

# The Marketplace

Where Christian faith gets down to business

May June 2022

**Tree planting for  
a better future:  
MEDA partners with Nigerian  
groups to fight desert expansion**

**Caring for workers is a spiritual  
and business imperative**

**Can saltwater batteries solve  
green energy storage problems?**

**MEDA looks inward for  
sustainability goals**

**Greening the  
landscaping industry**



# Navigating the “Great Resignation” through increased attention to employee care

The Denver Institute for Faith & Work does an excellent job of facilitating important conversations. The Institute is an educational nonprofit. It is dedicated to forming men and women to serve God, neighbor, and society through their work.

You can read about some of the insights shared at their recent Business For the Common Good conference in this issue. See the stories that run from pages 14 to 17.

The focus of their 2022 gathering could not have been more relevant for a time such as this. Businesses are facing unprecedented challenges in hiring and retaining workers.

One speaker at the Denver Institute’s conference said that what has come to be called the “Great Resignation” saw 38 million workers quit their jobs in 2021.

*Fast Company* magazine put the number of departures in 2021 much higher, at nearly 69 million.

Research conducted by Gallup found that 42 percent of people quitting cited concerns about their bosses and organizational cultures. Most people who left their jobs were looking to earn more money, the study found.

Just over one in five respondents cited well-being and issues around work-life balance.

In November, an unprecedented 4.5 million workers quit their jobs, *The Economist* magazine reported.

Earlier this year, there were a record five million more job openings in the US economy

than the number of available workers. That means there are 1.8 job openings in the US for every unemployed person.

The North American worker shortage is ironic, given that many in the Global South struggle to find decent work to support their families. The pandemic has created a seller’s market for labor in the Global North. At the same time, it has set back economic progress in many parts of the world by a decade.

## Empathy is key

Author Tracy Brower, writing in *Forbes* magazine, notes that empathy is now considered to be the most important skill for leaders. It influences everything from innovation to retention, new research indicates.

An employee study by *Catalyst* found that leading with empathy also has several other benefits. It improves engagement, workplace inclusivity and people’s sense of being able to navigate work-life balance.

Other studies report greater worker cooperation and sense of mental health in firms where leaders demonstrate empathy.

## When workers are worn out

How can managers be effective when everyone seems grumpy and tired?

The *Harvard Business Review* article “Leading an Exhausted Workforce” provides some useful suggestions.

In an era of collective grief and global trauma, leaders need to learn and use new skills, the article says.

Among the suggestions of attributes for leaders in this time:

- Self-care is critical so leaders are able to be role models.

- Mental flexibility
- Emotional openness
- Healthy behaviors
- Reducing stressors for self and employees
- Finding systems to prevent serious errors.

## Hats off to Grammarly

Several MEDA staff regularly benefit from using Grammarly, a computer app that flags writing errors in email and other documents. The company provides its product free to non-profit organizations.

The company’s charitable impulses have recently benefited humanitarian groups in the Ukraine in a big way. Company founders Max Lytvyn and Alex Shevchenko are Ukrainian-born.

When Russia launched its attacks on Ukraine, Grammarly, like many other companies, suspended their services in Russia and Belarus. The company also announced that it will “donate all of the net revenue earned from Russia and Belarus since the war started in 2014 through 2022 to causes supporting Ukraine.” That will create a \$5 million fund.

Grammarly’s top manager has Mennonite roots. CEO Brad Hoover, a former venture capital manager, grew up in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. ●

## Comments

Would you like to comment on anything in this magazine, or on any other matters relating to business and faith? Send your thoughts to [mstrathdee@meda.org](mailto:mstrathdee@meda.org)

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Sean and Ryan Hebel operate Green Ventures Landscaping

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# COVID Has Made Us Weary, But We Should Still Be Doing Good

By Michael Krahn

*“As for you, brothers and sisters, do not grow weary in doing good.”*

*2 Thessalonians 3:13*

Seldom in the world’s history has the entirety of humankind been subjected to such mind-numbing and soul-crushing stress and chaos that has led to such persistent weariness. During this time, on days when I’m feeling down, it’s easy to look for the fruits of my efforts and wonder if I’ve accomplished anything at all. On those weary days, progress seems painfully slow and tangible “results” seem like a barren field on a foggy morning. This is quite opposite of what we desire, isn’t it?

We would all love for our efforts to result in immediate, visible, tangible fruit, but fruit is a fitting metaphor, and it is no accident that this metaphor is employed frequently in Scripture. As Psalm 1 points out, the blessed person is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit *in its season*.

## **How the Wicked and the Righteous Grow**

In Psalm 92 we see a clear contrast between the wicked and the righteous. In verse seven we learn that *“though the wicked sprout like grass and all evildoers flourish, they are doomed to destruction forever,”* while in verse 12 we see that *“the righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar” that still bears fruit in old age and is ever full of sap and green* (verse 14).

Ray Dirks photo



The wicked have their day in the sun, their flash in the pan, their proverbial 15 minutes of fame. They sprout like grass, which grows rapidly but provides little value and fades away just as quickly as it appeared.

Although these people are often among the most prominent in the world and seem to be successful by worldly standards (we might even envy them sometimes), in the end, such people are doomed to destruction. The righteous, however, are like palm or cedar trees.

Palm trees take about five years to grow a trunk and another 15 years to produce coconuts, but they can live for hundreds of years. They represent slow growth and much fruit, just the opposite of grass.

Cedars are evergreen trees that can grow to over 150 feet and live up to 300 years. They are known for their alluring scent and have an ornamental quality because of their beauty.

Cedar is also used for guitar tops and is known for its warm tone. Cedar trees represent beauty, warmth, and an inviting aroma. We

might think of this aroma as “the fragrance of life” that is mentioned in *2 Cor. 2:16*.

## **The Long Blessings of Slow Growth**

In contrast to the wicked, the righteous grow slowly but they live long and fruitful lives. For such people, what often looks like a season of fruitlessness is actually a season of preparation. If we see a tree as only useful when there is ripe fruit to pick, we might see it as useless at all other times.

But trees are not useless during seasons when the fruit is not visibly emerging. During times of not bearing fruit, a tree is still being prepared to be fruitful: it is being pruned and watered and weathered, all of which will make the fruit sweeter and more abundant.

Even the blessed person is not bearing fruit in all seasons but in the appointed season; there is a cyclical pattern to fruit-bearing.

If you are in a season that feels barren and fruitless, take heart — over time, if we are persistent in our pursuit of God and obedient to his will and plan, we will bear fruit.

Now might be a time when you are being pruned and watered and weathered so that your fruit will be both sweeter and more abundant when the appointed season comes.

So, as for you, do not grow weary in doing good. ●

*Michael Krahn is the Lead Pastor of the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Church in Aylmer, Ontario. You can find more of Michael’s writing at [www.michaelkrahn.com](http://www.michaelkrahn.com)*

# Poverty and person-centered language

By Cindy Lapp

Jesus said, “*The poor you will always have with you,*” (Matthew 26:11, Mark 14:7, John 12:8 NIV). It is not a truth I want to accept. Still, Jesus said it, so as Anabaptists we listen.

The language we use when we talk about people, including “the poor” or “the homeless,” gives a glimpse of how we think about people who are poor. Our language frames how we relate to them. **Person-centered language** calls us to put people first rather than the conditions they find themselves in. It may just be a function of the English translation that we, with Jesus, say “Blessed are the poor.” But when we call people “the poor,” it is as if this one characteristic defines who they are and who they can become in relation to others. Applying person-centered language shifts from talking about “the poor,” to saying “people who are poor.”

That small shift in language allows us to see the people that live in poverty. We recognize that being poor is only one aspect of life, and poor people are caught in a system that values money over living beings.

Changing language helps humanize people and is a reminder that all are made in the image of God.

As followers of Jesus, who was himself a poor man, we are called to care about people who live in poverty, as well as the causes of poverty. As followers of Jesus, we remember that we are called not only to serve but to serve *with* people who experience poverty. During this time of pandemic, when food insecurity has become ever more urgent, some folks from

Ray Dirks photo



my relatively well-off congregation volunteer alongside people from a neighboring congregation. Recent immigrants who struggle in poverty and not-so recent immigrants volunteer together, packing boxes of food for distribution in the community. We share a common task of caring for our neighbors. We learn each other’s names and stories. We begin to see through the poverty that can divide us from one another.

When Jesus said, “The poor you will always have with you,” perhaps he meant it less as a comment about the economic troubles of society and more as a description of the reality we live into when we become followers of Jesus. Maybe Jesus was saying, “When you follow me, you will always be with poor people.” We might even begin to recognize the poverty of spirit that exists for those who do not see themselves as people in need.

It doesn’t cure poverty, but seeing each other in our fullness as children of God does fill the spirit. And when the spirit is full, we open our hands to share with one another. And when we live and serve with people who are poor and when we accept that we are poor, Jesus gives us this blessing: “*You who are poor are blessed, for the reign of God is yours*” (Luke

6:20 Inclusive Bible). “*Blessed are those who are poor in spirit: the kingdom of heaven is theirs*” (Matthew 5:3 Inclusive Bible). ●

Cynthia Lapp is a pastor at Hyattsville Mennonite Church in Maryland. She is active with Congregation Action Network in solidarity with immigrants and is a community chaplain with the Hyattsville Police Department.

This article originally appeared as a blog post, part of Mennonite Church USA’s *Cost of Poverty: Learn, Pray, Join* initiative.

**Volume 52, Issue 3**  
**May June 2022**

**The Marketplace** (ISSN 321-330) is published bi-monthly by Mennonite Economic Development Associates at 532 North Oliver Road, Newton, KS 67114. Periodicals postage paid at Newton, KS 67114. Lithographed in U.S.A. Copyright 2021 by MEDA.

**Editor:** Mike Strathdee  
**Design:** Ray Dirks



**Postmaster:**  
Send address changes to  
The Marketplace  
33 N Market St., Suite 400,  
Lancaster, PA 17603-3805

**Change of address** should be sent to Mennonite Economic Development Associates, 33 N Market St, Suite 400, Lancaster, PA 17603-3805.

To e-mail an address change, subscription request or anything else relating to delivery of the magazine, please contact [subscription@meda.org](mailto:subscription@meda.org)

For editorial matters, email [mstrathdee@meda.org](mailto:mstrathdee@meda.org) or call (800) 665-7026, ext. 705

Subscriptions: \$35/year; \$55/two years.

Published by Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA). MEDA’s economic development work in the Global South creates business solutions to poverty. MEDA also facilitates the connection of faith and work through discussions, publications and conventions for participants.

For more information about MEDA call 1-800-665-7026.

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Cover photo of Iliya Shuaibu planting a tree by Salihu Samuel Wamdeo

# A commitment to corporate sustainability

## MEDA enters program to measure and shrink its environmental footprint

People in the Global South bear the brunt of severe weather swings.

That reality means that addressing climate change is a priority for MEDA.

The organization is now taking steps to understand its own environmental footprint. That means tracking water consumption, waste production and carbon emissions as a first step towards reducing that footprint.

Earlier this year, MEDA joined Sustainable Waterloo Region's regional sustainability initiative.

Sustainable Waterloo Region is a social enterprise that helps the local business community become more environmentally and economically sustainable.

"Preventing and mitigating climate change, and reaching net-zero emissions, are important priorities at MEDA," says Dr. Dorothy Nyambi, MEDA's president and CEO. "Joining this initiative is key to achieving them."

MEDA's membership in the organization gives it access to an extensive member network to learn best practices to create a culture of sustainability. This will engage employees as advocates as MEDA looks to set ambitious and realistic sustainability targets.

MEDA already has an environment and climate change technical team which aims to adhere to principles of sustainability, mitigation, and climate action in all its projects. Several of MEDA's

offices, both in North America and in the Global South, already have staff green teams.

Tova Davidson, Sustainable Waterloo Region's executive director, is pleased to see the partnership. "MEDA's work is committed to helping create a just, resilient and low-carbon future," she said. "Through their international development programs, they work to support others to manifest this vision, and we are excited to support them in making this a reality in their own operations."



Mira Chouinard

As part of the Sustainability Waterloo initiative, MEDA will complete a baseline assessment, set annual targets and report on its progress in meeting those targets.

MEDA will pilot this program in four offices in Lancaster, Pennsylvania; Waterloo, Ontario; Ghana, and Tanzania.

"It's a big, important commitment," said Mira Chouinard, MEDA's acting director for environment and climate change. "I'm glad MEDA is doing this."

Gauging MEDA's current environmental footprint is the first step. Then the Sustainable Waterloo program will seek to involve employees on sustainability issues and action through office green teams. MEDA will also work to create a carbon budget for business-funded travel. That will reduce international business travel by increasing the capacity of in-country staff.

"It will be a long journey," Chouinard said.

One of MEDA's priorities in its current strategic plan will help to reduce the business travel portion of the organization's carbon footprint. Addressing the current North-South power imbalance is a key principle guiding the

strategic plan.

Specifically, shifting to increased local decision making means having more key staff based closer to partnership efforts. Helal Ahsan Ul-Haque, MEDA's senior director for the Eastern, Central and Southern Africa regions, is based in Nairobi, Kenya.

MEDA has recently based several senior finance manager positions in Africa — Enoch Appiah in Ghana and Mercy Gichema in Kenya. The organization also recently hired Zakaria Issahaku as a technical specialist, market systems, based in Accra, Ghana. That position involves analysis and technical support for projects.

MEDA faces several challenges in measuring its carbon footprint. Sustainable Waterloo Region lays out a long-term process that clashes with the project cycles of many MEDA projects.

The sustainability initiative asks participants to set 10-year targets. That requirement made it impossible for MEDA to include projects that are ending, or others that are just starting and have five-year contracts.

"If we only have short-term projects, it's not certain the efforts will always (have time to) bear fruit," Chouinard said.

"The hope is really that we'll (eventually) have systems in place to report back to MEDA ... that will be transferrable to other country offices."

Pandemic slowdowns and closures over the past two years make recent data less helpful in establishing a baseline understanding. To get around that problem, 2019 information will be used where available.

The initiative will require considerable effort from staff in gathering and coordinating data. Some sites will not have previously collected data in the required format.

It could also compete with other priorities in terms of workload, she said.

Musa Lubango, MEDA's country director for Tanzania, is happy that MEDA is embarking on this initiative. It will actively contribute to three of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

UN SDG number 11 deals with sustainable cities and communities. Goal number 12 addresses responsible consumption and production. Goal 13 deals with climate change. All of these will be addressed through MEDA's commitment, he said.

"This shows how MEDA is taking environment and climate change seriously."

"MEDA is taking action and leading the way through awareness creation as part of project implementation and ensuring offices are operating in an environmentally sustainable manner," he said.

After developing sustainability goals, MEDA participated in a four-week carbon cleanse effort. Each week, the effort



Musa Lubango

put a spotlight on a different area and ways to improve sustainability: water, transportation, waste, and energy.

A third step in the process is collecting baseline data and setting reduction targets. Chouinard hopes the data collection will be completed

sometime this summer.

Some organizations purchase carbon offsets as part of their sustainability work. But Sustainable Waterloo Region likes to see organizations minimize their footprint as much as possible before looking at other measures, she said. ●

A graphic featuring the MEDA logo in the top left corner. Below it, a close-up of hands typing on a laptop keyboard. The background is a mix of purple and white.

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# Towards a greener future in Nigeria

## MEDA WAY project supports efforts to plant trees, offset negative effects of climate change

In northern Nigeria, the need for increased tree cover becomes apparent with the changing of the seasons.

“At the beginning of every rainy season, there is a sandstorm that destroys a lot of structures and buildings,” Salihu Wamdeo says.

Wamdeo is climate smart technology coordinator for MEDA’s Nigeria WAY project.

In Bauchi State, the area of Northern Nigeria where the WAY (women and youth) project operates, the rainy season has become increasingly unpredictable and extreme.

“Unfortunately, last year was

a year that we saw the danger of some of these activities firsthand. The winds did a lot of damage, and then comes the flooding.”

For the past three years, a three-to-four-month rainy season, historically between June and September, has been delayed by more than a month.

The water table often goes down between 20 and 30 meters (65 to 98 feet) during the dry season, Wamdeo said.

There may be very little precipitation at either end of the rainy season, with torrential downpours in the middle.

The intensity of rainfall over

short periods of time causes flooding and soil erosion.

Changing patterns of precipitation and climatic conditions are taking a major toll on the agriculture sector. These changes reduce farm incomes and have contributed to skyrocketing costs of agricultural products.

MEDA’s WAY project, which began in 2018, has taken a leadership role in response to environmental challenges facing farmers in Bauchi state.

The WAY team has played an active role in the creation of a climate collaboration strategy. That work paved the road for



Hand-woven baskets protect seedlings from foraging goats.





Salihu Wamdeo and Hadiza Galadima

the establishment of a Bauchi state environmental stakeholders committee.

The committee includes representatives of government agencies, the private sector and civil society organizations. It has identified environmental problems within the state and proposed strategies to address them.

In 2021, its focus was the growing threat of drought and desertification. That focus led to the planting of 9,500 trees in the areas where MEDA works.

Tree planting is a frontline defense to slow the expansion of the Sahara Desert, protecting farmland and natural vegetation.

Nigeria’s National Agency for The Great Green Wall has been a major stakeholder in the effort. It supplied most of the seedlings for the tree planting effort and woodlots for breeding seedlings.

Trees were selected for planting

based on their drought resistance, Wamdeo said.

“The rainy season here, it’s getting shorter and shorter. At most we have three months of rainfall. That actually informs the kind of seedlings we are selecting.”

Drought resistance wasn’t the only consideration in ensuring that the trees would grow and thrive.

In a culture where people can be tempted to cut down trees for firewood or to make charcoal, public education is also a necessary ingredient.

The WAY project, through its partners and the Bauchi state sports council, helped to get 1,000 youth to support the tree-planting program.





Drought and sandstorms followed by flooding makes agriculture challenging in northern Nigeria.

Youth were invited to football (soccer) matches, with players wearing Great Green Wall jerseys.

“We used those periods to sensitize youths to the dangers of tree (harvesting) for deforestation, and illicit practices such as for charcoal making,” Wamdeo said.

Some local laws forbid cutting down trees such as the shea tree, which takes between 20 and 30 years to grow to maturity. But because of its high lignin content, bakeries like to use that wood for the fires in breadmaking.

“We understood that it is the youth that actually go to cut down these trees. That is why we centered the (promotional) activities around the youth, so we sensitize them to the dangers (posed by deforestation),” he said.

A parallel education effort is the Green Environmental Promoters Society which was introduced last year. The society is a youth platform to sensitize youth to environmental programs.

Those efforts led LaFarge Cement to donate 2,700 tree seedlings.

The Green Environmental

Promoters Society hopes to build environmental clubs in secondary schools, polytechnic colleges, and universities throughout Bauchi state.

Wamdeo is optimistic about the future of the Bauchi state environmental stakeholders committee. The head of Bauchi’s environmental protection agency has joined the committee and is now leading this work, he said.

MEDA is now in the background of the committee, providing support.

MEDA has suggested that the committee’s focus for this year should be sustaining tree planting efforts. It is promoting an increased focus on women and youth. The proposal is to plant 16,000 trees. The hope is to encourage every client involved in the WAY program to plant at least one tree.

Planting efforts will include three types of trees — the Neem, the Malena, and the Acacia.

The Neem tree is “very, very resistant to drought” and was selected for the drought-prone northern areas of Bauchi state. It

begins fruiting after about two years.

The Malena tree grows fast — one to 1.5 years — and has fruit “that animals take a lot of.”

The Acacia is a leguminous tree that fixes nitrogen in the soil. But the committee will plant less of them than the other species, as they take three to four years to mature.

The WAY project was originally scheduled to end in March 2022 but has been extended for another two years.

MEDA’s environmental work between now and 2024 will focus on sustainability. The organization wants to ensure that tree planting and other efforts continue after MEDA’s involvement ends, Wamdeo said.

“My biggest hope is to see all hands on deck without reward (like the football match) by MEDA. I want to see a spontaneous response by all stakeholders to combat this mutual problem that we have.

“I’m looking to a period where we all agree that we have this problem and we work together to see how we can address it, together.” ●

## A green wall to improve lives

The Great Green Wall project is an ambitious effort to beat back the desert in Africa's Sahel region.

Launched in 2007 by the African Union, the initiative envisions restoring more than 247 million acres of land by growing a 5,000-mile green belt across the entire width of Africa through 22 countries.

The project has a goal of creating a nine-mile-wide mosaic of trees, grasslands, vegetation, and plants to restore degraded lands by 2030. It also would help people living in the area produce adequate food.

Once complete, the Great Green Wall would be the largest living structure on the planet, three times the size of the Great Barrier Reef.

The Great Green Wall project is working at the southern edge of the Sahara Desert — one of the poorest places on Earth.

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification estimates the effort could sequester 250 million tons of carbon and create 10 million green jobs.

More than anywhere else on Earth, the Sahel region is on the frontline of climate change and millions of people are already facing its devastating impact, the project's website indicates. "Persistent droughts, lack of food, conflicts over dwindling natural resources, and mass migration to Europe are just some of the many consequences."

Estimates vary on how much of the project has been completed to date. A November 2021 Associated Press article indicated that an additional \$43 billion would be required to complete the work.

The story suggested that the focus of the project has shifted from a wall of trees to "trying a mosaic of smaller, more durable projects to stop desertification,

including community-based efforts designed to improve lives and help the most vulnerable agriculture."

The newest projects in Senegal are circular gardens known in the Wolof language as "tolou keur." They feature a variety of trees that are planted strategically so that the larger ones protect the more vulnerable.

African Development Bank President Akinwumi A. Adesina spoke about the importance of stopping desertification in the Sahel during the United Nations' COP26 global climate conference in Glasgow last November. He announced a commitment from the bank to mobilize \$6.5 billion toward the Great Green Wall by 2025.

To learn more about the Great Green Wall initiative, visit <https://www.greatgreenwall.org/about-great-green-wall> ●



Nigerian youth carry tree seedlings to plant following a soccer match.

# Partnerships for impact

## Ghanaian firm Farmerline helps to empower farmers

When Alloysius Attah started college, a career in agriculture was something he wanted to avoid.

Born on a farm where his family lived in Ghana, he watched his aunt struggle to get the tools she needed to grow food on two acres.

“Most farmers actually don’t want their kids to end up in farming or agriculture,” he said in a presentation to MEDA staff.

“I was one of those kids. I was studying very hard to get far away from agriculture.”

Thirteen years later, Farmerline, the agtech firm he co-founded, has made a major difference in the lives of farmers in Ghana and around the world.

The company’s software platform has been used to help one million farmers in 26 countries receive the digital tools they need to improve their businesses.

Attah credits former US President Barack Obama with launching his entrepreneurial journey. In 2009, Obama visited Ghana and challenged young Africans to create change from the bottom up.

That year, Attah started college, the first member of his family to do so. He also bought his first laptop computer using his student loan.

He started to learn computer



Alloysius Attah and Emmanuel O. Addai co-founded Farmerline

coding and met Emmanuel O. Addai, his Farmerline co-founder.

Attah saw entrepreneurship as a means of survival. His teacher father, who never earned more than \$200 a month, borrowed money to send him to college. “I had to work extra in order to keep up.”

Attah was also inspired by two Kenyan tech innovations: M-Pesa, a mobile phone based money transfer service, and Ushahidi, a software platform allows local observers to submit reports using their mobile phones or the Internet.

Farmerline emerged when Attah and Addai were challenged at a 2013 tech boot camp to come up with solutions that they cared about.

They launched the company with \$600 and a sense of mission: to “get farmers all they need to produce and sell more food.”

Their initial plan was to help farmers access information. They

would empower people in rural areas where the government agriculture extension agents lacked the funding or equipment to visit.

Mobile phones were becoming widely used, so they built a simple platform to send SMS (text) messages to farmers.

When they went to the field to meet farmers and extension officers, they were told the

system would not work. “People believe, and take action, when they are talking to someone,” Attah said.

“That was the first lesson in building anything, in building any form of intervention,” he said. “Speak to the people that you are trying to serve. Pay attention and learn.”

When Farmerline’s first product failed, Attah and Addai went back to work. They realized the need to replicate the in-person experience that a farmer gets talking to an extension officer, through the mobile phone. “That’s when the Farmerline platform was born, using voice messaging, basically recording the message, the conversation that a farmer would have with an extension officer, and sending it out to farmers.”

MEDA was the firm’s first partner in northern Ghana. Attah met MEDA staffer Catherine Sobrevaga, who was then

overseeing a project in Ghana, at a workshop. That interaction led to MEDA giving Farmerline a chance, then credibility with others.

“This was very monumental for us,” he said. “Before we met MEDA, no one was taking us seriously.”

“When we started this project with MEDA, many other partners followed.”

Their first project was providing a help line and messaging service for 20,000 women farmers in northern Ghana. The messages included information about best farming practices, market prices and weather forecasts.

The helpline also provided additional support and answered farmer inquiries.

The partnership with MEDA not only opened doors. It also helped a group of engineers learn how to build content for farmers, he said.

Farmerline now provides four major services:

- Agro-input financing and distribution with flexible payment plans,
- sending weather voice messages to each farmer it serves with crop inputs,
- in-person farmer education through workshops,
- and connecting farmers to local and global markets.

A key part of Farmerline’s work is done through partnerships. They initially went to farmers themselves.

As the pandemic restricted mobility, they learned the importance of having trusted partners on the ground. Having partners who speak the same language and come from the same tribe as the farmers they are serving became essential.

Community partners allowed Farmerline to multiply the number of farmers it is working with directly from 9,000 in 2019 to 77,000 in 2021.

There are 58 languages in

Ghana. Working with people from those communities and language groups has been critical to Farmerline’s growth.

The company has warehouses in four areas, works with nine companies to deliver goods, and partners with 12 input suppliers.

Farmerline currently works in 80 percent of Ghana. It has plans to expand to the rest of the nation, except the capital region, this year.

Its software platform is now used by more than 80 corporate and development agency partners. These include the Mastercard Foundation and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, as well as MEDA and food processors such as Hershey.

Three of the firm’s top performing employees are former MEDA staff, he said.

In 2021, 54 percent of the farmers the company served were women. Its efforts increased farmer income by 26 per cent and created more than 200 jobs.

Goals for 2022 include reaching 400,000 farmers across Ghana, increasing full-time staff to 140 from 80 previously, and employing 400 contract staff.

Farmers’ needs are clear. In a recent Linked In post, Attah noted that over 16,000 agribusinesses closed down in Ghana since May 2020. Factors contributing to the closures included decreases in

**“We really want to work with partners to reduce costs for farmers.”**

**— Farmerline CEO  
Alloysius Attah**

input supply and financing.

Three things have been central to Farmerline’s work, he said: Growing with mission-aligned partners, being cost-effective and sustainable at all times, and continuing rigorous impact measurement. Those concepts will guide the firm as it goes forward.

“When there’s any global change, be it COVID or Ukraine fighting Russia, farmers really suffer as food systems get affected.”

He sees building sustainable systems as key to ensuring that cocoa farmers earn a fair income, for example. Currently those farmers earn only two percent of the industry’s \$100 billion in revenue, he said.

Attah hopes to reach two million farmers within five years. Farmerline will do this not just by providing information, but also enabling access to quality seeds and fertilizer. “We really want to work with partners to reduce costs for farmers.”

Attah has received numerous awards for his work, including *CBNC Africa’s* Young Business Leader Award in 2017. He also became a laureate of the King Baudoin (former King of Belgium) African Development Prize in 2017. Attah is also one of the 2021 class of innovators, visionaries, scientists, policymakers, and entrepreneurs who are part of the *Bloomberg* New Economy Catalysts.

Farmerline won the FT/IFC Transformational Business Award for Achievement in Sustainable Agriculture in 2016.

In 2019, *Time* magazine recognized Farmerline’s software platform as one of the best 100 inventions of the year. *The New York Times* honored Farmerline as one of five companies using technology to solve global problems. ●

# Cultivating more caring workplaces

Businesses encouraged to recognize, support workers with win-win strategies

Taking time to implement caring workplace cultures is both a spiritual issue and a practical business concern.

“Each person in our organization is created in the image of God and we are all called to love them,” Abby World said at the Denver Institute for Faith & Work’s annual Business for the Common Good conference.

“The benefits, the systems, the policies we have in our workplaces can be a vehicle for loving them.”

World, the institute’s vice-president of operations and finance, made the comments during a panel

discussion on cultivating more caring workplaces.

“The state of the American workforce is grim,” she said. “Over 38 million people left their jobs over the past year, and there have been more people resigning each month than any year on record.”

“Many business leaders... are really struggling to attract and retain a quality workforce.”

Given those realities, a caring work environment can be a business distinctive “that not only fulfills that (Christian) call to others, but also helps to retain a really strong workforce for your company.”

Small steps to demonstrate care for employees are better than grand visions that “will never hit the ground,” Dave Runyon said.

Runyon is founder and executive director of Denver-based CityUnite, which helps government, business, and faith leaders unite around common causes. A former pastor, he also co-authored the book *The Art of Neighboring: Building Genuine Relationships Right Outside Your Door*.

Something as simple as remembering people’s names can be a good start, he said. “If you want to start a movement, the key isn’t to set the bar high. The key is to set the bar so low that people can’t crawl underneath it.”

Runyon gave conference attendees a list of seven ideas to consider and challenged them to consider implementing one of them in the coming year. (See sidebar, pp.16)

“What we are trying to do is to create a sense of belonging, a sense of trust in the places where we work.”

Pat Riley believes in checking in with staff by taking time to ask them about both their personal and work lives. He begins by asking whether they are feeling red, yellow, or green.

Riley heads the Global Accelerator Network, a group of business accelerators, startups, and organizations spanning six continents and more than 100 cities around the world. He is also managing partner of GAN Ventures, which provides seed-stage capital to startups around the globe.

Photos by Josh Barrett/Courtesy of Denver Institute for Faith & Work



Dave Runyon urges businesses to take small steps to demonstrate care for employees.



Pat Riley (second from right) models self-care as a leader.

In Riley’s color check-in, red means that employees are in a crisis moment. Yellow means they are doing okay but not great.

Over the past two years of asking the question, he has found that “how people are doing personally is typically how they

are doing at work.”

“I’ve found over and over again that it has been a season of yellow.”

Quoting author Adam Grant, he noted that many people have been languishing during the pandemic.

As a leader, Riley recognizes that he has the choice to put up

a wall between himself and a struggling employee, or he can have empathy.

“But when we have empathy, it requires giving up a piece of ourselves to that thing.”

Riley has called a number of CEO friends recently to ask about their stress levels. He found that most of them are dealing with a moderate to extreme amount of anxiety every day.

In order to have the ability to keep leaning into empathy, he takes a three-step approach to caring for himself.

First, he manages his calendar with daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly rhythms. Riley ensures that three hours in his workday have no meetings. Every Friday, he schedules in time for reading, thinking, and praying.

Each month, he takes two Fridays off. He also takes two to four weeks a year away from work to refresh.

“The second thing I do is, I always have something to look forward to.”

The third thing he does is to name the emotions he is feeling, to take their power away. He cited Philippians 4:6 about the need to bring petitions before God.

Many factors make it difficult for leaders to stay in relationships when under stress.

Remote working has reduced opportunities to check in with employees, and labor shortages have forced many to do more with less, leading to more of a task orientation, Tracy Matthews noted.

“No wonder people are depleted and languishing,” she said.

Internal stress and anxieties related to isolation also amplify people’s tendencies to put walls up, said Matthews, who heads Attune. Attune is an organization designed to help teams and individuals cultivate spiritually



Tracy Matthews promotes spiritually attuned leadership.

attuned leadership.

Following the practices that Pat Riley mentioned require discipline, she noted.

“It takes intentionality to create space for that kind of relational connection, but the fruit (of doing so) is so needed today.”

Matthews promotes an attunement model that will allow people to hear from God.

Spiritual connection comes

from skills, postures, muscles, and practices that are learned with intentional practice, she said.

Those skills are learned both alone and in community.

For Tony Julienne of Atlas Real Estate,



Panelists Abby World, Chris Chancey and Tony Julienne discuss creating more caring workplaces

## Best practices for faith-driven business owners

*Dave Runyon is the co-founder and director of Denver-based CityUnite, which helps government, business, and faith leaders unite around common causes. A speaker at the Denver Institute for Faith & Work's Business for the Common Good 2022 conference, he challenged attendees to consider adopting new ways of caring for employees.*

*The text below comes from a Best Practices for Faith-Driven Business Owners handout that he distributed at the conference. — ED*

As a business owner, your work is your most strategic leverage point for kingdom impact. Deep down, most faith driven business owners know this, but few have implemented structures to create a kingdom culture in their companies.

The key to starting down this road is to simply take a first step in the right direction. The following is a list of best practices that will help you to integrate your faith and your work. Each of these ideas come from faith-driven companies that have successfully made the move from good intentions to practical action.

### • Recognize and celebrate your employees

What gets celebrated and rewarded is what creates the culture of your company.

Create annual awards such as: Servant Leader, Team Player, Rookie of the Year, Going the Extra Mile, etc. Create framed certificates for each one and hand them out at a staff meeting or annual event. You will be surprised how much your employees will value a simple framed certificate that acknowledges their service.

Track work anniversaries and birthdays and go out of your way to acknowledge these at staff meetings.

For major work anniversaries give team members a meaningful gift that acknowledges their work and loyalty.

Host an annual event for your employees and their families. Make it both fun and purposeful. Use this time to acknowledge your employees and build connections among your team members and their spouses.

### • Relational leadership structure

Have every direct report meet once a month with each employee to connect on a personal level. These one-on-one meetings have the potential to significantly change your work culture as they create space to build meaningful relationships. Equip your leaders to ask thoughtful questions during these meetings and encourage them to spend most of the time listening. Some conversation starters might include: How are things going at home? What is the most life-giving part of your job? What is the most draining part? What is something specific that you want to do in the coming month to grow both personally and professionally? Follow up on that question to begin each meeting.

### • Serve days

Give your employees 2-3 days a year of paid time to volunteer in the community. These can be done individually or as a group of employees. Set up a simple way for your team members to share their volunteer experiences with the entire staff.

### • Intentional hiring

A good job is the antidote to poverty and key to helping people move from one season of life to another. Make a commitment to interview people who

are transitioning out of local non-profits, prison, sober houses, or who are on the verge of homelessness. This can be both beautiful and messy, but it's worth it. The best way to do this is by partnering with an organization that helps people get their lives back on track.

### • Partner with a local non-profit organization

What would happen in our cities if every faith-driven company formed a significant partnership with a local non-profit? Start by meeting with the leader of an NGO that is doing work that you are passionate about. Dream with them about ways your company could help them accomplish their mission. Consider giving a portion of your profits to them each year to support their work in the community. It's a good idea to involve some of your team members in the process.

### • Get creative with benefits

Practice radical generosity with your employees. Pay them well and go over and above when it comes to their benefit packages. Examples of this could be providing a counseling stipend, childcare allowances for parents, on-site financial literacy classes, professional development stipend, gym reimbursements, etc.

### • Employee benevolence fund

Invite employees to give monthly to a general fund that is matched by the business to care for team members who encounter unexpected circumstances. Create a small team of employees to be on the lookout for needs and to discern when those funds are given. Visit [cityunite.org/work](http://cityunite.org/work) for additional resources and video stories ●



employee empowerment means giving people permission to make mistakes. “If you’re not failing, you’re not bringing your whole self to work,” he said.

Leaders can only support their workers if they have something in the tank rather than running on empty, he said. That means integrating their hearts and souls, not just their minds.

“You have the opportunity to be a non-anxious presence. The more you show up as a leader as a non-anxious presence, to be authentically a non-anxious presence... that just instills a lot of confidence.”

Atlas, which is an investment-focused real estate firm, has a talent and culture department instead of a human resources department. “I just don’t like thinking of humans as resources.”

Understanding the effectiveness of employee engagement efforts comes from asking workers how they feel, he said. “We take that feedback really seriously.”

Chris Chancey is founder and executive director of Amplio Recruiting, an Atlanta-based firm that finds jobs for refugees. As a seminary student, he began to consider concepts of work, stewardship, and generosity.

After returning to Atlanta, his family eventually moved into a neighborhood filled with refugees and was continually asked if he could help people find a job.

Since 2014, Amplio has placed 8,000 refugees in jobs in 20 cities across the US. Chancey has worked with 300 firms across the US in all industries.

Too often, employee care is operated somewhat like a restaurant, with a one-size-fits-all model, he said.

“In the work environment, we have to start thinking about customization, what fits for the

employee in front of us,” he said.

That means businesses thinking about employee care need to operate more like a hospital floor, something that Chancey conceded can be hard to do.

While this approach can be more expensive and messier, it pays off he said.

“You get to keep people for a lot longer. Retention rates go through the roof because there’s some individual engagement and connection.”

For many of the people Chancey places in jobs, USA stands for “U Start Again.”

**“The more you show up as a leader as a non-anxious presence, to be authentically a non-anxious presence... that just instills a lot of confidence.”**

**— Tony Julianelle,  
Atlas Real Estate**



Chris Chancey's firm finds jobs for refugees.

Those people are in an unstable place in their life. So something as simple as a business card, a uniform, a locker with their name on it can give them a sense of connection and belonging, he said.

“It can be really small, but it communicates something that’s much bigger. It communicates that stability; you want everyone to feel like they belong.

“If that’s your goal, there’s some creative ways of doing that that really doesn’t even cost that much.”

Taking a “roll out the red carpet” approach, ensuring that workers understand “we’re going to love you as much on the way in as on the way out (to a different job)” changes the models, structures, and decisions that firms make, he said.

“That plays into the long-term reputation you have in your community.” ●

# Greening with less gasoline

## Landscaping businesses adopt quieter, cleaner equipment

If you hear landscaping firms talking about green, it may not be about the grass they are mowing or the money their businesses are making.

A growing number of companies are replacing noisy and polluting equipment with quieter, battery-operated alternatives.

The president of Stanley Black & Decker's outdoor products division told *Bloomberg News* last year that half of chainsaws, trimmers, and push mowers sold are now electric. John Wyatt predicted that by 2025, 75 percent of push mowers sold will be electric.

Electric riding mowers currently make up only two percent of mower sales. But that will grow to 50 percent within five to seven years, he said.

Green Ventures Landscaping started using battery-powered equipment about five years ago, vice-president Ryan Hebel says.

The family-owned firm, based

in Kitchener, Ontario, has 25 staff year-round and 35 in the summer. It has one crew that uses only battery-powered machinery — a riding lawnmower, leaf blower and trimmers.

Other crews take a hybrid approach, using battery-powered handheld equipment and gas-fueled riding mowers.

Riding mowers still use heavy batteries which make them less suitable for some jobs, company president Sean Hebel said. Heavier mowers can leave marks on some lawns.

Green Ventures will move to using only electric equipment within a few years, he said. "Each generation, the functionality gets better."

The landscaping industry tends to be quite conservative and slow to change. It is several years behind where it could be in terms of adopting battery-powered equipment, he said.

That is likely to change. High gas prices and customer demand will lead the sector to look more seriously at electric equipment, he predicted.

Ryan Hebel agrees. "I think we're getting to our tipping point, if we're not already there."

Given the amount of pollution produced by "super dirty" two-stroke engines, "it would be cheaper to hand out incentives to get rid of their two-stroke engines than for electric cars (subsidies as a way to decrease carbon emissions)," he said.

An increasing number of observers agree that two-stroke engines, commonly found in gas lawnmowers, are a big problem.

The US Environmental Protection Agency says gas-powered mowers are responsible for five percent of the country's air pollution.

Operating a gas-powered lawn mower for an hour can have the same polluting effect as driving a Toyota Camry 300 miles, the California Air Resources Board says. Using a gas-powered leaf blower for an hour is even worse, according to CARB. That's the equivalent of driving the Camry 1,100 miles.

Denver, Colorado's Regional Air Quality Council has given rebates to homeowners and businesses who turn in gas-powered mowers and purchase electric-powered replacements. Similar programs have been offered in California and Utah. Some are also offering rebates for turning in gas-powered snowblowers, grass trimmers and leaf blowers.

Colorado lawmakers have introduced a bill prohibiting the sale of 50 horsepower or smaller gas engines by 2030. California is moving more quickly in that direction. It will stop sales of gas-powered equipment with small off-road engines by January 1, 2024.



Photos courtesy LOF Photography

Ryan Hebel talks about a battery-operated leaf blower.



Ryan and Sean Hebel stand next to a battery-powered, semi-autonomous tractor. The machine is used for cleaning sidewalks in the winter. In the summer, switching out the blades for a mower deck spares staff from the hot work of cutting grass in parks.

A similar bill was introduced in New York State last fall. It calls for lawn care and landscaping equipment sold in that state to be zero-emissions by 2027. Illinois is pondering comparable legislation.

The writing may be on the wall for gas-powered leaf blowers elsewhere. As many as 170 US cities have already passed laws banning their use.

In Canada, Ottawa’s National Capital Commission will ban the use of gas-powered leaf blowers, line trimmers, hedge trimmers and small chainsaws on NCC lands effective April 1, 2023.

In the US, the National Association of Professional Landscapers has raised several concerns about these bans. One objection relates to having to recharge equipment several times over the course of a day. Another is that electric leaf blowers don’t yet have the power required for commercial use.

Since Green Ventures began using electric equipment, costs have come down significantly. Machines are now half the size and weight they were in 2017, with better power, Ryan Hebel said.

Company employees are

encouraging the shift, as they find electric equipment breaks down less and costs less to repair.

Green Ventures already has one client that demands only electric equipment be used at their property. Some condo buildings are making similar requests due to noise concerns.

Use of battery-powered equipment is a year-round practice for Green Ventures. They use semi-autonomous electric robots to plow sidewalks in the winter and have three electric snowblowers as well.

The robots are made by Swap Robotics, a Waterloo, Ontario firm that the Hebels are investors in.

Swap is also producing semi-autonomous mower decks used to cut lawns in parks.

Use of electric, semi-autonomous equipment will have more than environmental benefits. It will reduce the toll on landscaping employees by automating menial tasks. That will also remove the health risks from fumes, noise, and vibrations.

Green Ventures is committed to paying its workers a living wage. Sean Hebel deems that a “moral obligation.”



Green Ventures will use all-electric equipment within a few years, Sean Hebel says.

The firm doesn’t have problems keeping employees. But they admit that finding new staff to add to their team is challenging.

The Hebels don’t yet see the use of electric-powered equipment as providing a competitive edge for their firm. Sean Hebel thinks that day is coming.

Others are already exploring that opportunity. A landscaping firm in Victoria, British Columbia markets itself as being a clean, green alternative. They market themselves as being a “solar-powered, zero-emission business model since 2010.” ●

# A salt-water solution

## Aqua-Cell hopes to provide a better battery for solar energy storage

Solar power is now the least expensive source of new power generation.

Storing that power for use when the sun isn't shining is a business problem that hasn't been fully solved.

Lithium ion batteries are used in electric vehicles, power tools, mobile phones and computers. They can provide two to four hours of power storage for solar arrays.

However, lithium ion batteries can be expensive and offer limited flexibility. There are also safety issues with their use that limit where they can be installed. The risk of explosion and fires if the batteries are damaged or improperly installed is significant.

Infamously, seven Tesla solar systems caught fire on Walmart stores between 2012 and 2018. The blazes led to a lawsuit and the removal of 240 rooftop systems.

Those challenges have meant that commercial and industrial adoption of solar panels has been much slower than residential installations.

The commercial-industrial sector is estimated to account for over two-thirds of electricity usage. Finding a safer and less expensive way to store solar energy would be a big boost to sustainability and conservation efforts.

Keith Cleland hopes to solve that problem. His solution is to harness a less expensive alternative type of battery that uses salt water.

Cleland, a Calgary native, graduates from the University of Waterloo with a master's degree in chemical engineering this spring.



Keith Cleland

Cleland became interested in sustainable energy while doing a petroleum engineering minor as an undergrad. During those studies, he realized that he didn't like what he was doing.

"Just as a general philosophy, I like to be on the side of cleaning things up in terms of the environment rather than making a bigger mess," he says.

He worked on battery technology during internships and battery-related projects in labs in Calgary.

During an internship with General Electric, he began thinking about tapping salt water as an alternative to lithium ion batteries.

Many municipalities use a

water treatment technology that uses electricity in combination with salt water and membranes in order to clean up water, he said. Cleland discovered that running that process in reverse could work as an energy storage medium.

That insight has led Cleland to file a patent application for the technology that forms the basis of Aqua-Cell Energy Inc.

The fledgling firm's product is a "flow" battery system that flows liquids from a tank through a battery.

"If you want to increase the (energy storage) duration ... you don't have to make the battery any bigger," Cleland explains. "All you have to do is make the tanks bigger."

Cleland and his co-founder Ellsworth Bell are currently sizing a pilot system that would provide 10 hours of energy storage. That is more than double the cost-effective storage time of lithium ion batteries.

Aqua-Cell will begin piloting a one-kilowatt system with a developer in Northern Ontario in May.

Businesses that can install solar panels with adequate battery backup can eliminate most of their electricity bills, he said.

"One of the biggest challenges (facing Aqua-Cell) right now is being able to get the confidence of the renewable energy developers" to host pilot projects, he said.

Developers and funders alike want to see that performance of a battery system will stay the same over time. Aqua-Cell will need to demonstrate the track record of its

technology to win them over.

Cleland has put together a design for a 50-kilowatt system. That could perhaps handle solar backup for a supermarket or a large warehouse. The saltwater tanks needed for a system that size would equal one or two shipping containers, he said.

Aqua-Cell has won seed funding from several university-related pitch competitions.

It hopes to develop pilot projects for 10-kilowatt to one-megawatt systems.

While they develop those proposals, Cleland is working on another startup. Ace Power Solutions is a consulting firm that focuses on renewable energy for small to medium-sized businesses.

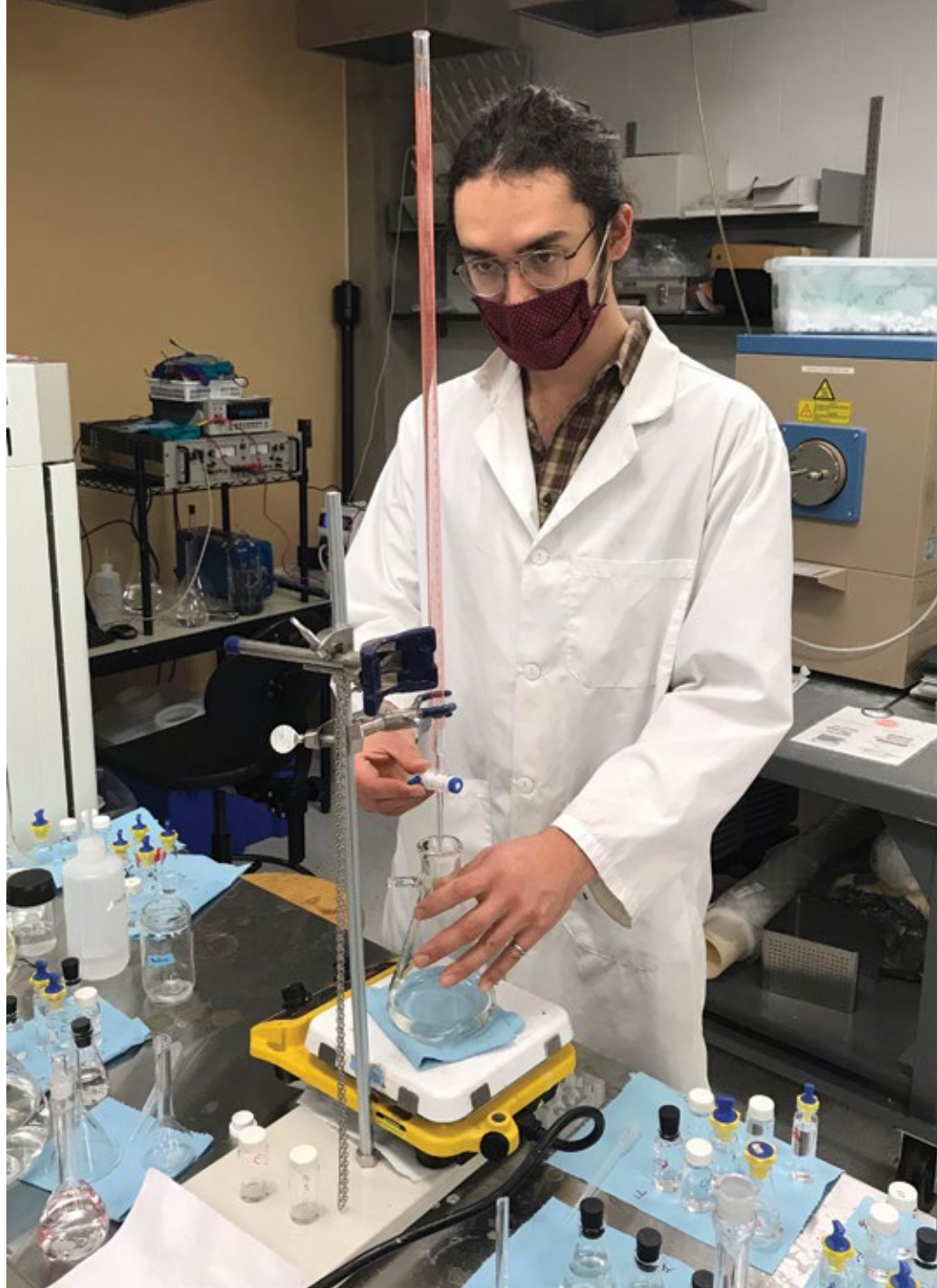
For now, Aqua-Cell will be based out of the Kitchener area. The firm hopes to connect with a local business incubator that makes lab space available to its clients. In the longer term, Cleland is “very open to moving anywhere within Canada or even the US, if that’s where the market takes me.”

Improving battery performance is the focus of major research efforts at many North American universities.

Most notable of these is Tesla’s partnership with Jeff Dahn at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Dahn is considered the leading industrial researcher into lithium ion batteries. In 2021 he signed a second five-year funding term with electric vehicle pioneer Tesla, continuing that partnership until 2026.

Industry observers say that Dahn’s secretive efforts are causing “excitement and buzz around the world.”

University releases about Dahn’s work simply note that “all lab work is guided by a mantra: reduce cost, boost density and stretch out the lifetime of the



Keith Cleland prepares an electrolyte for a salt-water battery.

lithium-ion battery.”

Meanwhile, in the US, University of Texas at Austin researchers have created a new sodium-based battery material. It is described as “highly stable, capable of recharging as quickly as a traditional lithium-ion battery and able to pave the way toward delivering more energy than current battery technologies.”

Professor David Mitlin thinks that this new innovation and others from UT Austin, including

a new solid electrolyte that boosts energy storage, will mean sodium batteries may soon be able to fill the growing demand for stationary energy storage.

South Carolina’s Clemson University is working with potassium-ion technology to create a new generation of batteries. These new batteries have potential to provide critical backup storage for the nation’s stationary energy storage, such as the power grid, researchers there believe. ●

# Disarmed: The radical life and legacy of Michael “MJ” Sharp

By Marshall V. King (Herald Press, 2022, 255 pp, \$29.99 US)

Many details about the tragic end of Michael Sharp’s life have received international publicity.

Five years ago, Sharp and colleague Zaida Catalàn were working in the Democratic Republic of Congo for the United Nations. Misled into believing that they would be safe

meeting rebels in the bush, they were kidnapped and killed.

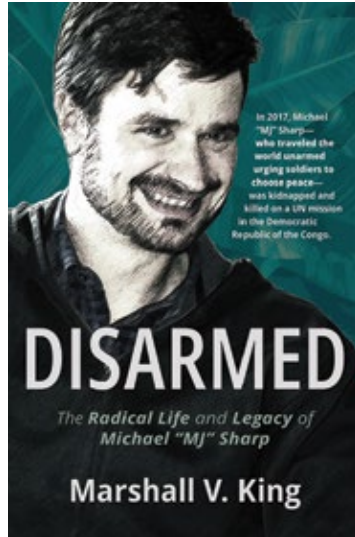
Since the publication earlier this year of Marshall King’s engaging story of “MJ” Sharp’s life, 50 people have been convicted in connection with the conspiracy that led to the murder of the two UN envoys.

In *Disarmed*, King does a masterful job of recounting Sharp’s passion for peace and justice, telling the life story of a man whose commitment to pacifism was anything but passive.

The book delves into how Sharp assessed risk in his work and questions around what constitutes heroism.

As committed as he was to helping others, Sharp loved having fun. Son of a Mennonite pastor, Sharp was a prankster who loved driving a sports car. A wanderer whose ability to win poker games helped pay for his studies at Eastern Mennonite University.

After graduation, Sharp worked with soldiers seeking conscientious objector status in Germany.



A position with Mennonite Central Committee led him to Eastern Congo, teaching non-violent methods of peacemaking and distributing resources to people living in UN camps for internally displaced persons. Success in that work brought him to the attention of UN officials who hired him in 2015.

Sharp’s story would make a great movie. Read this book and you will agree. ●

## The funny thing about forgiveness: What every leader needs to know about improv, culture and the world’s least favorite F word

By Andrea Flack-Wetherald. (2021, 213 pp., \$15.99 US)

Andrea Flack-Wetherald is a social worker turned improv performer. She has combined those two passions in & Beyond, a consulting firm that teaches leaders how to be emotionally healthy.

Being emotionally healthy, she writes, allows leaders to build healthy, people-first cultures.

Getting there

requires understanding how to hold accountability and forgiveness together.

Forgiveness is described as the most important soft skill a leader could ever master.

All of life is improv, she writes, and mastering that skill requires both patience and agility.

Patience is sometimes required to navigate the digressions that season this book. But a reader’s perseverance is rewarded with a highly relevant challenge to take an inner journey towards more effective communication.

She emphasizes the importance of listening hygiene. Listening is described as the only one of the primary forms of communication that is not taught in school. A mark of good listening hygiene is ensuring that all communication is receiver-oriented.

The book outlines five core improv skills, providing a sound rationale for each one: Choose curiosity instead of judgement, honor your scene partner, stay in this present moment, listen beyond your comfort zone, and receive everything as a gift.

As with improv performance, people who want to be effective leaders are invited to “follow the fear, as all the fun lies outside your comfort zone.”

Conflict, engaged effectively, can be a useful teaching tool, she suggests. A healthy leader will accept that challenge and invite their team members “to grow into more of who they are.” ●



## Books in brief

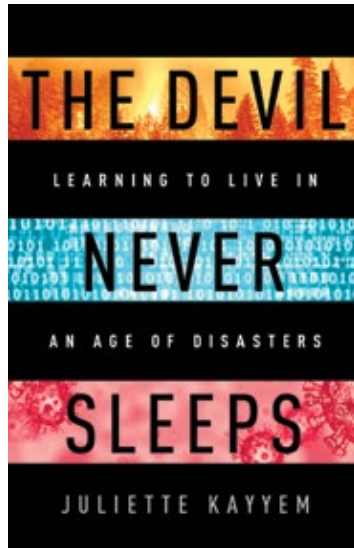
### The devil never sleeps: Learning to live in an age of disasters

By Juliette Kayyem  
(Public Affairs  
Hachette Book Group,  
2022, 209 pp., \$29.00  
US)

Juliette Kayyem believes we should be thinking about, and preparing for, disasters more often than is currently the case.

Kayyem, an academic who teaches on the subject at Harvard University, knows of what she speaks.

She has served as assistant secretary at the US Department of Homeland Security and spent



more than 20 years organizing responses to major crises.

Sadly, her advice is not always accepted. In early March of 2020, during a regular TV appearance on CNN as a national security analyst, she suggested the US government should shut down everything to keep people safe from

the global pandemic.

Her prophetic words were met with incredulity by host Anderson Cooper. Even her mother texted to say her words sounded harsh.

*The devil never sleeps* is a provocative exploration of why

things went so badly in many past high-profile disasters. Kayyem relates the failures and lessons to be learned from corporate or government responses to natural disasters, cyberattacks and bad things that happen when companies cut corners.

The book is also a plea for greater rigor and preparation for future catastrophes that lie just around the corner.

To those who would deem her stance an over-reaction, she lays out the case for consequence minimization and ongoing readiness for making things “less bad.”

This well-documented and highly readable book argues for practice, training, and adaptability.

Kayyem makes a compelling case that regardless of our station in life, we are all crisis managers now. It is advice well worth heeding. ●



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