

# Fall 2017

## IMMANUEL PRESENCE AND THERAPEUTIC HEALING



The crushing sense of being alone in the world, isolated and abandoned is a perceived reality I hear all too often as a counselor. Time and time again, clients tell me that I am the first person to hear what they are carrying or going through, that it is not safe to tell others for fear of being shamed, rejected, judged or fixed with quick solutions.

As I listen and enter into the details I have this strong sense that they feel orphaned, completely alone. I came across a phrase recently that seemed to capture this reality, that the new cancer is loneliness. Loneliness leaves you with this unnamed sadness of not feeling felt, heard or understood. In the emptiness of that feeling there often surfaces a sense of not being worthy or valued as a human being, as if you caused this and are to blame for the lack of human connection. I am deeply grateful for the safe and confidential container of the counseling office to allow these feelings and perceptions to be heard, valued, and processed. Simply being seen, heard and validated (valued) in the middle of your messy truth begins the slow process of healing.

I am also grateful for my faith in a living, loving presence all around me that cares for me (us) and knows me (us) and is somehow closer to me than my own breath. This vulnerable faith journey helps to sustain me and give me hope (grounding) in the moments I am tempted to believe that I am all alone, and must take care of myself by myself. Part of this faith journey is embedded in the rich truth behind the word, Immanuel, God with us in and through the human companionship of Jesus. Many of my clients have a theoretical or doctrinal (head) belief regarding Jesus, but are missing an actual experience of intimacy with Jesus in the mix and hurt of their real life story. It is an amazing, sacred privilege to go looking for Jesus (his Immanuel presence) with clients right in the very places they have felt abandoned the most. Often we rehearse or relive old wounds and painful

memories with their old ugly messages on our own, forgetting to look for the closeness and intimate friendship with Jesus in that moment. He is longing to hold us and connect with us in that memory, whispering words of compassion and truth.

In my own life story, I carry the scars of being bullied during my high school years due to the fact of being a late bloomer physically. To survive and cope I learned to make light of things and to excel in humor to lessen the blows and to ward off potential bullies. I believed the lies that I was not a man and could only make my way (be valued) by being funny. What a healing surprise to be invited years later to go back to those scenes of being bullied and taunted with my memory and imagination, but this time to be open and curious about the Immanuel presence of Jesus with me in those moments. To pay attention to his face, his presence, and the words he might have to say to me in that moment in that old painful memory. What deep joy to hear love, compassion, value and validation for me as a young man. So now, I can access the companionship friendship of Jesus within that old scary moment, connecting to his love and not the old toxic message. This also frees me up to go looking for other parts of my story that I have lived and survived alone with, and begin discovering Him and His healing love with me in those parts as well. May you also be surprised by this healing relational Immanuel truth when you feel the weight of being alone (orphaned) as you go looking for intimate closeness of Jesus with you past, present and future, in every detail of your life. To explore this further check out the following website <http://www.immanuelapproach.com/> and by all means feel free to talk to your therapist about this.

**Brent Unrau, MA, RCC  
Contract Counsellor, CCCA**

# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - PRESIDENTS REPORT

Since 2015 Cascade Christian Counselling Association (CCCA) has been working with contract counselling under the supervision of the Board and with management by our office staff. This system continues to function very well for us and we see increasing positive consequences of benefit to our staff, counsellors and the effect and influence of CCCA in the communities we serve.

In 2016 we had 154 new clients, and our counselling hours were at 804. At present, we are working with six counsellors who cover our two offices in Surrey and Abbotsford, and our clients in Smithers. Mike Ayers works one day a week in the Abbotsford office. Monique Hoving-Smeets works two days in Abbotsford and two days in Surrey. Heres Snijder works one day in Abbotsford and one day in Surrey, and Brent Unrau works two days in Surrey. Our newest counsellor, Nina Lim is working one day a week for CCCA split between our Abbotsford and Surrey office. Jan Bryant continues to serve the Bulkley Valley Christian School and clients in Smithers on a monthly basis. In the coming year the relationship between Vancouver Christian School and CCCA may change as Jan Bryant retires from her position at the school. The School Board is considering hiring their own teacher/counsellor rather than relying on CCCA to provide this service for them.

With the resignation last Fall of counsellor Holly Tomkinson, we interviewed several candidates to take her place, with the kind assistance of our former Executive Director Dick Farenhorst. The successful candidate, Monique Hoving-Smeets started meeting clients in November 2016 and she has fit in very well with the style and philosophy of CCCA. She has picked up extra hours for us so that we have been able to serve more clients, showing a large increase in client hours for this year.

Statistics reveal that most of our new clients have come to us through our website. Recently the Board looked at the functioning of our website through Google Analytics and we will consider ways in which to improve this resource in order to attract more new clients. The second best resource for new clients comes from referrals by pastors. We have increased our newsletter production and made them more colourful and appealing in order to improve our outreach to the regional churches and to the Reformed community.

Our finances are in very good shape, our counselling hours are increasing and our costs have been reduced. We thank God for His continuing provision for our financial needs so that we may help those who come to us or are referred to us from our Christian

communities and who may not be able to bear the full cost of counselling.

Our 2016 Annual Fall Drive was again around \$40,000, and we were blessed as well by a bequest left to CCCA. In addition, the offerings we continue to receive from many local churches allow us to offer assistance to all who come to us.

Our office staff serves us faithfully and well, Marion Ottevangers and Hanah Wuerch have been working well together and we are thankful for their service to us. The Board members are also faithful in meeting on a monthly basis and in supervising the work of our counsellors and staff. We continue to look for new Board Members to give relief to some who have served us well for many years.

We look forward to another year of service and blessing to our greater Community as we seek to advance the ministry of CCCA amongst God's people. It has been a privilege to serve as your President this year and I thank each member for their support and encouragement.

**Rudy W. Ouwehand**  
President

**May 10, 2017 – Annual General Meeting**

## WELCOMING NINA LIM

Nina is a Registered Clinical Counsellor with the British Columbia Association of Clinical Counsellors and has a Masters in Marriage and Family Therapy from Associated Canadian Theological Schools (ACTS) of Trinity Western University. She feels deeply privileged to work with people at every stage of their journey. Her gentle and soft presence invites clients to feel safe and welcome. Nina works from a systemic perspective and incorporates various therapeutic modalities to help clients gain clarity and reach their goals. She particularly enjoys working with parents, children and teens regarding anxiety, aggression and parent-child relationships. Her hope is that every person that comes to her office will feel valued, respected and safe.



In her spare time, Nina enjoys cooking and eating vegetarian cuisine, hiking and spending time with her church. She also spends more time than she probably should, listening to audiobooks.