



Season 14: Episode 5 | Finu Iype | How Can Christians Reach a Changing Canada?

Hello and welcome to Scripture Untangled, a podcast by the Canadian Bible Society. My name is Joanne la Fleur. I'm a friend of the Canadian Bible Society and I'm going to be your guide for today's episode.

Today, seasoned journalist Lorna Dueck will be in conversation with Pastor Finu Iype. Buckle up your seatbelts because we will be on a road trip of sorts with Village Church today, which has six locations across Canada. Finu Iype serves as Senior Pastor of Preaching, Mission, and Advancement at Village Church.

Finu was born and raised in the Kingdom of Bahrain. He felt called to ministry at a young age and he credits his parents for a huge influence in this area of his life. In his teen years, he lost his only brother to cancer.

And after that loss, Finu soon emigrated all on his own to Canada. Upon arriving for Bible College at Canada Christian College near Toronto, Finu founded an evangelism ministry and learned to preach in English. Finu pioneered how to do crusade evangelism in many small communities across Ontario and without ever really even applying for the job was pursued and is now the Senior Pastor of Preaching, Mission, and Advancement for the six Village Churches across Canada.

Finu and his wife, Tresha, have two daughters and live in Langley, British Columbia. And as you will learn today, Finu is passionate about helping people know their Bibles. So here is Lorna Dueck in conversation with Finu Iype.

Scripture Untangled

Season 14: Episode 5 | Finu Iype | How Can Christians Reach a Changing Canada?

Lorna Dueck: Well, Finu, I am delighted to meet you. I have looked forward to what's been going on at your amazing church family.

You've got quite a team there, but I want to go back to age 18. You arrive in Canada. How many Canadians know that story of coming in? Tell us about arriving here.

What drew you to Canada?

Finu Iype: Lorna, great to be on the podcast today. Thank you for having me. Yeah, I mean, was that 23 years ago now? What brought me to Canada? Well, I was a 17-year-old kid in Bahrain.

I had an encounter with the Lord for a couple of years at that point. Since I was 15, I really sensed the Lord speaking to me, calling me into ministry, had a series of things happen in my life, some of them not so great, difficult circumstances, suffering, et cetera, that the Lord was sort of working through all of that to give me the sense of calling, that He wanted to use me somehow, and I was praying. Actually, I was in India at this point.

I was in India for about six months while recovering from an illness that I was going through at the time, and the Lord spoke to me about Canada and said He wanted me to go to this country and that I was going to be in ministry, I was going to be preaching there. And I didn't know much about Canada, to be honest. Like in the Middle East, I mean, Global East, Global South, I feel like at least back then, we're talking 23 years ago, I felt like America was in the news all the time.

We followed American media all the time, of course, and shows and all of that, but not really much about Canada. So, it was an interesting thing that happened in my heart. I started loving this nation I'd never been to or didn't know much about and really sensed that God wanted me to come here and to be part of ministry.

Scripture Untangled

Season 14: Episode 5 | Finu Iype | How Can Christians Reach a Changing Canada?

Didn't know exactly how. I mean, again, I was 17 when God first spoke to me about Canada, so I didn't have strategy. I just knew that this was the path that I needed to take in life.

And so, yeah, applied to a Bible college called Canada Christian College in Toronto and got here. And yeah, like you said, I mean, of course, millions of Canadians, I mean, throughout Canadian history, of course, but if you look at the last few decades from, you know, all around the world, including people like me, I'm of Indian descent, didn't live there much. But, you know, there's so many people that have come to our nation from all those nations of the world, and it's tough and it's intimidating.

And I didn't know what I was signing up for at all. I remember getting off at Don Mills in Eglinton in Toronto, getting off the TTC bus and completely lost my way. I had no clue how to get to the college.

I mean, I had friends who had told me on a map, you know, you get off at this bus stop, and this is how you get there. Completely lost my way, went in circles for an hour. It's only like a 10-minute walk, not even.

And I remember thinking, oh, Lord, I'm in this completely. I have no clue where I'm at right now and what's going to happen. It was sort of maybe a template for how I felt about my life and calling as well to say, I'm really lost, Lord, without you, and I need to figure out what you want me to do.

But it was one step at a time, obviously, as the Lord sort of led me in those first few weeks and months of being in Canada and, yeah, just had a love for the nation.

Lorna Dueck: You're praying mother, honestly.

Finu Iype: Yeah, that's true.

Lorna Dueck: Even helping you find your way on the streets; you're praying mom back home. Okay, you finished that Bible college degree, and you feel called to be an evangelist, an active evangelist in small-town Ontario. Tell us about that.

Scripture Untangled

Season 14: Episode 5 | Finu Iype | How Can Christians Reach a Changing Canada?

Finu Iype: Yeah, I mean, it wasn't when I was done Bible college. I had a Bible college professor who became my mentor who said to me, you know, a lot of people are done their, you know, undergrad at Bible college and they don't quite know what they want to do and they're going to try to figure it out at the end of the three or four years. And he said, what I'd love for your story to be is that at the end of your school, you're like a jumbo jet at the end of a runway.

You're just about taking off because you've already been doing the work. And so probably year one, I started organizing meetings with young people, prayer meetings, Praying for Canada, all of this. And by year two, I just started having these opportunities to go into small-town Ontario or around the greater Toronto area.

So, places like, I mean, Hanover, Mayford, Kincardine, Goderich, Owen Sound, all these places. And, you know, again, it was crazy. Now that I think about it, I was just talking to a friend of mine.

I hadn't talked to him in maybe a decade, just Face Timed with him two days ago. And we were talking about those initial years and I was saying, I can't imagine that I was 18 or 19 years old and walking up to these churches, no appointments, no one knows me. I just knock on the door, walk in.

And I speak with such confidence that I think the administrative assistants or the receptionist thought I knew the lead pastors because I just said, hey, can I speak to Brian? I just dropped in to see him. And does Brian come out? Of course, Brian's never met me in his life. And I just start talking, you know, and I'm like, hey, I'm Finu.

I'm from, you know, Canada, from Toronto, and I really feel called to do evangelistic work. I'm working with the churches in your community. I'm wondering if you would want to be a part of something that we're doing to reach people.

And again, you know, I'm a kid from Bahrain. No one's heard of Bahrain. I am not Caucasian, obviously, and these communities were completely Caucasian at the time, at least, 23 years ago, 22 years ago.

Scripture Untangled

Season 14: Episode 5 | Finu lype | How Can Christians Reach a Changing Canada?

And I have a funny name that no one can quite remember or pronounce correctly. And I have a really strong Indian accent that people can't understand. I mean, I had meetings where people would be laughing, not because I cracked a joke, because I was just pronouncing words wrong, you know, or not wrong, but just like with my accent, which was just hilarious, I suppose.

And so, my point is, looking back, I just don't even know how it all worked out, except that the Lord had called me and I had a sense of boldness that I was just going to do the thing God called me to do. And it didn't matter to me if people thought I was different or whatever. You know, I was just going to just be faithful.

Lorna Dueck: But you did gather Canadians, right? Tell us about that. There was still, there is still a hunger, but back then you just were available to God to say, I want to gather people to hear and learn about Jesus.

Finu lype: Yeah, you know, for me, when I think about the Scripture, for me, I grew up in a Christian home, right? Gave my life to Christ when I was seven, baptized when I was 12.

When I was 15, I had a real powerful encounter with the Holy Spirit where the Bible became real to me. And I mean, I've read my Bible. Obviously, I had to sort of, I was forced to, I guess, in some ways you grew up in a Christian home.

But it was more, the Scriptures were more for like, hey, this is the plan of salvation. And so, one day you'll get to heaven, and this is why you are a follower of Jesus. It turned from that to, you know, God's actually working in the world today.

And if you will faithfully preach the Bible, God is going to transform people. You know, everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. And so that Scripture, and then, you know, Hebrews 13, Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Scripture Untangled

Season 14: Episode 5 | Finu Iype | How Can Christians Reach a Changing Canada?

And I, when I was a teenager in Bahrain, and, you know, I was going through all this stuff that I was dealing with at the time, including sickness and healing and all of this, it just became so real to me that if the Bible is preached faithfully, that God is going to transform people's lives. And I just believed that wholeheartedly. And I think that was maybe the key to success, why I was even able to work with churches from different denominations and backgrounds, because it wasn't about, you know, secondary issues.

For me, it was, I just want to see people come to faith in Christ. I want a transformation to happen in people's lives. And people were, yeah, I guess they were hungry for that, you know, and the churches wanted that.

And then there was something also about unity. Like, I really cared about unity. Like, I'd go to some towns where the churches in that town had not come together for an evangelistic push, you know, in meetings or gatherings for decades, you know? And so, the fact that someone was willing to do that and raise the money to make that all happen, yeah, I think that spoke to people.

And again, God's favour was on that.

Lorna Dueck: Well, we need you back in small-town Canada. However, let's just advance the clock, because as you are doing that, as you're being very active in sharing the Gospel in small-town Canada that way, big-town Canada comes knocking on your door.

Village Church, which currently has six churches in Canadian cities, Mark Clark was... We were all just cheering this amazing work on that Mark Clark and his family had started at Village Church. And he comes knocking on your door, and Village reaches out and says, you need to think about coming on staff here. Tell us a little bit about that big journey.

Finu Iype: Sure. Let me just fill in the blanks a little bit here. So small-town Ontario doing these meetings, you know, early 19, 20, 21.

Scripture Untangled

Season 14: Episode 5 | Finu Iype | How Can Christians Reach a Changing Canada?

Then God starts opening doors globally for us as a ministry. So, I started this, again, I started this, you know, charity ministry called *Passions Reach Ministries*, registered with the CRA when I was 19 years old, all of this, you know. And so, I started raising money, and then God started opening doors around the world.

So, we did that for about seven or eight years, 20, 25 countries, you know, Gospel meetings, open-air rent-out fields in, you know, Africa, South America, India, et cetera. So, we did that for those number of years. And then God reminded me again about my calling to Canada.

This is back in probably about 2015. And my challenge, Lorna, was I didn't quite know how to operate as an evangelist in a larger context and also in the context of the local churches. And my heart was, how do we help the local church actually become missional? Because the evangelistic work that I was doing is good, but it's sort of external, right? It's almost like, oh, there's this preacher guy coming to town, and we're going to join these meetings, and we're going to invite our friends, which is great.

But how do you consistently do that in a local church setting? And so that was sort of my heart and desire and passion at the time. And so, the Lord, you know, gave me an opportunity to start working with churches, almost like consulting with churches in evangelism and discipleship. And we started this conference called GO Conference, Gospel Outreach Conference, which grew from like initially when I started it, most of my, you know, friends were like, I don't think this is going to work because most people don't care about evangelism.

They want, I don't know, something to do with something that feels good. And I was really convinced that, you know, God really wanted to equip Canadians to reach the people that he was bringing from all over the world. And so started this conference, started with like 200 people.

Scripture Untangled

Season 14: Episode 5 | Finu Iype | How Can Christians Reach a Changing Canada?

Within a year, it was like, I think, 1,500 people. In a couple of years, it was 2,000. So, thousands of people, a couple thousand people were coming together once a year to gather, to get trained.

And then out of that, we were working with local churches throughout the year, just helping them figure out how to become more intentional in praying and reaching out to their communities and seeing those people become followers of Jesus, which is the connection to Village Church. Because Mark was one of my speakers for the conference one year. We didn't really have a relationship at all.

He just was in and out speaking at the conference in Toronto. And then in 2019, I had him come, and he was speaking at a young adult conference. Same idea, same theme, evangelism, how do young people reach their friends at university, et cetera.

And we decided we were going to just sit down and have a conversation after. So, this would have been our first time actually sitting down and talking. And, yeah, he really felt that God had spoken to him earlier that day during the conference that I should come on the team at Village Church.

And I had never worked for anyone. I started this ministry when I was 18, 19 years old. So, my joke to him was, like, I always sign my own paychecks.

And so, I'm not used to working for somebody else, working in a church. I had always said, actually, I don't know if I should say this on this podcast. I don't know.

I'd always said I'd never be a pastor. You know, I was like, oh, in my mind, pastors were a bit like the maintainers, the service departments, if you will, of a car dealership, versus I wanted to be on the sales side. I want to be marketing the Gospel.

I want to get new people in through the doors. And that was my heart. So, in my mind, of course, not an accurate description of a pastor, but I had caricatured pastors to go, that's what they primarily focus on, and I really don't want to do that.

Scripture Untangled

Season 14: Episode 5 | Finu Iype | How Can Christians Reach a Changing Canada?

So, I was pushing back in this meeting, this lunch we had about even considering Village. But what had happened was about six months prior to this, I had someone give me a prophetic word that basically said, that accurately described what God was doing in our ministry at the time, and said, the Lord is going to give you, you're pouring new wine into old wineskins, the Lord's going to give you a new wineskin, and he will speak to a person in the province of British Columbia, and this person will come and make a covenant with you, and it will not be for a short period of time, it will be for a long period of time, and here's what I'm going to do through this. And someone else in the room had recorded this prophetic word, so I had the audio of it.

Of course, I'd never been, at that time, I'd never been west of Ontario in Canada, so I had no friends in BC, I had no connections to British Columbia. So halfway through the lunch, while I'm pushing back at even the possibility that this could be a thing, me joining Village Church, becoming a pastor, I remembered that, wait a minute, this guys from BC, what if? And so, anyways, that's sort of how the conversation started. It took about a year of discerning.

Part of the challenge at the time, which is sort of hilarious now, was, you talked about my mom, my mom was very much against me doing this. Part of the reason was, at Village at the time, Mark was the primary communicator, and so if you joined as a pastor on the Village Church team, you were most likely not preaching a sermon, and you were just basically helping run the church, and my role at the time was going to be to help start multiple locations for Village in the greater Toronto area. So, my mom was like, no, you're called to preach the Gospel.

You cannot, like, get a role. Preaching is not part of what you're going to do. And I'm like, Mom, I love preaching, and I was basically booked to preach like every weekend of the year, usually, plus the global stuff, but I said, I can't worship the gift more than I worship the God who gave me the gift, and so I've got to just honor God, and I really sense He's calling me to this, not just because of the prophetic word, but there were multiple confirmations along the way, and honestly, Lorna, the reason Village was

Scripture Untangled

Season 14: Episode 5 | Finu Iype | How Can Christians Reach a Changing Canada?

really attractive to me at the time, I remember coming out here to BC, so the first time I came to BC was for Village, because they asked me to come out just to see the sites and get to know the team, and when I came back home in Toronto and talked to my friends about it, because I was just discerning with a group of people, I said, the thing about Village that I loved was, Village was like an evangelistic ministry disguised as a church.

In other words, it wasn't about, like every decision the church was making at the time, and I was talking to people here, trying to understand how Village functioned, it was always focused at how do we reach the skeptic? How do we reach the person that has given up on church, has no idea of Jesus or the Gospel, and will find certain things in church world just strange, because they have no context for it. How do we speak to that person? How do we, in our preaching, in our worship, in how we welcome people at the door, all of it. And I loved that.

And frankly, that was part of what I was trying to do at the time, in my consulting work with churches that I, we called back then, we used to call them legacy churches, churches that have been around 40, 50 years, which after that period of time, you just become internally focused. It's just the natural drift of church. It's like, how can we feel more comfortable? How can the church serve us versus how well are we reaching the community? And Village was doing that.

And I really loved that. And it also showed me that the local church can be an engine for evangelism and missional work in the context of a community, if it's directed correctly. And honestly, Mark Clark was, I don't know, he was just the most incredible pastor, leader, apostolic leader.

He just built the church with the sole focus of how do we reach more people? And Mark loved the church, but he would say to me, he's like, Finu, I'm ultimately going to focus always on reaching people. And if people who become Christians or are Christians are like, ah, you're too radical, you're just trying too hard to reach people. You're not focusing enough on the comfort of the people in the church.

Scripture Untangled

Season 14: Episode 5 | Finu Iype | How Can Christians Reach a Changing Canada?

He's like, I'd rather those people find another church versus slow down our focus on reaching people who are far from Jesus. And I just love that. And I'm so grateful for now today as the senior pastor, I'm grateful for Mark's vision and commitment to the Gospel in that way.

Lorna Dueck: Wow. Okay.

There's a lot of people listening who have not been to Village Church and you guys are really upfront on the website that there's eight things we're going to experience at church. Just tell us what we might expect when we would go to one of the Village Churches across Canada.

Finu Iype: I think the eight things you're referring to probably is the discipleship and how we want to see people formed in their walk with Jesus.

I think the thing about Village, if you come to a Village Church location, it's how welcoming we are of the outsider, I think is a key. Like we try to build our church around the idea that every Sunday is someone's first Sunday. And we want to... now, you know, frankly, there's one thing that maybe is helpful for us.

Everything we do is rental. So, everything's a rental. So, we don't actually even have like institutional memory when it comes to, let's say a building where everyone knows where the washrooms are and everyone knows where everything is at.

It's set up and turned on every single Sunday at all of our locations. And so, I think there's that one is the welcoming warmth, the idea that, hey, we want to speak in such a way that that new person that walks through the door feels like they've been seen and they've been noticed. And we're speaking a language that makes sense to them.

I think the way we do preaching is, of course, Biblically faithful, but also always thinking about the person that doesn't know the terminology, doesn't understand the meanings. If we use a word like justification or propitiation or, you know, even the church, like sometimes we'll just explain when we say the word church, here's what

Scripture Untangled

Season 14: Episode 5 | Finu Iype | How Can Christians Reach a Changing Canada?

church means in the context of the culture we're living in. I think we're very focused on that.

I think that that matters a lot. And then the idea of community, like you can belong before you become. And I think that's really core to how we do ministry.

There isn't a gate, there isn't a test, you know, where you have to pass this test to actually become, you know, a part of our church. No, you can actually belong. You can even start serving on certain teams or specific teams where you may not even be a Christian yet, but we want you to get into a community.

We want you to like be shoulder to shoulder with people because you just enjoy being at church. One of the things I find so, I just heard this the other day, where there's this family that comes to a church and they're not Christians yet. I think they're Buddhists, but, you know, they come to church and I usually stand at the door greeting at our broadcast location at the Bell Center here in Surrey.

And they're like, Pastor, we invited some friends to come and they're not Christians. You need to pray for them. I'm like, you're not Christians yet.

You know what I mean? You're not Christians yet, but you're like, hey, pray for them that they'll hear the Gospel and they'll come to faith. And so, I think that says a lot about who we are as a church. Like non-Christians feel comfortable bringing their friends to go. I think this is going to be great for them.

God's Book: The Series: Before we return to today's conversation, here's a first look at an exciting new small group series from the Canadian Bible Society, *God's Book: The Series*. What does the Bible really say about science, miracles, violence, and suffering? *God's Book: The Series*, is tackling the Bible's toughest questions in a new eight-part video series created for young adults and others who are asking honest questions about the Bible.

Scripture Untangled

Season 14: Episode 5 | Finu Iype | How Can Christians Reach a Changing Canada?

Featuring Bible scholar Dr. Andrew Ollerton and three Canadian young adult hosts, *God's Book* explores some of the most challenging questions surrounding the Bible through thoughtful and accessible conversations for you and your group. The series is launching soon, and you can be among the first to know when it arrives. So, preview the trailer and be the first to get the free launch kit at godsbooktheseries.com. That's gods book the series . com . And now let's return to today's conversation.

Lorna Dueck: There's a lot of your DNA, personally, but also as a church, where you are seeing second-generation Christians who've grown up in ethno-cultural churches in Canada. Give us a challenge on how do those second-generation Christians share their faith with, as you said, all these different ethnic groups that are part and parcel?

Finu Iype: Yeah, this is, you know, I think it's a huge part of my heart towards, you know, that community for sure.

Like basically people that, so I give you context for my own story. So, when I first moved to Canada, I went to an Indian church because we had a relative here that had moved to Canada a year before I got here. And so, you know, you're new to the country, new to the city, Toronto.

And so obviously, I was staying with them. And so, I just went to church with them. And maybe, I don't know, 18 months to 24 months after I started attending that church, I left that church on a really good term, spoke to the pastor.

In fact, the pastor blessed me to leave. And the context there was what I found was that that church, like many ethnocentric churches, was so focused on keeping culture intact, which I understand the tension, you know, how your religion, and this is true not just for Christians that come from other countries, it's true for every religion, right? Your religious gathering also becomes a place for you to disciple your children and grandchildren on your culture. And you want them to retain some level of awareness,

Scripture Untangled

Season 14: Episode 5 | Finu Iype | How Can Christians Reach a Changing Canada?

familiarity with the dress and, you know, the food and how you worship God back in, you know, where you came from.

And so, the challenge was, of course, my sense of calling was to Canada. And I'm like, I can't stay here if I'm called to the nation because this is so internally focused towards that culture. So, I think my desire is, and I've said this often, is that we would see the second and third generation immigrant children of Christians.

So, they've grown up in the church. They believe in Jesus. They have a great heritage of faith that is worth a lot in our nation.

But they are educated in Canada. They've gone to schools in Canada, universities in Canada. They have friends in their life that are from, you know, every background you can imagine.

And yet they won't feel comfortable inviting those friends to their church because their church is very ethnocentric, of course. And so, I think there's something about, I've used this analogy of, you know, the Bible talks about children are like arrows, you know, and I think I am an arrow, if you will, from the Indian community to our nation. And the idea of an arrow is it goes much further than where you're actually releasing it.

That's the point. Why would you have an arrow if it sort of dropped to the floor right next to you? It doesn't make any sense. So, I think that should be the perspective, and I say this to pastors of Vietnamese churches and Chinese churches and Indian churches and Hispanic churches and all kinds of churches.

Your children should be arrows that you are releasing across the length and breadth of this nation because they have the heritage of faith that you brought to this nation. Now they have the ability to communicate in a way that is so broad that it can reach the entire nation. And you should allow them to do that.

Scripture Untangled

Season 14: Episode 5 | Finu Iype | How Can Christians Reach a Changing Canada?

And I think we are seeing that. We're seeing the benefit of that at our church where literally the nations of the world are gathering, and I think that is the future of Canada. And I say this often.

I believe God is bringing families to our country. They're coming. The first generation is probably coming for a better, you know, I don't know, opportunity for themselves, you know, financially, better opportunity for their children educationally.

But I believe God's ultimate purpose, sort of like the Jesse and David story, go take supplies to your brothers, but actually God's got a bigger plan. I think it's the same thing. I think it's, yeah, that's why the first generation is coming, but God's got a bigger plan for that second and third generation.

Lorna Dueck: Wow. You know, where I'm recording here, I live not far from some of the biggest temples and mosques in North America, North America's largest Hindu temple is just down the highway from me. We have many devout followers of non-Christian religions, and those people are thriving in Canada.

What is a Bible-informed approach to that reality, that we have many other religions in Canada?

Finu Iype: I'll start off with saying, you know, this is not a political statement about immigration strategy, but I will say growing up in a nation that was primarily predominantly Muslim, where, I mean, unlike certain Muslim countries, I'd say Bahrain, you know, the UAE, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, et cetera, have a lot of freedom for people to worship, you know, freely, except when it comes to evangelism. You know, you can't proselytize. You can't, talk to somebody about becoming a Christian if they're not a Christian already.

There's a lot of restrictions to that. I think God and His sovereignty is allowing our nation to welcome people from all over the world in a place where the public square is still open for conversation and communication about the Gospel, where you can actually see transformation happen because of the freedoms we enjoy here in

Scripture Untangled

Season 14: Episode 5 | Finu Iype | How Can Christians Reach a Changing Canada?

Canada when it comes to communicating Jesus. And so, I think that is something that every Christian ought to fully take advantage of.

And I think that the strategy, Lorna, it isn't us versus them. It is faithful presence in people's lives. And, you know, when we used to do Go Conference, right? Like we used to bring people who were formerly Muslims, formerly Hindus, formerly Sikhs, formerly Buddhists, whatever.

Or, obviously, no religion and atheists. And the number one thing, and my vision at the time was like, why don't we just get that person, you know, who used to follow another faith, who became a Christian, why don't we get them to tell us what worked for them? Like, what was it? What ultimately inspired you to want to like, you know what, I want to explore this Christianity religion, you know? And I'd say nine out of ten times, the top answer was always faithful presence of Christians in their life. You know, faithful presence of Christians who loved them, who cared for them, who noticed them, who shared meals with them, shared life with them.

And then, of course, at some point, faithfully, in a kind way, in a way that generated curiosity, shared the Gospel story, but also their own personal story of how Christ had transformed their life. And I think every Christian, ought to be intentional about that. Yeah, and I think that's one of the challenges we face, because our culture is so insular.

You know, it's like that garage door, right? It opens up, the car pulls in, the garage door closes, and we're in our own little bubble in our homes, and we don't always intentionally make those connections in our communities, which I think is ultimately the way God's going to work through us. And if you think about it, the number one challenge we're facing in all our big cities, it's true in Vancouver, like, it's loneliness. People are alone.

Scripture Untangled

Season 14: Episode 5 | Finu Iype | How Can Christians Reach a Changing Canada?

People are disconnected. And if you think about a family coming from another nation, for instance, if you want to specifically speak about reaching, you know, immigrants, they have all of their social networks are gone. They're alone in this country.

They may look like they know what they're doing, but often they're doubtful, very doubtful on the inside, trying to figure out how to navigate settling into this brand-new country. What an amazing opportunity for Canadians.

Lorna Dueck: They need to be invited into our homes, don't they?

Finu Iype: To be a guide.

Let me help you figure that out. Even if you never, again, even if you never become a Christian, the point isn't I'm trying to convert you. The point is I'm just trying to be a faithful Jesus presence in your life as you navigate what it means to become part of the Canadian mosaic and context.

Lorna Dueck: Wow. Okay. I'm running out of time, but I have some more questions.

I'm going to shift here now a moment. And I want to know about you and your Bible time. We are the Bible Society.

We love to hear how do people personally engage with the Bible? What's your spiritual time like?

Finu Iype: Yeah, I think, you know, the thing that changed my life was two things I'd say. One of the benefits of growing up in a Christian home is we had devotions every single day. I can't remember a day of my life where as a family we didn't sit together.

You know, Indian culture a little bit here. We had a prayer mat that was exclusively for praying. So basically, every evening the prayer mat would go down and the five of us, three boys, mom and dad, would sit down.

We would read the Bible together, and we would sing a couple of songs together in worship, and then each of us would pray. And when I had an encounter with Jesus

Scripture Untangled

Season 14: Episode 5 | Finu Iype | How Can Christians Reach a Changing Canada?

when I was 15, in a very sort of special way, of course, I knew the Lord most of my life, but I really got deeper in relationship with Him, I took over Bible devos for the family, which was very intimidating at the time. But I was reading my Bible every day, and the Holy Spirit started speaking to me.

So, for me personally, prayer, inviting the Spirit to speak and reading the Scriptures has been just like a formative thing that I have always had as part of my life. And I found that fasting helped me a lot when it came to understanding the Scriptures. We live in a very intellectually focused society, and so I would say a lot of what I see around me is like, yeah, let's read the latest commentaries, and let's look at the Greek, and let's look at the Hebrew, which is all good, and I do all of that.

Of course, you can imagine leading a church. But the thing that has made the most difference in my life is my prayer and fasting time in connection to reading Scripture, because I end up, it's almost like you're mining, and you continue to find gold, you continue to find diamonds, you continue to find truth that you've read the same stories a gazillion times for someone like me growing up in the church, and it's still speaking to you, and it's still showing you. I'm doing a devo for our staff tomorrow, when this is being recorded, and I'm sharing, I'm talking about the David and Goliath story, and I'm just like, I'm just in the mood.

I'm like, I have never seen this before. How is this possible? I'm 41. I've read the story when I was like, I don't know, a six-year-old, right, five-year-old, and that's because you're not just reading to learn.

You're reading to obey, and it's like, Lord, what do I need to hear today that needs to be obeyed? What needs to be done, implemented, executed in my life? Not just what information can I learn that's new and different.

Lorna Dueck: You have a busy lifestyle. You have two daughters, right, two daughters? And your wife.

How do you hold it together? How do you hold the schedule together?

Scripture Untangled

Season 14: Episode 5 | Finu Iype | How Can Christians Reach a Changing Canada?

Finu Iype: Not really well, honestly. I can listen to a podcast with someone else, hopefully, that can figure that out for us, but I will say it's been, it's definitely been challenging for us since we moved out here to B.C. two years ago now, partly because we're in the middle of a pretty big...

Lorna Dueck: Yes, we're going to ask, we're going to talk about that next, so.

Finu Iype: Okay, so considering that, I won't unpack that, but considering that and, you know, obviously also settling into a new area, my wife's getting a new job. She works a full-time job. She's also an executive.

She's an executive director of a pretty significant charity here in the Lower Mainland, so she has her own, you know, staffing and financing and all the stuff she has to do. I have my own, and so, yeah, it hasn't been easy, to be honest with you. We are doing our best.

We have good friends around us. I'm in a community group that I'm not leading where someone else gets to speak into my life and remind me of the basics of time with family and time with kids and being a dad and being a husband and being available to them. And so, yeah, it's a work in progress.

There's definitely tension there where you're trying to navigate a major role in a church setting plus, you know, family, especially the kids at that age.

Lorna Dueck: And so many of our young family listeners totally relate to that. Yeah, let's finish with this.

I don't know another Protestant church in this country that's doing a \$30 million building campaign like you guys are. You started by saying you're always meeting in different places, tear down, but your lease is up now at the Bell Center. And so, by faith, you guys launched an amazing building campaign for a permanent church.

Village is finally going to have its own roof over its head and a ministry center and \$30 million. How's it going?

Scripture Untangled

Season 14: Episode 5 | Finu Iype | How Can Christians Reach a Changing Canada?

Finu Iype: It's going actually amazing, to be honest with you.

Our church has stepped up in an incredible way. So, the project is \$62 million.

Lorna Dueck: \$62 million.

I'm way behind.

Finu Iype: Yeah, yeah. The hope, the goal was to raise 30.

We had about 6 to 7 million already saved, and we would have to borrow about 27. But we are praying for God to be able to bring in all of the funds, and hopefully we won't have to borrow very little or hopefully none. That's sort of the stretch goal.

That's the prayer. But so far, we've raised about 25, close to 25, 24 and change, in pledges that are coming in every month, which is amazing. And, yeah, our sort of next leg is to get to ideally 35 is what we're going for and make an announcement this Sunday at the church about it.

Lorna Dueck: But you will be without a home if you guys don't figure that out.

Finu Iype: That's right. Yeah.

This is it. And it's our broadcast location as well, so everything gets recorded there, goes to the other location. So, it's a very critical piece of everything God's called us to do as a church, and we're praying.

Definitely there are moments, Lorna, where it feels absolutely insurmountable. Again, working on this devotional about David and Goliath, it does feel like Goliath at times, and yet you see God's faithfulness through His people.

Lorna Dueck: I'm going to encourage our listeners to look at your website because there's a beautiful video, and it shows the scope, the cement pad and the construction underway.

And I'm just shaking my head.

Scripture Untangled

Season 14: Episode 5 | Finu Iype | How Can Christians Reach a Changing Canada?

Finu Iype: I'll just say this, the final thing. When it's done, the vision is it's going to be a national ministry center, not only for Village Church, but for what God wants to do in Canada, that we would be one of those churches that would be a place for national initiatives to have a home and to have a base from where churches across our nation could collaborate and work together to see the Gospel go forward in our country coast to coast to coast in the decades ahead.

And that's our heart. That's our vision. It's not just for us, but it's for Canada.

Lorna Dueck: Wow. Finu, thank you so much for coming on to Scripture Untangled. It's just fun to listen to your adventure with God and with Village Church.

And we've got in the show notes how people can connect with your church and with its website. Is there anything else you'd like to say in closing?

Finu Iype: No, I'm just really grateful for the work of CBS and how you're championing, you know, Biblical literacy across our nation, even around the world. And it's really exciting.

And I'm grateful that, yeah, I get to be on the podcast today. So, thank you, Lorna.

Lorna Dueck: All right.

All the best. Thank you so much.