

# POWER **TO** CHANGE

ISSUE 2 // SPRING 2018



Following  
Faithfully

Impact  
Players

Undone

Inspiring  
Nations

Staging the  
Conversation

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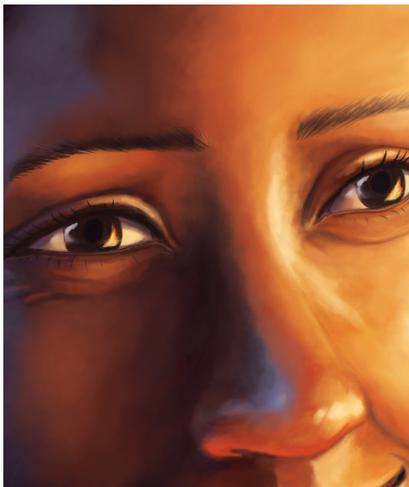
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## POWER TO CHANGE MAGAZINE

**REAL. LIFE. CHANGE.**

Issue 2 | Spring 2018

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### MINISTRY MISSION

**Power to Change helps people know Jesus and experience His power to change the world.**

Power to Change has been seeking to fulfil the Great Commission since 1967.

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# Contrasting the Unexpected

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Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Our God often does the unexpected. Jesus Himself came at an unexpected time, through an unexpected woman, in an unexpected form. He deserved a crown, but instead He took up a cross.

As Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 1:27, *“God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him.”*

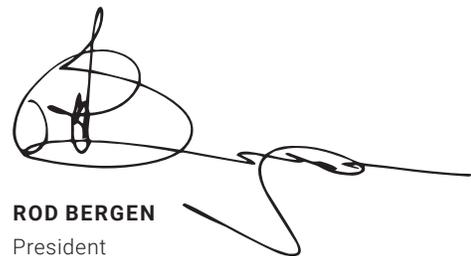
I believe God delights in surprising us and appearing in unusual places in our lives. His unpredictability is certainly visible in the stories of those featured in this second issue of Power to Change magazine. He healed a young woman who believed all hope was lost, he led a former athlete to use her influence in the world of politics, and he brought meaning and purpose to a football player’s life through a young girl in a palliative care home.

We are deeply humbled to share these stories and others on the following pages. I hope you will be inspired and encouraged by what God is doing in and through our family of ministries.

At Power to Change, it is our privilege to help people know Jesus and experience His power to change the world. Our ministries connect with people where they are, so that they might know Jesus as their Lord and walk with Him forever.

To serve Jesus alongside you is one of our greatest privileges. May we continue to find God in the unexpected places and in the unexpected ways.

Sincerely in Christ,



**ROD BERGEN**  
President



# Power to Change

\* HIGHLIGHTED  
IN THIS ISSUE

## \* ATHLETES IN ACTION (AIA)

Reaching people with the message of Jesus through sport.

## \* CHRISTIAN EMBASSY

Inspiring political and diplomatic leaders with the Person and values of Jesus.

## CONNECTING STREAMS

Equipping and mobilizing the Church to help society's marginalized know Jesus and experience His power to change the world.

## \* DRIME

Helping people encounter Jesus through drama and meaningful, gospel-centred conversations.

## FAMILYLIFE

Providing help and the hope of Jesus to marriages and families in every stage of life.

## GLOBAL AID NETWORK (GaiN)

Demonstrating the love of God, in word and deed, to hurting and needy people around the world.

## \* THE JESUS FILM CHURCH PLANTING STRATEGY

Using the *JESUS* film to introduce people to Jesus, disciple new believers and plant churches.

## LEADERIMPACT

Helping leaders explore the relevance of faith in God in their professional and personal lives.

## POWER TO CHANGE – STUDENTS

Engaging students with Jesus' life-changing message and equipping them to live for Him for a lifetime.

## THE LIFE PROJECT

Walking alongside people online to help them know Jesus.

## WOMEN'S HEART-ENGAGING NETWORK (WHEN)

Connecting women in their heart language to each other, Jesus Christ and the local church.



  
*Theo's*  
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“ *It was simply  
**AMAZING...**  
I never knew that  
**FOOD** could be  
related to such  
**SPIRITUAL  
MATTERS.** ”*

# Following Faithfully: Stephanie

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**Stephanie Dyck**

Contributing Writer

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*As Power to Change celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, there are a multitude of stories to share. God's faithfulness can be seen through each of these accounts. Below is one such example from Stephanie Dyck, an International Representative of the Christian Embassy.*

**I**t made no sense to me. It seemed like everything I read in Scripture pointed to a major change in my life, but I resisted. I reasoned every excuse I could imagine to stay where I was, but I was still conflicted. I wanted to listen to God and be obedient, so I prayed to Him, "Are You asking me to do this?"

What I heard back in my spirit surprised me: "You're asking the wrong question. Whatever I ask of you, would you say yes?"

The words hit me like a ton of bricks. Jesus invited me to say yes to Him before I even knew what He was asking. I asked myself, "Do

I really know Jesus? Do I truly believe that His leadership is perfect?"

I was working with Athletes in Action (AIA), a ministry of Power to Change that focuses on proclaiming the gospel through sport. It was satisfying work as it fused both my passion for Christ and the acumen He gave me in basketball; I mentored and challenged other athletes to base their identity in Jesus while excelling in sport. Even though I was based in Montréal, my work through AIA allowed me the pleasure of touring distant parts of the globe. My love for other people and cultures grew during this exciting time of life.

However, in 2013, several key events happened, one after another, that made me reconsider my path at AIA. The first instance occurred during a prayer meeting. A stranger came up to me and said he had a word from God for me. The message was, "You can't stay where you are. You must go higher." Neither of us completely understood, but I started praying about what the message meant.

That same week, while walking to an AIA meeting near Parliament in Ottawa, I crossed paths with my friend Darlene McLean of the Christian Embassy. We stopped and exchanged pleasantries. She said, "If ever the Christian

**"Whatever I ask  
of you, would  
you say yes?"**



Embassy interests you, let me know.” Although it was another ministry within the Power to Change family, I had no interest in politics and loved serving with AIA. I thought the comment was a bit unusual, so I put it aside and we warmly parted ways.

A few days later, I was having coffee with my mentor when he asked what I was doing with the heart God gave me for the nations. That topic led to a discussion about my calling. He finally said, “You would be a good staff member for the Christian Embassy.”

I almost spewed my coffee. “I don’t like suits and I don’t like politics,” I responded, and I continued to list other reasons why he was wrong. He was kind, as usual, and took it in stride.

Later that evening, I met with a friend and told her about my conversation with my mentor. She said it was clear to her that God was speaking to me and that I had to say yes to what He asked.

I was horrified. I saw how the message of change kept popping up in my life, but I still didn’t want to go. The whole situation was overwhelming to me, so I decided to set aside some extra time to focus on God’s will and what He wanted me to do.

Reading my Bible, I was particularly struck by God’s challenge to the nation of Israel in Exodus 16:28 and Deuteronomy 31:27. In essence He was saying, “How long will you refuse to listen

and continue to be a rebellious and stiff-necked people?”

I felt the Spirit stop me right there as I saw myself mirrored in these Scriptures. I knew I didn’t want to be rebellious. I wanted to have a tender heart and be responsive to whatever God asked of me.

So I prayed.

When I asked God what He

Christian Embassy. I’ve grown to deeply respect many of our parliamentarians as I’ve observed firsthand the countless hours they work and how they sacrifice to be in Ottawa and serve faithfully. They take their responsibilities seriously, weighed by the reality that the constituents—those who have put them into office—expect their

## While it didn’t make much sense to me at first, agreeing to what God had for me was the best decision I could make.

wanted me to do, He showed me that it was really about trust; I had to put my trust in Him, and say yes even before I knew where He was leading me.

I wrestled with that decision, but I finally surrendered and answered yes. I faced the reality in front of me after multiple signs and convictions, and decided to leave AIA to join the Christian Embassy.

Many people, including myself, were surprised as they knew how much I enjoyed serving at AIA. But it was the right decision. For me to be an obedient child of God, I knew He wanted me to trust Him with all of my life, including where I served and how I would surrender to Him daily.

For the past four years, God has softened my heart for leaders through my work at the

members of Parliament to represent their beliefs and values well in our nation’s capital.

Of course, not all government officials share the same beliefs and work ethic, but most have inspired me with their courage and tenacity. I especially appreciate leaders I’ve met who stand up for biblical values when no one else does. That’s been powerful for me to see firsthand.

While it didn’t make much sense to me at first, agreeing to what God had for me was the best decision I could make. My life in vocational ministry today is an expression of my faith and my obedience in Christ. After each decision, He led me to places I never imagined I would go, and I’ve been so blessed because of it. I’m so excited and thankful to see how His plans will continue to unfold in the future!

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**“We have the opportunity to step into people's lives and make a difference... Every time we go in the name of Jesus, God shows up.”**

*Jack Knight, AIA chaplain*



Michael "Pinball" Clemons

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**Danielle Kinvig**  
Staff Writer

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*From homeless shelters to hospitals, Athletes in Action (AIA) delivered messages of true strength during the 2017 Grey Cup week in Ottawa.*

**A**t 6'5", 265 pounds, Craig Roh is an imposing figure—even more so when he's fully decked out in his helmet, shoulder pads and cleats on a BC Lions game day, ready to compete in front of thousands of screaming fans.

But on a chilly Thursday evening in Ottawa, the hard-hitting defensive end is far from the crowds and cameras. Instead, he's crouched behind the wheelchair of a young girl named Stacy, a patient at the Roger Neilson House hospice for pediatric palliative care.

Craig helps Stacy align her fingers on the laces of a toy football. Together, they launch it four feet down the hallway, just past the other footballs thrown by Craig and several other pro athletes in attendance.

The room erupts in cheers.

Nearby, Canadian Olympic runner Jenna Martin-Evans places a tambourine on a giant drum. Wielding large sticks, three

children cluster their wheelchairs around and hammer on it, creating an entirely new sound of bells and drums and laughter.

Amidst the fun, the sober realities in the room seem to be forgotten.

Across town at the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre, DeQuin Evans roams the yard. It's a setting all too familiar to him. Growing up in Compton, California, much of his youth was spent with street gangs and in juvenile detention. He's left that all behind, though—these days, he's a defensive lineman for the BC Lions.

The inmates start to file into the yard. They're frustrated and in no mood to talk, but DeQuin and Adrian Tracy of the Hamilton Tiger-Cats start tossing around a football to get their attention.

When DeQuin shares his testimony, a dozen inmates gather to listen. DeQuin tells them about how he met Jesus and the difference that has made in his life. It's a simple story, but the Spirit of God is at work. When DeQuin invites the inmates to know Jesus for themselves, every one of them prays to receive Him. Later on, 12 more inmates come to DeQuin to hear his story, and they too accept Christ.

Jack Knight, a former corrections officer who now serves as an AIA chaplain, looks on in amazement.

**“If your identity is rooted in sport, you will never be enough. Someone will always be better. You have to constantly fight to prove yourself.”**

*Ron Omara, linebacker for the Ottawa Redblacks*



“This usually doesn’t happen,” he says. “This is a really special time for us. I know there’s a huge party in heaven today with much rejoicing.”

### **Am I good enough?**

There’s no denying that professional athletes have an influential position and platform in society; it’s what they choose to do with it that matters. During Grey Cup week (November 20–25, 2017), an AIA team comprised of five pro athletes and six Canadian Football League (CFL) chaplains visited schools, hospitals, homeless shelters, and churches throughout Ottawa. Their sports fame gave them an instant connection with people, allowing them to share Christ. Each had his or her own unique testimony, but a common thread wove them together.

“If your identity is rooted in sport, you will never be enough,” Ron Omara, linebacker for the Ottawa Redblacks, said to students at

Ottawa Christian School. “Someone will always be better. You have to constantly fight to prove yourself.”

The scrutiny that high-profile athletes face can be intense. Their worth is continually and publicly debated in the media or over a drink at the pub. They also deal with devastating injuries and the rejection of being released or traded.

When Craig Roh was cut from the National Football League’s (NFL) Carolina Panthers in 2014, he wrestled with God about the direction of his life. God revealed to him that his pursuit of perfection made him afraid to take risks. Craig came to realize that risk is necessary, and in light of God’s unwavering love, possible.

“What people say about you doesn’t matter because you are worth so much more to God,” he said to student athletes at Ottawa University.

You don’t have to play football to experience the pain of rejection and the shame of never being enough. The intense adversity that athletes

deal with allows them to speak into the fears and insecurities that everyone faces and point to Jesus.

### **Looking back**

The topic of identity is a popular theme within AIA. For over four decades, it has been a powerful way to introduce people to the gospel.

In 1974, eight CFL players were searching for a way to share their faith with their teammates and make an impact for Jesus in the entire league. They joined Campus Crusade for Christ Canada (now Power to Change) to form the ministry Athletes in Action.

With former Winnipeg Blue Bomber Bob Kraemer at the helm in 1975, they organized the first CFL vs. NFL exhibition flag football game in Edmonton. In the week prior to the match-up, the Christian athletes attended high school assemblies throughout the city, playing games with the students and sharing their faith stories.



*"The Grey Cup week with AIA was life-altering for me," says BC Lions defensive end Craig Roh, pictured here at Roger Neilson House in Ottawa.*

That week 11,000 people heard the gospel and over 3,600 indicated decisions for Christ. Within months, varsity athletes were organizing AIA ministries on university campuses across Canada.

In 1978, AIA hosted the first annual Grey Cup Breakfast in Toronto. Just as they had done at the flag football game three years earlier, athletes spent the week prior sharing the gospel in the community. That tradition continues today.

"The Grey Cup Breakfast is about sharing a message of hope, courage and faith," said Dave Klassen, National Director for Athletes in Action. "It gives football fans a chance to hear CFL players, coaches, and alumni share how faith in Jesus has impacted their lives."

Almost 40 years have passed since that first breakfast; during that time, AIA has built a strong presence and a respected reputation within the CFL. At the 2017 Grey Cup breakfast in Ottawa, the CFL commissioner addressed the crowd,

where many past and present CFL players and their families were in attendance.

### **Beyond the big game**

On Sunday, November 26, 2017, fans flocked to TD Place Stadium and millions more watched on TV as the Toronto Argonauts defeated the Calgary Stampeders to win the CFL's 105th Grey Cup. However, football's impact on Ottawa that week went far beyond a single game.

As a CFL chaplain, Jack Knight approaches football with an eternal perspective. "Every time we go in the name of Jesus, God shows up," he said. "We have the opportunity to step into people's lives and make a difference. God is using AIA and this platform to reach athletes and the world for Jesus Christ."

Through AIA, professional athletes like Craig Roh have been challenged and empowered to use their status to proclaim the name of Jesus. "The Grey Cup

week with AIA was life-altering for me," he said. "The gospel can bring redemptive work to so many different aspects of life and communities."

Although AIA's roots are in football, the ministry has expanded over the years to include basketball, hockey, soccer, volleyball, running, triathlon, and wrestling. Currently, AIA has ministries on over 25 university campuses and runs more than 150 summer sport camps, connecting with people from all walks of life, from inner-city kids at summer camps to varsity athletes at top universities. High performance AIA teams also tour internationally, leveraging their mutual love for sport to share the love of Jesus around the world.

"We encourage athletes to think critically about their identity and place within the world of sport," said Dave Klassen. "Through the integration of faith, life and sport, we aim to see people experience true victory in their lives."



# UN DONE

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**Stephanie Cooper**  
Staff Writer

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*The JESUS film is the most widely watched, most translated film in human history. Viewed by nearly 7.7 billion people worldwide and presented in over 1,600 different languages, more than 530 million people have indicated decisions for Christ since its creation in 1979.\**

*The following account is based on true events of one such decision. Names have been changed for privacy.*

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**S**ickness coiled through Zenia. Demons seared her insides, their claws ripping her stomach and driving her mad. In her darkest moments, she ran naked, screaming and cursing at the villagers in her town in Ethiopia. While the rest of the community whispered about her outbursts, she remembered none of it.

Like previous generations of her family, Zenia practiced witchcraft and worshipped spirits. Every morning, she would try to

speak with demons and obey their orders. She never expected them to turn on her.

Her torment left her unable to care for herself or her family. Her mother and father remembered the sweet child she once was and were grieved and ashamed. They resolved in their family that she could not be healed.

Desperate to be free from the demons' anger, Zenia sought out the village witch doctor. Heart pounding, she knocked on his door.

"Please heal me," she begged.

He paused to consider her request, then said, "The spirits choose who will and will not be healed. Give them an offering to gain their favour." He pointed out the door to his fields, and continued, "Bury money in my field for seven nights. The more you bury, the faster you will be healed."

Zenia was sure the spirits wouldn't be impressed by her small offering, but perhaps they would have pity and spare her from this torment. She buried her money by moonlight, feeling the witch doctor's eyes on her as she worked. The sickness tightened inside her, and she could hear the spirits laughing while she wept.

“I have amulets to protect you,” said the witch doctor when she returned.

She bought the amulets, the prayers, and the spells until she had no money left. The witch doctor burned roots and recited incantations over her, filling his hut with smoke until Zenia could hardly breathe. She begged the spirits to free her, to have mercy and remember how she worshipped and served them.

In the morning, she still felt the demons’ claws piercing her stomach.

She skirted through the village on her way back to the witch doctor’s hut, careful not to be seen by those who were drilling a water well. She would only bring her family shame if they or anyone from her village saw her.

The witch doctor’s eyes gleamed when she returned. “You must bring me a goat to sacrifice to the devil,” he said. “Only he can heal you now.”

Her family’s lone goat provided them with milk and would give them meat when the time came to butcher

it. She hesitated at the thought of stealing it, but if the animal would heal her, she had to take it. She was desperate for relief.

Darkness fell as Zenia led the goat to the witch doctor. She couldn’t watch as he bound the creature to his altar and called on the devil. The hut darkened.

“Please leave me,” she begged. “Take this curse away.”

She heard the demons laughing as the witch doctor’s knife sliced through the goat’s throat. Its blood drained into a bowl that he then pushed towards Zenia. Her hands shook as she lifted it to her lips.

### **Empty promises**

The next morning, Zenia woke in the middle of the village with bruises all over her body. The blood had done nothing except wake the demons that made her run wild. She returned to the witch doctor’s hut, where there was no sign of the slain goat.

“You want another spell?” he asked. “Bring me another goat.”

Zenia’s memory began to return. She left his house in a daze, stumbling into his field as she realized what she’d done, yet another shame she had brought to her family. They now had no goat. They might even starve, and it would be all her fault.

She fell to her knees, rocking back and forth as regret crashed down on her. The sacrifice hadn’t worked. She had nothing left—she couldn’t go home, where they surely hated her. She had done too many terrible things to be redeemed. Was there anything she could do to help them survive?

Suddenly, it hit her. The field! She sat up a little, considering the idea. If she was already cursed, taking back the money she’d buried couldn’t make her situation any worse.

So she waited until dark to return to the dig site. It was difficult to see in the faint moonlight, and the ground was surprisingly rougher than she last remembered.

After several minutes of digging, she still hadn’t found the money.



# There were no spells left for her to buy, no more sacrifices she could make. She closed her eyes and wished for death.

She dug deeper, and searched the surrounding area, but there was nothing. The spirits couldn't have taken it—she still felt the claws in her stomach.

Her eyes drifted up to the hut near the edge of the forest. It must have been the witch doctor. No one else knew the money was buried here except him. He'd taken her family's goat, stolen all her money, and left her to suffer. Wild anger rose inside of her, but she didn't have the strength to fight it back.

She got up and ran through the village as she screamed wildly in the night. She couldn't stop herself from scratching her own body, desperate to rid herself of the demons. When her outburst finally passed, she found herself naked at the other end of the village.

Zenia cried as she lay on the ground, covered in dirt. No one wanted anything to do with her. She

had nothing left. She'd betrayed her own family and disgraced her village. There were no spells left for her to buy, no more sacrifices she could make. She closed her eyes and wished for death.

## A different sacrifice

"They're finished! It's time!" a voice cried out near the village market.

It was near dusk when Zenia opened her eyes. She saw several people walk towards a growing gathering. She got to her feet and retrieved some of her clothes laying nearby. Keeping her distance, she made her way to the market to see what was happening.

As she got closer, she saw clean water flowing from the newly completed well. People were celebrating and collecting the water in buckets and pans and filling cisterns.

However, something else was going on as well. Some men were stretching a large, white cloth between two posts. They said in her language that they were going to show a "film" and explained that the people they would see on the sheet weren't really there, but had an important and true story for everyone in the village.

When darkness fell and many people gathered, the film started. Zenia watched in amazement as she heard the people on the sheet speak her language. They followed a man who was more powerful than the spirits that haunted her. He could command demons to obey Him. His name was Jesus, and He freed people like her, people who couldn't control their madness. He was far stronger than the witch doctor. This Jesus could cure her!

A nearby movement caught her attention. The witch doctor circled

# Jesus was stronger than the spirits. He was more powerful than the witch doctor and healed her when nothing else could.

the crowd, waving his arms and calling on dark spirits to disperse the people. She waited to see if the villagers would leave, but no one moved. No one even looked at him. He finally backed away, pulling at the amulets around his neck and muttering under his breath.

Zenia looked back at the crowd and saw her family sitting near the front. Perhaps they were hoping that the man in the film would visit them and cure Zenia, but maybe they were cursing her for stealing their goat. She turned away, but the man in the film looked like He was staring at her. She saw that His eyes were kind. If He had healed so many people already, perhaps He would heal her as well.

After the film concluded, many stayed behind to speak to the people who had brought the film, including Zenia.

When it was her turn, she said, “I want to be healed like the people in the film. Where is this Jesus? What do I have to do to please Him?”

They smiled, and replied in her language. “Nothing. Jesus already made the only sacrifice you need. All you have to do is accept His gift.”

She knew if there was a chance He could help her—any chance at all that He might free her from this sickness and her shame—she would take it. She wanted to be with Jesus and in His peace.

Zenia let the men lay their hands on her shoulders and speak over her. As they prayed for her, she felt the claws in her stomach lose their grip. A warmth flowed through her. The darkness in her heart gave way to a gentle light, and she felt the evil depart.

She was finally free! Stunned, Zenia fell to her knees. She took her first deep breath in years, with no demons in her stomach to pain her. Jesus was stronger than the spirits. He was more powerful than the witch doctor and healed her when nothing else could. Tears flowed as she laughed with joy and relief. It was a new sound, full of the love that could only come from Jesus.

## Denouement

Never again did the demons return. They knew better. With the completion of the new well, Zenia and the others in her village had easy access to clean water for the first time in their lives. At the new church in her village, Zenia worshipped and prayed to Jesus daily. Her family was encouraged by the change they saw in her, and they also came to accept Christ into their hearts. It was a joyous time for (almost) everyone.

The witch doctor, seeing his influence significantly diminished, left the village. Of course, the new Jesus followers made numerous invitations for him to receive Christ, but these words only seemed to irritate him more. They committed to praying for him and anyone else in the village that had yet to accept the faith. Perhaps one day, their hearts would soften.

Even though life in the village still had its daily struggles, many people now had a hope they never experienced before. In an amazing act of generosity, one wealthy villager who witnessed so much positive change gave a goat to Zenia’s family. It meant so much to all of them.

Together, they praised Jesus in their village as their greatest blessing.

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*The JESUS Film Church Planting Strategy, a ministry of Power to Change, uses the JESUS film to plant churches and disciples new believers primarily in Africa and Latin America.*

*\*<https://www.jesusfilm.org/about/learn-more/statistics.html>*

# MINISTRY QUESTION

*What does evangelism mean to you?*



"Evangelism is to reflect Jesus in every way I can. It is to love people and live out the forgiveness and grace I have found in Christ. It's not always easy, but it's what we've been called to do: love God and people."

**Guillermo Galeano Villalba**  
*Asunción Team Leader (Paraguay)*



"When I evangelize, God reminds me that I am doing exactly what I was created to do: glorify Him, enjoy Him, and spread the good news. I couldn't create a more satisfying purpose if I tried. Now that's wild."

**Jamie Arseneau**  
*Vancouver Team Leader*



"Evangelism is more about listening than speaking, especially at first. It's asking people questions about their lives and hearing their stories, struggles and triumphs. It's looking for those places where God is already at work in a person's life and bringing that to their attention."

**Janna Cressman**  
*Director of Global Operations*



*DRIME exists to help people discover Christ through choreographed street drama, empower others for ministry as they experience drama and evangelism training, and inspire passionate, disciplined leaders through purposed community.*

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*The Hungarian Parliament building on the bank of the Danube river in Budapest.*

# Inspiring Nations

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**Stephanie Cooper**

Staff Writer

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Stepping into Ambassador Bálint Ódor's Ottawa office, it is easy to sense the pride he takes in representing his home country of Hungary. His workspace is immaculate and well-organized, tastefully accented by Hungarian cultural decor. He greets his guests warmly, projecting a dignified demeanor.

The 42-year-old economist and European Union specialist arrived in Canada with his family in November 2014. Like most ambassadors, he seeks to build relationships with like-minded people in order to further the interests of his country.

When David Imbrock enters the room and greets the ambassador with a warm handshake, the friendship between the two men is evident. David is the Senior International Representative with the Christian Embassy, a ministry of Power to Change Canada. Within weeks of the ambassador's arrival in Ottawa, David and the Christian Embassy's Executive Director Darlene McLean knocked on his office door to welcome him to Canada. Their mutual faith in Jesus quickly established common ground and a deep friendship between them.

"It was a very nice gesture," Ambassador Ódor says of David and Darlene's initial visit. "I appreciated their interest in me and was very happy that there are organizations in Canada based on religious values."

An important role of the Christian Embassy is to link people together for mutual benefit, which is advantageous for diplomats like Ambassador Ódor seeking to make new connections. However, the Christian Embassy is unlike other embassies in Ottawa. "They can ask us what our main problems are, how they can help with programs, and how they can pray for us. Other embassies cannot do this," the ambassador elaborates.

The Christian Embassy's willingness to help with personal as well as professional challenges makes them a valuable resource for diplomats, especially those new to Canada with few established relationships. When Ambassador Ódor and his family first arrived in Ottawa, they were looking for a church community to join. They sought the advice of Darlene, who provided them with a list of options. "We went to all of them and we picked one," says Ambassador Ódor. "We've been going there ever since and are very happy."

As his relationship with the Christian Embassy progressed, the ambassador was invited to read Scripture at their 2016 Christmas dinner, a formal evening where diplomats, parliamentarians and business leaders enjoy a festive meal, live music and an inspirational guest speaker. Although Ambassador Ódor had another engagement that evening, he raced back and forth between the two events so he could still participate. "I think he had to wear running shoes," David jokes.

The invitations have not only been one-sided. Ambassador Ódor reciprocated the kind gesture to the Christian Embassy on multiple occasions, introducing David and Darlene to various Hungarian dignitaries visiting Canada.

This past year, the Hungarian government also extended a significant invitation. The Christian Embassy was invited to Budapest for the Hungarian Prayer Breakfast and the International Consultation on Christian Persecution—the government's first major conference to call attention to the brutal violence against Christians in Africa and the Middle East.

David and Darlene humbly accepted the invitation to connect with leaders in Hungary. They invited several Canadian members of Parliament (MPs), prominent



▲  
*Bálint Ódor, the Hungarian Ambassador to Canada: "In Hungary, Christian roots matter. We want to strengthen this root and build connections based on this heritage."*



▲  
*"Four out of every five people oppressed due to their religion are Christians," says Hungarian President Viktor Orbán at the International Consultation for Persecuted Christians.*

business leaders, and the President of Power to Change Canada to join them in strategic interactions with leaders in Budapest in October 2017.

The trip to Hungary was one of the most extensive international delegations in the Christian Embassy's history. They experienced open and honest conversations with many political leaders about practical applications of faith. "To see how God opened doors was more than we could ask for or imagine," says Darlene.

"The Hungarian government was unbelievably generous with their time," says Power to Change President, Rod Bergen. "We were meeting people daily from early in the morning until late at night. There are a number of leaders in the political, diplomatic and business sectors in Hungary who are clearly standing for their faith. This was a time of mutual encouragement and extending ties that will continue on into the future."

Several MPs from the delegation have already spoken out about Christian persecution, raising the issue in Parliament and taking to their social media platforms to inform Canadians. Another MP, who will lead future National Prayer Breakfasts in Canada, was inspired by the Hungarian event and believes a bolder proclamation of the gospel is needed.

"Hungary is standing alone in Europe for their Christian values," explains Darlene. "The MPs who travelled with us said that what they saw and heard in Hungary gave them hope for Canada."

For more than three decades, the Christian Embassy has been a bridge between leaders in Ottawa,

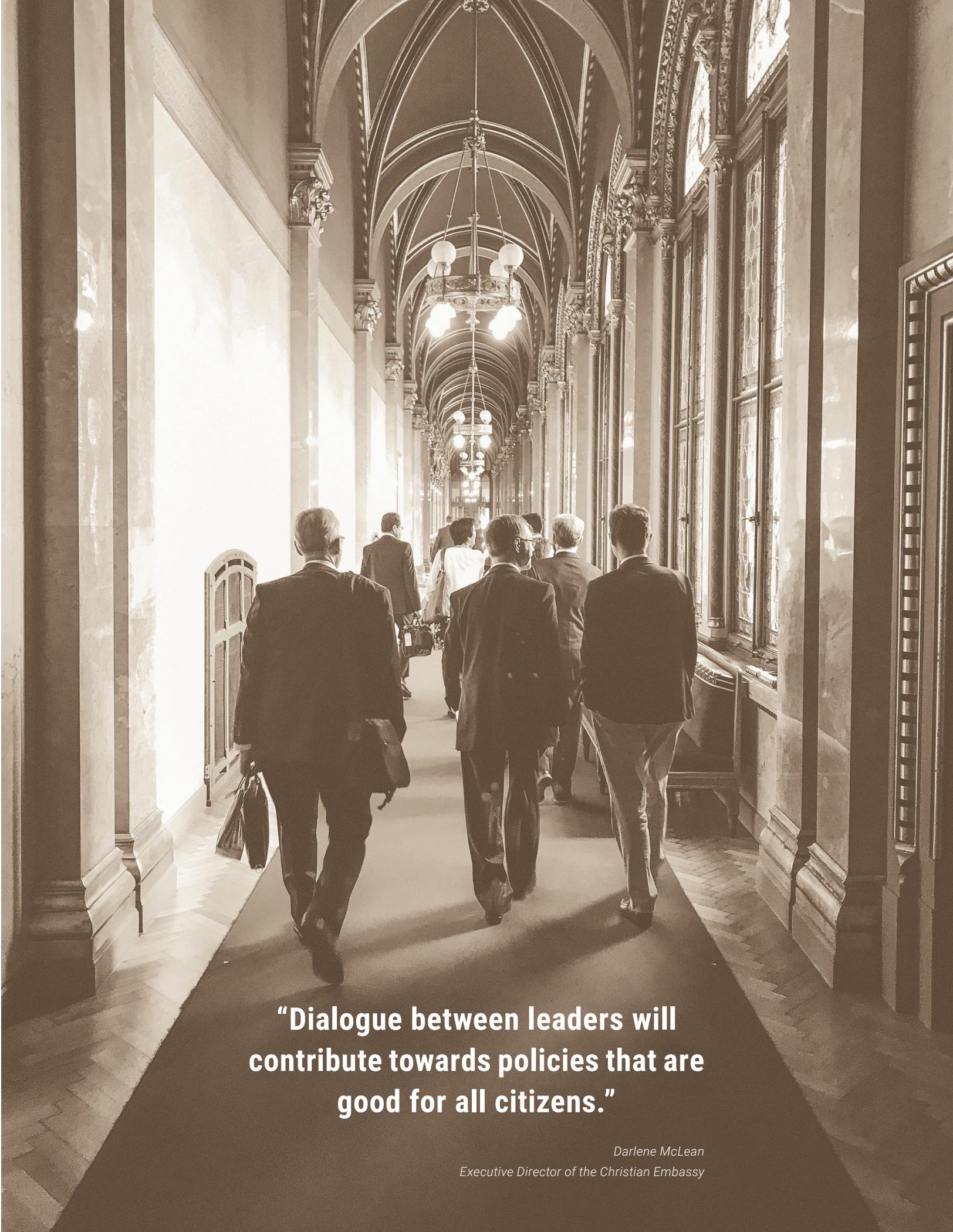
across Canada, and around the world. "Dialogue between leaders will contribute towards policies that are good for all citizens," Darlene says. "It is important for political leaders of Christian faith to be challenged and equipped through frank exchanges."

But the Christian Embassy does not exist solely to strengthen ties between politicians. When asked what the Christian Embassy has to offer diplomats, MPs and business leaders, David replies, "Professional connections and eternal life [through Jesus]." By building these relationships, the Christian Embassy ultimately seeks to inspire leaders with the Person of Jesus Christ.

"Evangelism is expressing—both verbally and through our actions—what it is to know Jesus personally and what a life transformed by Him looks like," says Darlene.

"When engaging in spiritual conversations, we are more process-oriented than results-oriented," David adds. "We don't focus on just jumping to the end. In sharing the gospel, we are not pushy. But at the same time, we are not shy." He emphasizes that it often takes years to build trust with politicians and diplomats. "In so much of what we do, we don't see an immediate response. However, sometimes things just happen, seemingly out of nowhere. It is because a seed was sown long ago."

The Christian Embassy's relationship with Ambassador Ódor and the Hungarian government is a connection that has been built over time and is based on mutual trust. In Canada and Hungary, the results will continue to unfold for years to come.



**“Dialogue between leaders will  
contribute towards policies that are  
good for all citizens.”**

*Darlene McLean  
Executive Director of the Christian Embassy*

# STAGING THE CONVER- SATION

*On street corners in Vancouver, Nairobi and Hong Kong—among others—Disciples Ready in Mobile Evangelism (DRIME), a ministry of Power to Change, uses drama to proclaim the gospel and spark spiritual conversations amidst the gathering crowds. Power to Change magazine sat down with Guillermo Galeano Villalba, a performer and leader of the DRIME Paraguay team, to learn how drama is impacting lives in Asunción.*

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**P2C: When did you first encounter DRIME and their unique form of evangelism?**

GGV: A DRIME team from Gramado, Brazil, came to Paraguay in 2010 and I saw them in action. I was surprised by their passion, and impressed by the way they performed dramas and talked to people.





## “I’ve learned not to feel bad when I am rejected, but to be joyful when someone listens.”

### **P2C: Why did you decide to get involved?**

GGV: God was asking me to do something more than just go to church on Sunday morning. I had evangelized in some ways before, but it wasn't a regular or continuous ministry. When I met the DRIME Brazil team, I was like, "This is it!"

### **P2C: Can you describe your first time on the streets with DRIME?**

GGV: I felt insecure and unsure of what to do or what to say to people. I didn't know the dramas very well or what to expect from the crowd when I spoke with them, so I was surprised that most people thanked me for taking the time to personally explain the gospel.

### **P2C: What is your experience now that you've been involved with DRIME for seven years?**

GGV: I know better now what to expect on the streets. Some people ignore me or aren't interested in anything about God. I've learned not to feel bad when I am rejected, but to be joyful when someone

listens. Here in Paraguay, many people have heard of Jesus but they don't understand the significance of His sacrifice. DRIME explains the gospel in a clear and visual way so people can start to make sense of it—even if they're not ready to put their faith in Jesus just yet.

### **P2C: What excites you most about the impact your ministry makes?**

GGV: We can reach all kinds of people on the streets. We meet drug addicts, sex workers, orphans, single mothers, families, atheists and believers. We are not able to help every one of them, but we have the Holy Spirit in us and He helps us when we don't know what to do. We experience this miracle every time we are on the streets. God works through us to bring peace to the people who need it, just by praying for them and sharing the hope of Jesus.

### **P2C: Why is drama such an effective method of evangelism?**

GGV: I'll admit, it's not the best way to approach everyone. Some people find it weird—we're all dressed in black and there is a man in a white T-shirt. But, whatever their reaction to the drama itself, it's an effective tool to get peoples' attention, so we work hard on perfecting the movements and our expressions. Drama does half of the work, but it wouldn't be complete if we didn't talk to people afterward and share the gospel.

Guillermo Galeano Villalba performs drama set to music in Asunción, while other DRIME members mix among the crowd to start spiritual conversations with onlookers.

**P2C: What kind of conversations do you have with people?**

GGV: There are people who just watch one or two dramas and pass by, and we will never know what they thought. When I do get the chance to speak with someone, I ask them what they understood and who they think the man in the white T-shirt is. The responses are “an angel,” “a good person or spirit,” “maybe God,” or they just don’t know. That’s when I introduce Jesus.

**P2C: How do you handle people’s resistance to religion and God?**

GGV: DRIME’s method works really well to overcome negative experiences or associations that people have with religion. We point directly to Jesus, not man or organizations. People usually ask us where we come from and which church or organization we work with. I just tell them the message I bring is from God. It’s about Jesus. That’s what I want to talk about. If they want to know more, we explain the ministry, including what we do.

**P2C: What do you enjoy most about the ministry?**

GGV: The relationships. The DRIME team is like family. The work we do together creates a special bond between us. It’s a place to belong and to be a part of something greater than ourselves.

**P2C: How has serving with DRIME impacted your spiritual growth?**

GGV: Ministering to others helps me understand God’s love for me and strengthens my faith in Jesus. When I hear people’s stories on the streets, it reminds me that no one is ever too far away from God. He gives us all a second chance with Jesus. I will always come back to the cross. When I am centred on that, it gives me a sense of security and strength to keep going.

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*Through drama, Guillermo and his fellow DRIME team members are helping people discover Jesus and become passionate disciples. To view a drama for yourself, visit [vimeo.com/drime](http://vimeo.com/drime).*

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**15 YEARS OF DRAMA AND DIALOGUE**

Starting spiritual conversations isn’t easy for me on my own. In DRIME, I’ve found a place for these meaningful and often transformational conversations to happen naturally. For 15 years, drama has helped me dialogue easily about faith and things that matter.

Regardless of what culture we’re in when we perform, people get curious and want to know more. Because DRIME teams around the world are made up of locals, they are also able to relate with others and have meaningful conversations within their own culture and language.

With DRIME, I have been able to encourage so many people to get to know Jesus and experience His power to change the world. I can’t think of anything I’d want to do more!

*Lillian Frederiksen, International Director of DRIME*

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**“I will always come back to the cross. When I am centred on that, it gives me a sense of security and strength to keep going.”**



*Guillermo and his wife,  
Tanja de Galeano, live  
in Asunción, Paraguay.*

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*There are multiple ways  
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Pray for those who don't yet know Jesus, and for workers seeking to reach the unreached. Pray our ministry would be effective in making disciples who make more disciples.

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[p2c.com/serve](http://p2c.com/serve)

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Consider supporting the ministry of a staff member through monthly or annual giving. Donate to the Power to Change ministry of your choice and fund specific initiatives. Through your financial partnership, we are proclaiming Jesus' name in Canada and abroad together.

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