustainable, reclaim deforested foothills, enjoy poetry, music and drama, and theologize in support of peace.

One King's initiative that beautifully embodies the spirit of serviceable insight is Community Engaged Research. CER sees students and faculty research teams "collaborate with local non-profit organizations to help provide data-driven solutions to pressing problems facing communities." To date, teams have worked on research for agencies such as Lady Flower Gardens, Edmonton Area Land Trust, Mennonite Church of Canada, Boyle Street Community Services, and many others.

Serviceable insight seemed like a good description of my early research at King's. However, as I focused on public questions related to justice throughout my career, another characteristic of research reared its head. Some of my more controversial research faced opposition from one segment of society or another and this shifted my understanding of what neighbour love means for scholarship.

CHRISTIAN SCHOLARSHIP OFTEN INVOLVES CONTROVERSY

As you scan the following topics and conclusions (listed in no particular order), try to imagine groups and interests that may have disagreed with, or opposed, my research conclusions.

- Oil sands developments have profoundly destructive and unjust impacts on nearby Indigenous peoples

- Faithful Christian schooling can occur in alternative programs within public school systems (if properly structured)
- Some faith will always play a part in politics and government, and Christian faith should also be allowed to play a properly defined role, yet government must never impose any faith on citizens, not even the Christian faith
- Greenhouse gas emissions generated by Alberta's petroleum industry are unacceptably high and must be rapidly reduced to avoid catastrophic global warming
- Organizations like businesses or universities ought to structure their decision-making processes to involve employees in codeterminative major decisions
- Government's public justice role demands equitable funding for all bonafide schools, including those run by Christian, secular, Sikh, Indigenous, Muslim, a philosophy, or other faith groups

Loving one's neighbour through my research, I discovered, can be polarizing, and opposed.

Just to be clear, disagreement within the scientific process is normal and necessary. My research conclusions may be off base at times, and it is the task of science to repeatedly test them. Science is not first and foremost a body of knowledge, but a practice of testing and pursuing knowledge.

But how should this reality of external opposition be incorporated in a Christian view of research?

SERVICEABLE INSIGHT CAN BECOME CONFORMITY

The weakness of the idea of research as serviceable insight is that it can all too easily mutate into a culture-affirming, cheerleading activity. It can degenerate into the search for neutral rational knowledge to merely tinker with and fine-tune society, economy, and culture. Scholarship as the handmaiden of the



Dr. John Hiemstra has served as Professor of Political Studies at The King's University for more than 30 years. Throughout his career, Hiemstra has taught hundreds of students in courses spanning Canadian and world politics, public policy, Christian social movements, and others. Hiemstra's research involves topics such as electoral reform, faith and public life, school policy and pluralism, and oil sands development.

Dr. Hiemstra will retire from King's at the end of the 2021 – 2022 academic year.

status quo, however, only serves to drive society down its predetermined progressive, modernist tracks at a faster pace. It fails to critique its deeper structures and driving faith. In so doing, even Christian scholarship can end up failing to challenge injustice, inequality, and other antinormative facets of society.

Opposition to facets of my research taught me that loving one's neighbour through scholarship is more than serviceable insight. Bob Goudzwaard once suggested a powerful definition: "Science is given the divine calling to search for truth and truth alone, even if some social groups, governments, or businesspeople don't like these outcomes."

I find this definition helpful and liberating. Scholarly neighbour-love in a sinful world must critique society, reveal unpopular positions, expose oppression, lift up those marginalized by society, propose healing changes, and address topics that are contested and controversial in society, church, and even within King's. In a word, it must be scholarship for shalom.

The biblical idea of *coram deo* is helpful here as it declares that all of life is lived in the face of God. A Christian thinker that has influenced King's, Abraham Kuyper (1837 – 1920), constructed the principle of sphere sovereignty on this idea. He suggested all spheres of human activity—business, art, government, family, university, and so on—are constantly called to love God and neighbour. In university research, loving one's neighbour specifically means searching for truthful explanations of all parts of creational reality and sharing these in service of neighbours. While this includes providing serviceable insight, it also means truthful explanations must critique and oppose distorted systems, structures, and ideas. Therefore, Christian scholarship must also, by definition, be free of pressures and opposition from powerful outside interests.

Looking back on my research career, I'm deeply grateful that King's enabled and defended my scholarship and public advocacy, even when controversial.

But what might this divine vocation of loving neighbours through truthful research

mean as we enter increasingly turbulent and uncertain times?

BEING CHRISTIAN SCHOLARS IN DANGEROUS TIMES

Society is struggling with stress and burn-out from pandemic restrictions. We see the rise of disturbing populist movements, social media distortions, claims of fake news, and conspiracy theories. The United States appears on the precipice of becoming a failed democratic state. The climate crisis is coming into clearer focus: more intense and frequent droughts, atmospheric rivers, forest fires, and floods. An ecological crisis is intensifying as global resources decline, populations increase, pollution soars, ecosystems wobble and some collapse, species decline while others go extinct, and the world warms.

We see powerful actors invoke ideological distortions of truth, spinning words to advance their interests. Deceptive social media campaigns confuse swaths of citizens. News reporting by media corporations is distorted by their obsession with maximizing profits, thus transforming reporting into entertainment, spectacle,

and distraction. The rise of white Christian nationalism and militant masculinity weaken the church's witness. Mega-billionaires impose agendas on society. Corporations engage in unbridled profit-seeking. Truthful accounts are labelled as fake news. Public dialogue is choked, entangled in relativism, and declining.

Much of society refuses to see the true character of our problems, they dismiss looming decline and refuse to make the painful and necessary decisions on appropriate solutions.

If scholarship is understood as pursuing truthful understandings of reality in the face of potentially powerful opposition, then Christian scholarship is well positioned to help meet these challenges.

As we move into dangerous times, by God's grace, Christian universities need to shape themselves so they can help society discern wise ways forward. This involves coming to grips with seven questions:

First, can Christian universities resist outside pressures from powerful interests that want to make research about the narrow pursuit of technical knowledge, for neutral professionals, to adjust the established order, so it runs more smoothly?

“Christian universities need to shape themselves so they can help society discern wise ways forward.”

Second, will Christian scholars dare to conduct larger structural analyses of, and speak the truth about, the vast deformities in our socioeconomic order?

Third, will Christian universities support research that emphasizes listening to the marginalized, lifting up and centring their voices as they speak truth to power?

Fourth, will Christian scholarship courageously promote and guard the norms the Creator gives for the good of humankind, as signposts on the path of flourishing and

well-being, even if powerful forces in a survival of the fittest society deny they exist?

Fifth, will Christian universities continue teaching and nurturing new generations of 'critical change agents' equipping them for prophetic critique and healing service?

Sixth, will Christian scholars and their communities and churches continue to partner in the common cause of truthfully understanding our civilization?

Seventh, will Christian universities continue to protect faculty who faithfully carry out neighbour-love in research, by shielding them from outside interference?

King's has a rich tradition in these areas. When Christ returns one day in glory, may Christian scholars be found still faithful. What could express hope and faithful loving of neighbour in a university better than scholarship that strives to understand the truth of our lives, inspires ongoing repentance, and designs healing, reorienting steps for our troubled society? 🙏

The enduring value of King's PHE program

BY DR. JOHN HEIMSTRA

In recent years, leaders of every partisan stripe have faced enormous challenges and complex problems, e.g., vaccines and mandates; diversity and identity politics; social equality and family life; war in Ukraine and international peace; global warming and ecological decline.

A host of social movements, rooted in almost every conceivable ideology, campaign for major changes to one facet of the socioeconomic and political order or another. At the same time, populist movements have arisen to challenge the legitimacy of elite domination and public institutions.

The Politics, History & Economics (PHE) program at King's is designed to educate and train activists and leaders for faith-based engagement in public life. Wisdom, justice, and careful training are sorely

needed in our world. King's PHE program prepares graduates for genuine service in and through governments, non-governmental organizations, international development agencies, public administration, business, and media.

But what does PHE training look like? What is needed for wise Christian engagement in public life today? Some years ago, Paul Marshall, former professor at the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto, framed what is needed this way; it captures the thrust of the PHE program to this day.

“What is needed is not more calls for rectitude, cries for crusades, complaints of corruption, or claims of cynicism, but, in part, an exploration of the nature and place of politics itself in the world. It requires knowing that most politics is more like raising children than raising hell, more like

gardening than grandstanding, more like work than warfare. It requires realizing that politics will not bring in a utopia, or even anything remotely like it. It will neither conquer sin nor change human nature. Nor will it create a society which will not need reform the instant after it is reformed. But politics can make a difference in whether our schools are better or worse, whether it's safer or not to walk home on a dark night, whether people are healthy or hungry, whether or not we will live more at war or peace. While such struggles and policies are full of victories and defeats, they have no final victory or final defeat wherein we could properly and finally say “we have won” or “we have lost.” Politics is a part of ongoing life in the world to be pursued patiently and faithfully.”

Paul Marshall, *God and the Constitution: Christianity and American Politics* 🙏

Breaking records and barriers

Student-athlete Cecilia Wolski shares her love of badminton

BY REBECCA MEDEL

CECILIA WOLSKI came to her love of badminton entirely on her own. “We have no family background in the sport,” she says. “I was the first in my family to pick up a badminton racket and it became my personality.”

Wolski has been playing badminton for 10 years now. The sociology major is graduating this year and joined King’s badminton team two years ago, after transferring from another university where she didn’t feel a sense of community.

“I knew the coach here at King’s and he’s always been an amazing guy, so I contacted him and he said ‘let’s figure it out. Let’s get you to King’s.’ When I got here I found a community where people love each other—we’re a family on this team. Everybody is there for one another outside of badminton.”

The Badminton team has been having its best year on record since entering the Alberta Colleges Athletics Conference (ACAC) in the fall of 2015. The team won both provincial tournaments in January

and February and is sitting in first place in the league with a sizeable lead. Head coach Naeem Haque took ACAC Coach of the Year and a number of athletes won ACAC awards. Not bad for only their 7th season.

Wolski has been working hard to dismantle notions about badminton and to break down barriers for all women in sport. She plans to become a teacher and loves helping young people find a passion for competition.

“I want to show people—especially young women and girls—that there are things that you can do that might not be popular, but if you love it, and this is who you are, you should be proud to do what you’re doing. A lot of kids don’t like sports like hockey, so I want to show them that there are other options and that sports and competition are not something that they should stay away from. I believe when competition is taught right to children, it can really help them grow and be mentally and physically healthy.” 🏆





Women's basketball gives back off the court

When games were cancelled due to COVID-19, the team showed the community what love looks like

BY REBECCA MEDEL

BEING PART OF A TEAM is more than just wearing the same uniform. Last year, when university sports were cancelled due to COVID-19, King's women's basketball team instead found ways to practise teamwork off the court.

Not content with only working on their skills individually, the women used time that would have been spent at games to volunteer in the community; something they had never done before as a team.

The first volunteer activity the team got involved with was the Mustard Seed's Coldest Night of the Year—a kilometres-long nighttime winter walk to raise money for those experiencing hunger, poverty, and homelessness.

"After the Mustard Seed fundraiser, we all became enthusiastic and passionate about volunteering and kept adding more and more [events]. It felt good to be connected to our community," first-year guard and chemistry major Jadeyn Lunn says.

She's not kidding. The team then helped out at the World's Longest Hockey Game, a 252-hour fundraiser that raised \$1.8 million for cancer research during the coldest days and nights of the year. Temperatures dipped into the minus 30s and 40s during the week-and-a-half long game.

"I really had a tough time because it was so cold," fourth-year forward and psychology major Gaddiel Kamuanya Tshiuza says. "So I think it just makes you appreciate

all that you have; having a roof over your head, two pairs of socks to wear, three coats just to make sure you're warm."

Another fundraiser the team volunteered for was Toast of the Town, an event highlighting Edmontonians who have made significant community contributions while raising money for research at the Cross Cancer Institute.

Women's basketball head coach, Brian Anstice is one of the co-founders of the event, along with five other guys from the Cure Cancer Foundation. As he and assistant coach Darren Aughtry are both living with cancer and undergoing chemotherapy treatments, the fundraisers were deeply personal for the team.



(Top left) women's basketball forwards Casey Belway and Gaddiel Kamuanya Tshiuza pose at the World's Longest Hockey Game fundraiser. (Top right) giving out hampers in the inner city. (Bottom) head coach Brian Anstice and assistant coach Darren Aughtry meet Canadian broadcasting legend Ron Maclean at Toast of the Town.



"I was so proud of the girls when I looked out there [at Toast of the Town] because with myself and Coach Darren having cancer—we're both going through treatments—all of a sudden you look and here's these young athletes and they're supporting you. It doesn't matter if it's at the World's Longest Hockey Game or at our Toast of the Town event, but they're there for you, they're right beside you. It was a pretty moving experience," Anstice says.

The team also distributed food to those living on the streets in Edmonton's inner city. In conjunction with the rest of the Eagles Athletics program, they started a sock drive for the homeless. The drive caught on as other King's students, faculty, and staff joined in and donated more than 2000 pairs of socks.

It was certainly a year of growth for the women as they saw just how valuable

it is to give to those in need. Third-year forward and biology major Casey Belway reflects on her experience. "I think the biggest thing that I've realized over the last couple of years is that we're given so much grace by people. Grace in extensions on papers. Grace in 'Hey, you missed your bus, so I'll drive you.' Constant grace and kindness surrounds us, so to even just extend that grace to other people—remembering how it feels to receive it—that's what fuels me."

First-year guard and Politics, History & Economics student Kayla Soetaert adds, "I think that we're all so grateful that we get these opportunities to not only play basketball and to pursue a degree, but to also learn life skills of spreading kindness.

What Coach Brian talks about at the beginning of every year is not only does he want to make us better basketball players, he wants us to leave with a degree and an improved character."

Anstice is happy about the fire that's been lit under the team to give back to the community and is excited to see athletes exploring new ways of volunteering on their own.

"I think if we can do good things in the community and if the passion catches on with others, it eventually becomes a lifestyle," Anstice says. "Playing college sports is far more than winning and losing, it's all about family and thinking about what we can do to help out others." 🦋



Leading by example

Summertime youth camps give Eagles athletes a chance to serve their community

BY REBECCA MEDEL

CAMP IS A summertime staple and at King's, athletes spend a few of their summer days helping young people hone their skills at Eagles Youth Camps in badminton, basketball, and volleyball.

Lauryn Draker, a second-year libero studying social sciences and kinesiology, says last summer was her first time coaching at volleyball camp. She was inspired by one of her own junior high-school teachers to mentor young people.

"I was really shy and my teacher kind of seemed the same as me, but when she was at the front of the classroom she became really outgoing. It was something I looked forward to and is something I am still working on," Draker says. "She

listened to my problems and was always there for me and I want to be that as a coach, a player, and a teammate—being there for the kids in our camp and my teammates on and off the court. I think we all value that a lot as King's athletes."

Eagles Youth Camps take place annually each August with youth separated into groups of 11 – 14 year olds and 15 – 17 year olds. The weeklong programs focus on skills training and scrimmages but also provide time each day for devotions.

"We'd take about 15 – 20 minutes for devotions," says Kaiden Aceron, a fourth-year social sciences student and men's volleyball libero. "We had some good conversations with the kids about faith,

but also about life like, 'This is what we go through as guys in university, this is what we went through as guys when we were your age, and this is what we have all learned in between'—just that passing on of knowledge and experience."

Draker adds, "The kids got so excited to talk and ask us about university. They asked us so many questions about what we do as athletes and we asked them so many questions about their lives. That was probably one of the most beneficial parts—sitting down and opening up with the girls because then you saw how they grew, physically and mentally, throughout the camps. That they were opening up and talking to more people, that was one of the best feelings."



Men's volleyball outside hitter, Tanner Piers, coaching a camper on some tricks of the game.

At the beginning of the week, many of the youth were shy during devotional time, but the caring and acceptance shown by the coaches broke down barriers.

"I really enjoy sharing faith," Nic Gregersen, third-year social sciences student and basketball guard, says. "I'm going to have a lasting impression on these kids. It makes it a lot easier for them to talk about faith when they see someone older who's been through it and is not sugarcoating it. They can tell if you're being fake."

When it comes to passing on their skills, the athletes rose to the challenge of working with all levels of ability. Draker says working with a vast age group was a bit of a shock at first because of having to deal with so many different skill levels.

"It seemed like not so long ago, we were the campers. So we're taking what we've learned from our mentors and becoming those mentors. It's an exhilarating feeling. You feel so accomplished," she says.

"It's all about being positive in the way you talk to these kids because you have such a big impression on them."

Gregersen is an older brother and the oldest male cousin in his family, so he's used to being around younger kids. It makes coaching and breaking down the game in a way that is understandable easier for him.

"I remember being in that exact same position of being a young camper and looking up to the older guys," he says. "It's all about being positive in the way you talk to these kids because you have such a big impression on them. It doesn't matter if they keep messing up and aren't doing it right, it's all about having fun for them at that age and that they see you care."

Aceron says he's known since eighth grade that he wants to be a teacher and a coach. He was a bit of a loner back then but some

influential teachers took an interest in him and helped him discover his passions. Now he makes sure to watch for any kids in the camps who appear similar to the way he was so he can give them the extra dose of encouragement they need.

"I definitely keep an extra eye out for those kids that are like me because I know that they're probably not the first ones to volunteer for drills or to put themselves out there. So I give them a little bit of extra grace because I know where they're coming from," he says. "I always look forward to the youth camps. It's a really good experience for me knowing that I'm going to be a teacher and eventually a coach. It's a bit of an introduction to what my future's going to look like." 🙌

Blending worship with justice

How an I.S. Conference and John Calvin shaped Rachel Vroege's future

BY REBECCA MEDEL

TWO THINGS come to mind for Rachel Vroege, B.A. '01, when she's asked what led to her career with Diaconal Ministries Canada, a partner agency of the Christian Reformed Church (CRC).

For starters, there was her first I.S. Conference at King's in the late '90s. The music student joined an ensemble that accompanied keynote speaker John Bell, a leader from the Iona Community in Scotland, who travelled the world collecting worship songs from different cultures.

"The connection between justice and worship was really made for me at that conference. I believe that it put me on the path I'm on today. I got to spend a lot of time with John Bell, talking with him and hearing his stories. That really made the justice-worship connection for me: that our worship should reflect justice and that we should listen to worship music coming out of different countries and languages."

Vroege used her musical training as a music director before moving into her current role as Regional Ministry Developer for Western Canada. In this capacity,

Vroege educates and equips churches and Christian school communities in the Chilliwack B.C. area for ministry work on justice-related themes.

"The work I do now is mainly teaching. I equip and train churches in four areas: stewardship, which has a justice component in terms of creation care; benevolence, which is mercy-like charity work; justice, teaching churches about advocacy work and the deeper root causes of things like poverty; and community ministry, getting out into your community and connecting with people you come face to face with as well as the challenges they face."

One aspect of Vroege's work involves engaging participants in the Kairos Canada Blanket Exercise, in which she is a trained facilitator. The exercise is simply an interactive overview of Canada's relationship with Indigenous peoples. It's not a history lesson, but rather a chance for participants to learn about history by experiencing it. Vroege began teaching it after the Truth and Reconciliation Commission concluded and the CRC issued an apology to Indigenous Canadians.

"I saw an opportunity to plant the seeds of reconciliation early on so that children have an understanding of Canada's history and an empathy for the Indigenous kids they have in their class."

Vroege began by presenting the Blanket Exercise in her children's grades 3 and 4 classrooms six years ago in partnership with the Chilliwack Métis Association. The next year she was asked to present to all grades 3, 4, and 5 classrooms in the school. Other schools caught on, because of her initiative, and it's become a well-known exercise in Chilliwack public schools.

And Vroege's other inspiration? It is a quote from John Calvin: "We must make the invisible kingdom visible in our midst."

"It says right in the CRC deacon's mandate to confront injustice in the world," says Vroege, "and all of that is leading towards bringing peace, or shalom. We're trying to bring God's kingdom here on earth." 🙏





The pressure is real

Nurse and King's alumnus Reuben Bestman shares what life on the job is like

BY NIKOLAS VANDER KOOY

WORKING IN HEALTH care is never easy—especially these days. Hospital resources have been squeezed to the limits and waitlists are ever growing.

When Reuben Bestman, B.Sc. '06, arrives at his job as an O.R. nurse at Rockyview General Hospital in Calgary, he is confronted with pressure. First, there is the pressure to maintain high standards of care despite limited resources. Then there is the pressure of helping decide which patients require their surgery more urgently than others.

Of course, there is the pressure that comes with the surgeries themselves, and Rockyview handles a wide variety—gall bladder and appendix removals, breaks and fractures, urological procedures, and joint replacements. Each requires nurses

like Bestman to ensure that the specialized equipment, unique to that procedure, will work exactly as intended.

Bestman has also been involved in eye surgeries. These are tricky. There are several medications that must be prepared in advance. For operations like retina reattachments, the vitreous humor must be carefully drained, and a special machine set up to maintain eye pressure.

When it comes to harvesting organs for transplant, the pressures Bestman faces look different again. The procedures for successful organ removal are quite technical, and with these, emotional and ethical pressures become a factor. Talking about organ donation is one thing but, as Bestman puts it, “Holding someone’s heart in your hands is another experience entirely.”

The pressure is real but so too are the results they’re able to achieve for patients. Bestman cites his experience working on hip replacements with the Canadian Association of Medical Teams Abroad in Ecuador as an incredible example of the joy that comes with helping others improve their quality of life.

“We did 21 hips in nine days. These patients were so incredibly thankful. We would do rounds in the afternoon and see many of the patients who had been hobbled by pain for years already mobilizing. Being a part of making that kind of a change in people’s lives is really special.”

When it comes to health care, stress is taken on willingly by professionals like Bestman so that the pressure their patients experience can be released. 🙌

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Angela Santiago



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Alumni award recipients think locally

WITH AN EXCEPTIONAL base of alumni to choose from, settling on just three Alumni Achievement Award recipients each year can be difficult! King's loves to share stories of alumni making a difference and is proud to share its 2021 Alumni Award recipients.

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

Angela Santiago, '92, co-founder and CEO of The Little Potato Company, is this year's Distinguished Alumni.

Santiago co-founded The Little Potato Company in 1996 with her father Jacob Vander Schaaf, a Dutch immigrant who longed for the tasty little potatoes of his youth. What began as small operation on the outskirts of Edmonton selling at farmers' markets, is now an international, multi million-dollar company employing 400+ people—many newcomers to Canada.

Santiago leads her business by positive example, gives back to her community, and is a sought-after public speaker.

SERVANT LEADER AWARD

Trixie Ling, B.A. '07, founder and executive director of Flavours of Hope, is this year's Servant Leader Award recipient.

Flavours of Hope is a social enterprise empowering refugee newcomer women to earn livable incomes and build social connections within their communities through cooking, sharing culinary traditions, and storytelling. Ling was inspired to establish Flavours of Hope after her Vancouver church's weekly neighbourhood dinners saw an influx of Canadian newcomers attending their meals.

Ling is driven by compassion and a desire to see justice delivered in her community.

ACCOMPLISHED YOUNG ALUMNI

Nathan Flim, B.Sc. '16, owner of The Fort Distillery in Fort Saskatchewan, AB, is King's 2021 Accomplished Young Alumni. This award is given to alumni 35 years old or younger who have outstanding professional achievements and make significant community contributions.

Flim's passion for agriculture and chemistry led him to open a distillery with his wife Kayla, B.A. '14, in 2018. Their business produces delicious small-batch spirits made using quality, locally sourced ingredients

The Fort Distillery supports local farmers, hires community members, and showcases the talents of local artists. It has also quickly become an important community space where people come to connect. Products from The Fort Distillery are sold across Canada and the United States. 🇨🇦

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