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Messenger

october 2015



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heart to heart



“And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.—Genesis 1:31, ESV”

A Good Earth

Many of us now go online when we are shopping, to see how others rate such diverse things as restaurants, clothing, travel, a book, and the list goes on. What others say helps us choose. Experience is important.

So when I look at today's text, suddenly what it says becomes huge! The Genesis statement, given at the end of Creation week, is like today's online evaluation. But look who's talking. It's God. And coming from someone who lives in heaven, God's evaluation of earth is a big statement!

I have been thinking about my response to what God has placed around me. Do I have a responsibility to care for His creation in a respectful way? And if I do, what might that look like?

Some of my friends have strong feelings about the mining and petroleum industries. They fear that current practices are very damaging to the balance that God has placed in our environment. I respect their concern.

Other friends have a preference for using organic methods where they live as they grow food or fertilize their property. That certainly is commendable.

Becky takes care to recycle things. On garbage pickup day in our neighbourhood we make use of the recycling bins designated for paper products, glass, and plastics as provided by the municipalities where we live.

We have taken to using cloth bags from one of our favourite stores when we buy food, even though I grumbled a bit at first about paying for grocery bags.

There is a trail in my neighbourhood that sometimes is littered with wrappers, bottles, and all sorts of things that I can either complain about or help pick up. It's my choice. This brings my environmental concern to a practical level.

As Adventists we have been known as people who are focused on heaven. I wouldn't want that to change. But should we also be known as people who are protective of that which God has created? Perhaps that would be good.

And maybe in being careful Christians, respectful of our surroundings, we are tying together two creations spoken of in Scripture.

“But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells” (2 Pet. 3:13, ESV).

How about it? ■

Mark Johnson is president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada



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Cover photo by Halsey Peet.
Cover: Gabriel and Samrah, volunteers at Parula Farms, meet visitors with welcoming smiles.



Michael Kirkby at Bugesera



"Cooking show host" preparing a massive pot of beans for refugees at Bugesera.



Community leaders delivering their group's ration of beans to be distributed.

DINNERTIME AT BUGESERA

I BLINKED AWAY THE STINGING IN MY EYES, causing large tears to roll down my cheeks. The smoke was especially thick, and I found myself stifling yet another cough. Through the smoke-induced tears I struggled to look through the viewfinder on my camera. On the other side of my lens was a man, smiling, seemingly oblivious to the blinding smoke coming from the fire beneath the large pot of beans that he was stirring. He was laughing as he spoke in a teacherlike tone, pouring a gallon jug of oil into the massive pot between us. Behind me I could hear his fellow cooks laughing. When I asked the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) staff what he was saying, I was told he had seen my camera and thought it was time to start his own cooking show. There was much more laughter as I checked the focus and snapped another picture.

As I stepped out of the makeshift kitchen, which had once been a drive-shed for machinery, rubbing the sting of smoke from my eyes, I began to walk through row upon row of barrack-style tents. I was in Rwanda, visiting the Bugesera Transit Camp. The camp hosts refugees fleeing violence in neighbouring Burundi. At the time of my visit the camp housed 6,000 refugees, and more tents were being built in anticipation of many more. From here the refugees are re-assigned to larger camps, some with populations in excess of 25,000 people.

In Rwanda refugee camps, and transit camps like Bugesera, are under the care of ADRA. The United Nations High Commission

for Refugees (UNHCR) has chosen ADRA to run logistics at many camps. This means that ADRA is responsible for providing food, shelter, and other items, such as cans for water or sanitary supplies, often in partnership with other agencies.

As I returned to the kitchens, the smell of burning wood and cooking beans again filled my nostrils. A line had formed. It was made up of "community" leaders, who would collect the rations for their group in a large bucket and bring them back to their section to be shared. It is done this way to avoid confusion and overcrowding at the kitchens. At the front of the line our "cooking show host" and a few other ADRA staff were filling buckets with beans and porridge. The smiles on their faces were infectious. Everyone who came up to collect their food had a smile flash across their lips at least once, even if for a moment.

As the refugee crisis around the world becomes more severe, I often think of the "cooking show host" and the many people like him around the world who are working to make the lives of refugees better.

The UNHCR's trust in ADRA gives me a sense of pride, pride not only in ADRA but also in the people all over Canada and the world who help make our work possible. ■

Michael Kirkby is the Connections
Coordinator at ADRA Canada.



Attitude Matters

"...but if you say so, we will do it."—*Luke 5:5*

Four lepers were starving to death and did not know what to do, for there was a famine in the land. Then one of them had a bright idea.

"Why don't we go to the enemy's camp [Arameans] and see if they'll have mercy on us and give us something to eat?"

"That's very risky," the others said.

"I think that there is more hope in going to the camp of the Arameans than in sitting here waiting to die. At least with this option, we have a 50 percent chance of staying alive."

"OK, let's go," they said.

And so the four men got up and began walking toward the enemy's camp.

In a miraculous way God rewarded their courageous decision, for as they approached the enemy's camp, something strange happened. The Arameans heard the sound of chariots and horses as if a great army were descending upon them. They panicked and left in a hurry to save their lives. Thus, when the four lepers reached the camp, they were befuddled to see the camp abandoned. The four men suddenly found themselves in the midst of plenty surrounded by gold, silver, clothing, and an abundance of food.

This incredible story is recorded in 2 Kings 7:3-11. It is a story of how God rewards faith, even little faith. It is a story of how having a positive attitude in life produces results unimaginable. Had the four lepers remained in their hopeless condition, not willing to venture out in faith, they would have died of starvation.

Moving forward is more rewarding than standing still when standing still represents an unwillingness to try new things because of fear. Nothing in life is accomplished without an element of risk. When we walk out of the door of our houses, when we drive our cars on the highway, when we go shopping, when we eat at a restaurant, or when we are in a prayer meeting, danger lurks. But we must choose to live, not in the

shadow of fear, but in the openness of hope. We must have a positive attitude and trust God for good outcomes, even when our experience and knowledge may dictate otherwise.

The story of Peter's conversion from catching fish to catching men is instructive. He was washing his nets in preparation for his next fishing expedition, when Jesus entered his boat and asked him to move out into deeper waters. Sitting in the boat, Jesus preached to the crowd on the shore. When He was finished, Jesus told Peter to launch out into the deep for a catch. But Peter was reluctant.

Why was Peter reluctant? Here are the two reasons he gave: "Master, we fished all night and didn't catch a thing. This is the wrong time to fish" (see Luke 5:5). In other words, Peter was telling Jesus that in light of his own experience and knowledge of the sea, His request didn't make any sense; he was, therefore, unwilling to do as Jesus requested—a negative attitude, to say the least.

To his credit, Peter quickly remembered that he was talking to Jesus, who had "made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them" (Exod. 20:11, NASB). So in spite of his doubts, he chose to move forward in faith, ending his response with "...but if you say so, we will do it" (see Luke 5:5). And by displaying this positive attitude in the end, Peter and his companions had their largest catch ever and experienced a great transformation in life and profession, from being ordinary fishermen to extraordinary fishers of men. Attitude matters. ■

Dennis Marshall is general vice-president/director of education for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada.



teen talk

Q: Something very dramatic happened in my life recently, and I don't feel like singing praises to God at church anymore. How could I, after all the evil He has allowed?

A: It's OK not to feel like singing praises.

What you're feeling is totally normal in any kind of relationship. Friendships go through many stages and are not immune to dramatic events like the one you just suffered. The same applies to our interaction with God; at times it will be an adventurous thriller, and you'll feel in your heart that you'd even give your life to defend his name. On other occasions you'll feel apathetic, especially if you guys haven't talked much for a long period of time. Then, days like these will come—days filled with more questions than answers, days of sorrow and apparent lack of concern from God's side.

But throughout all these emotional ups and downs there's something that remains unmovable: God's stubborn love for you. He will patiently receive your sharp accusations, empathize with the anguish of your grief, and sit quietly by your side. He will wait until you calm down and will carefully lay his hand on your shoulder. The delicate touch of that pierced hand will remind you of his ultimate sacrifice, and any doubts of his intentions with our world will start to weaken. ■



creation corner for kids

He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads.—Revelation 13:16, NKJV

Whooping crane



In 1938, there were only 15 adult whooping cranes left in the world. Here are some ways scientists have tried to keep whooping cranes from going extinct. In 1975, whooping crane eggs were put into the nests of sandhill cranes, but the chicks that hatched thought they were sandhill cranes and didn't raise any whooping crane chicks when they became adults. Scientists then tried raising cranes in Kissimmee, Florida, but cranes there kept dying and did not produce chicks.

In 2001, whooping crane chicks hatched in captivity were raised by people wearing white costumes. They were fed by hand puppets that looked like adult whoopers. When they could fly, they learned to follow an ultralight plane piloted by a man wearing a whooping crane costume. That fall, the young whooping cranes followed the ultralight to a new wintering location in Florida.

Think about it.

Young whooping cranes are tricked into going to a place they have never been before because they have been trained to trust and follow a leader pretending to be one of them. The ultralight pilot is a scientist who cares for the whooping cranes. But many people have been tricked into following a leader who doesn't care about them and only wants to destroy them. By rejecting Jesus and His teachings and by disobeying Him, many people are trained to follow Satan. Sadly, they will be marked as his because they accept his teachings or do what he wants them to do.

Do it!

Who is your leader? Does Jesus control all your thoughts and actions? Ask Him to lead you and help you to follow only Him.

faculty profile

Kevin Burrell



Kevin Burrell

For the next few months we will be introducing our newest faculty members to you. These men and women will be the voices that young people will be dialoguing with during their time at Burman University.

A FEW QUESTIONS IN AND PROFESSOR KEVIN BURRELL, the newest member of the Burman University Faculty of Religious Studies, has already imparted wisdom in biblical languages. It is obvious that his passion for biblical languages and ministry will be passed on to new Burman University students and influence a new generation of pastors.

Kevin did not always want to be a pastor. While he was active in his church when he was younger, his attention shifted to the sciences and he started attending the University of Toronto as a human biology major. He came to the realization that this was not the path for him, and after meandering along various routes he finally accepted the call to ministry.

"I decided to become a pastor because I felt that God was specifically leading me in this direction. I was also motivated by the encouragement I received from many people who pointed me in this direction," said Burrell. The encouragement he received from his family at home and his church family fuelled his push toward ministry.

Through the encouragement of his mentors he decided to move to Lacombe, Alta., with his wife, Val, and their two children, Jonathan and Jesse. Kevin and his family wanted to stay in Canada, so the choice of Burman University was a perfect fit. He dove right into his classes and entire university experience. Ask him to choose his favourite classes and he is at a loss for words.

"This is like asking, 'Which is your favourite child?' You love them all! But, in no particular order, I really enjoyed Hebrew, Conflict Resolution, Archaeology, Seventh-day Adventist History, and Human Ecology," states Burrell.

Being in a university environment sparked his own academic interests. Burman University professors and administration saw the potential in Kevin and encouraged him to think about becoming a Burman professor in the future. "The encouragement of key individuals helped to spark my own academic interest. My decision to become a professor came about largely because of the foresight of professors and administrators at Burman who saw 'potential' in me and encouraged me toward further education. While I take full ownership of my decision to pursue academics, I have constantly seen God working through individuals and circumstances to make my path clear," says Burrell.

After pastoring in the British Columbia Conference, Kevin, along with his family, moved back to the Burman University campus as a professor in the religious studies faculty. He plans on bringing back to the classroom what he has learned from pastoral ministry. "The experience I have gained from my short time as a pastor in the British Columbia Conference is indispensable to my role as a religious studies professor. It was while serving as a pastor that I began to learn in practical terms the value of being supportive, encouraging, and motivating to the members of my congregations. At minimum, I wish to bring this kind of supportive, encouraging, and motivating spirit to the classroom," says Burrell.

In his first full year in the religious studies faculty he is excited for the interaction with the students. "I'm looking forward to the overall experience of engaging with students this upcoming school year. Students bring such enthusiasm, insights, and fun into the classroom, and I really enjoy both teaching and learning from them."

Having sat in the same classes and chairs as his current

students, Kevin is hoping that he can share both the perspective of a student and a teacher to his class.

"Students can expect to find warm, supportive, and academically competent teachers who are serious about God's call in their lives. Just as I was, so each student will be encouraged to strive for his or her highest spiritual and academic potential. This is a great place to learn of Christ, grow spiritually, and be prepared for Christian service. This is really a great place to be," says Burrell.

These students will receive a passionate education in the biblical languages, as Hebrew is one of his favourite classes to teach. "I find Greek and Hebrew extremely liberating when studying the Bible. This is because you get to experience the text in the original languages with all of the idioms and nuances that are necessarily lost in translation. The biblical languages allow you to appreciate the literary and historical contexts of Scripture much more fully than you would without them," states Burrell.

After all the biblical language classes and papers are completed, there are two things that he wants each of his students to come away with. First, he wants each one of them to develop authenticity in their ministry. "Being genuine about one's Christian profession by dispensing with superficiality (also known as "hypocrisy" from the Greek *hypokrites*, meaning "actor," "pretender")—that has remained an important goal of mine and a value I wish to pass on to students," says Burrell. The second value he would like to impart to his students is servant-leadership. He wants to see the shift focus more toward the servant aspect. He states, "We typically stress the leadership facet of servant-leadership while often ignoring the servant aspect. I wish to model the full measure of servant-leadership in my own life and teaching, while trusting that students will find value in the same." ■

JR Ferrer is the director of communication for Burman University.



THE UNIVERSITY IS ALSO LOOKING FOR A NEW VICE-PRESIDENT OF ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATION

(VPAA), one of the most important positions on campus. "As the coordinator of all academic activities on campus, the VPAA has the privilege of ensuring students receive a life-changing education at Burman University. Each aspect of the VPAA's work, from ensuring accreditation requirements to helping professors integrate faith and learning in creative and meaningful ways, is an opportunity to help students make their dreams of education, career, and Christian service come true," states Dr. Mark Haynal, Burman University president. *For more information about the VPAA position, see our advertisement in the classifieds section.* ■

Where Are They Now



Cliff and Betty Sorensen

Messenger: Tell me about your childhood and early education.

Cliff Sorensen: I was born in Vancouver, B.C., to a teenage mother who became an alcoholic before my first birthday. Consequently, my grandfather—Mom's dad, who had emigrated from Finland—accepted the task of raising me. Upon completing Grade 8 (in a school where my teacher taught 52 students), my grandfather came to me and said, "You now have a fine education. You can read and write and can work with numbers. It is now time for you to go to work." And so, on a Monday morning with a small suitcase containing my meager belongings, I left what had been my home.

M: Where did you go and what did you do?

C: I headed for a ranch on which I had previously worked. I knew they needed summer help and I would likely be able to get my old job. I was offered a full-time job at the end of the summer for a dollar a day and room and board. After a couple of years the farm was sold, and the new owners asked if I would stay through the summer. I shall never forget the first Friday with them. It was mid-morning in a quiet spot when the owner shared something with me I had never heard before. He said, "Tomorrow we will not be working.

Messenger catches up with former leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada. In this issue we talk with Cliff Sorensen.

Interview by J.D. Victor Fitch, Messenger Staff Writer.

It is our Sabbath, and if you have a commitment to Sunday, you may have that off also." The new owners were Russell and Fern Reising from Winfield, B.C.

M: How did this affect your life?

C: After several months I was introduced to Walter Toews, who, over time, shared with me the tenets of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and I was baptized in May of 1952. At the encouragement of the small church I attended and the special persuasion of Leonard Kettner, I departed for CUC High School and enrolled in the high school adult degree program.

M: Please outline your education.

C: Attending CUC opened a vast vista of new and exciting fields of knowledge and information. I completed the Adult High School program in two years, followed by two years of college, graduating in 1956. That summer I married Betty Heinrichs. We moved to Walla Walla College, where I completed my bachelor's and master's degrees. Through a National Science Foundation Grant I took graduate mathematics at Colorado State University and Stanford University before completing my doctorate at the University of Southern California in 1973. How thankful I am for CUC, where I was provided a foundation that enabled me to succeed in the most challenging circumstances and the privilege of serving for a period of 40 years.

M: Briefly tell us where you served the church.

C: My first position was to teach Grades 9 and 10—all subjects—in Bremerton, Wash. Then I worked as vice-principal at Seattle Junior Academy and Walla Walla College Academy. My next assignment was principal of the academy at Pacific Union College in Angwin, Calif., followed by principal at San Pasqual Academy in Escondido, Calif. I served as education superintendent for the Southern California Conference before moving to Walla Walla University as chair of the education department, followed by academic dean, then president for nine years. After serving as the executive director of the Board of Higher Education for the North American Division, I was called home serving as conference president from 1989 to 1990. I completed my career as president of Washington Adventist University and, finally, president of Atlantic Union College.

M: Tell me about your family and where you are now.

C: Betty has an RN degree and served 26 years, mostly in Adventist hospitals. We have two children, Melvin (Cindy) is an attorney, and they have two daughters. Our daughter, Laura, is a nurse anesthetist. She and her husband, Perry Sørner, have a son and a daughter. We have retired in Vancouver, Wash. ■

Using a Charitable Insured Annuity for Retirement Planning



FRANK AND LOUISE WEREN'T BIG WAGE EARNERS, but they had been able to save diligently, and retirement seemed to be just around the corner for them.

The previous five years had been especially good to them, as they had invested in mutual funds, and these had gone up because of the improving economy in Canada and the United States. Capital gains¹ inside of their RRSPs² would be a non-event until they started withdrawing the money, but capital gains outside of the RRSPs were going to generate a substantial tax bill at the time of sale. Frank and Louise wanted to deal with these capital gains sooner rather than later. They were looking to simplify their lives.

As an investment advisor, I put on seminars on planned giving and estate planning at B.C. campmeeting, and Frank had come to my seminar the previous year. He and Louise had been thinking about some of the options presented at that discussion and decided to give me a call.

We conducted a thorough financial plan to review their income needs as well as retirement and estate goals. They had one daughter, whom they wanted to help financially, and they loved the Lord and His church, so they wanted to give a large part of their assets to the church as well.

It became apparent early on that several major benefits could be achieved by constructing a *charitable insured annuity* for a portion of their assets.

Unlike the *charitable "gift" annuity* that is prevalent in church circles in the United States, a charitable "insured" annuity gives the holders a guaranteed income for life, and because of the life insurance portion, 100 percent of the principal invested goes to the church upon the holder's death. On the other hand, with a charitable "gift" annuity, the amount left to the church upon

death is unknown and may be small. Annuity payments are based on life expectancy table, and are a blend of principal and interest. The longer the holder lives, the less there will be left over for the church to receive.

Frank and Louise decided to go with a charitable insured annuity for several reasons. First, the annuity would give them a higher-than-average, risk-free income while they were alive, much like an additional pension. Second, the capital gain from the sale of their mutual funds could be virtually eliminated by using a portion of the proceeds to buy an insurance policy that makes the Adventist Church the recipient of the insurance policy proceeds. The cost of the insurance is considered a charitable donation if the church or an affiliated organization is the irrevocable beneficiary. Finally, no probate fees³ would be incurred on these assets. This can be a significant savings for some accounts.

Frank and Louise had to qualify for the insurance, but their healthy lifestyles made this part easy. Insured annuities generally work best for healthy people between the ages of 65 and 80.

The end result was a simpler portfolio that produces a higher risk-free income. Frank and Louise's charitable wishes toward the church would be carried out in a more effective manner than if it had simply been included in their will. This was a timely decision for Frank and Louise, because the government is changing the effectiveness of these insured annuities by 2017.⁴

No two people or families I deal with are exactly the same. We each have our own financial fingerprint, and there are creative financial solutions for all kinds of individuals, families, and their corporations and estates, just as there was for Frank and Louise. ■

Rick Wiegel is an investment advisor in Victoria, B.C.

¹ Capital gains are the profit from the sale of an investment.

² Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP).

³ Probate fees may be charged to an estate. These fees are charged when establishing the validity of the will. Fees vary from province to province.

⁴ Legislation changes through Bill C-43 will affect certain Life Insurance and Annuity contracts. These changes will affect new policies and annuities starting in 2017.

Young Canadians are becoming lifelong humanitarians



Jessica Llewellyn with one of the children from Male Primary School

After many months of preparation, the young Canadians set foot on Kenyan soil. Their July 4-19 mission? To learn about projects sponsored by A Better World Canada, connect with the community, and aspire to help in the future.

Nine young ladies aged 17 to 25 received \$2,000 scholarships to go on a trip organized by Tomorrow's EDGE, a youth division of A Better World (ABW), an organization that was created 25 years ago and is governed by the College Heights Seventh-day Adventist Church in Lacombe, Alta.

Tomorrow's EDGE encourages high school and university students to engage in lifelong humanitarian work; toward that end, trip-goers participate in five months of online instruction. The pros and cons of poverty is one topic, for example.

Jessica Llewellyn of Bedford, N.S., visited Kenya in July. Prior to that, in 2011, she went with her family to St. Lucia with the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) Canada. They helped build a water cistern on the Caribbean island.

The EDGE trip gave the now 18-year-old independence but still within a group setting. "What I liked most was how much it opened my eyes to what happens in a developing country and how happy the people are with nothing," said Llewellyn. "It really humbles you."

Rayna Sutherland raised money for A Better World while

attending Sunshine Hills Elementary School in Delta, B.C. Now older, she was interested in viewing projects firsthand. "I really wanted to see the impact of how A Better World implements and maintains projects," said Sutherland, 17.

The EDGE team visited various projects while under the direction of Eric Rajah, co-founder of A Better World, and Rick Wiebe, a volunteer and project sponsor from Red Deer, Alta.

Angela McKenna, a 23-year-old from Lacombe and a Prince Edward Island native, was impressed to see one community take value in its children with disabilities. She took part in a physiotherapy clinic.

"We were doing some casting on little boys with club feet. It was sad, but knowing that they have that support was very enlightening," said McKenna, an aspiring occupational therapist.

Wiebe, a business owner, posed a question for the team to think about through the day, and later on they would chat about what they saw and learned.

"The trip was very informative and hands-on," said McKenna, who has also travelled to Bolivia with A Better World.

Young people can offer a new perspective on projects, she added. They were given practice to help. The EDGE team conducted a leadership workshop at one location.

"At first, the men were a little stand-offish because women over there don't tend to be in leadership roles," said McKenna. "Then they said, 'We need to get some of our women in these workshops,' so it was very inspiring."

Sutherland said it was so good to see how training is helping communities become sustainable. The trip was positive for her, too, because it solidified her intentions to take international development in university.

"How do you balance being financially stable yourself but also making the impact you want to make?" said Sutherland, a Grade 12 student. "That's the biggest question for me right now—how to make both work."

Llewellyn wants to be a registered nurse and help people around the world.

McKenna always dreamed of going to Kenya. "You have the opportunity to meet with locals and connect with them," she said. "You're always thinking of ways to support them." ■

Laura Tester travels with A Better World and is a freelance writer for newspapers.

Following Jesus or Following the Crowd

Are we willing to remain peculiar and unpopular as the culture calls us inhospitable?

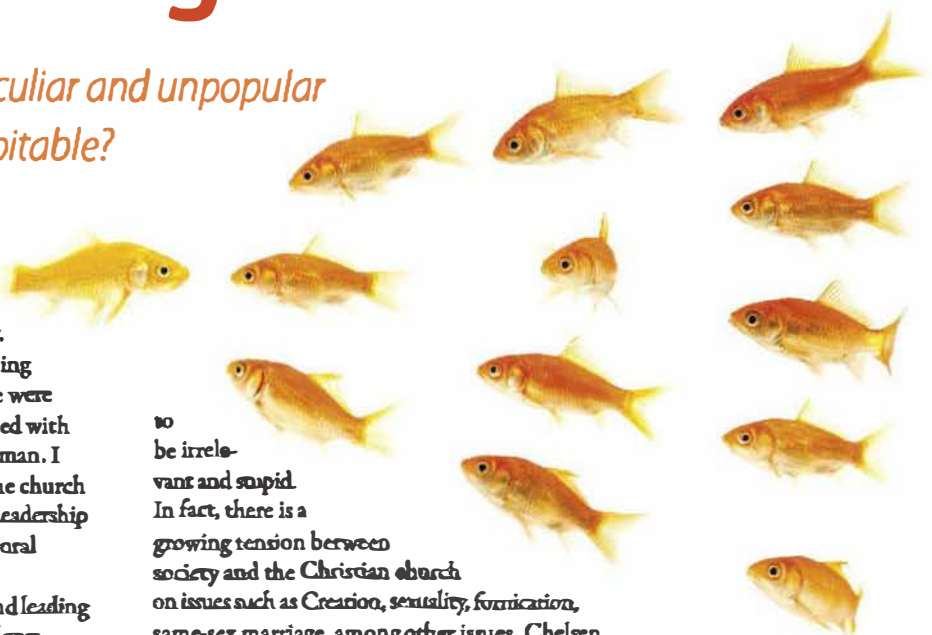
It was one of those awkward conversations I was hoping not to have. Gail had been a longtime member, very active in church leadership and in the worship ministry. We sat across the table at a local restaurant having small talk. She knew what was coming, and we were both uncomfortable. Gail had recently separated with her husband and was now living with another man. I told her how much she was loved by me and the church but that she would need to step down from her leadership positions at the church on account of her immoral lifestyle choices.

She was crushed. "I love singing in church and leading others in worship," she said with tears rolling down her cheeks. "My divorce has made things financially unbearable. I had no other choice but to move in with my boyfriend, since he's helping with the rent," she explained. There were several other good excuses to why she was living in sin. She didn't really see what was wrong with the situation. I felt her pain. I, too, wanted to look the other way.

The Evangelical Christian identity continues to erode over issues of morality. The conservative, biblical understanding of "living the Christian lifestyle" has taken on new meaning. There was a time when certain behaviour was clearly understood to be ungodly and unacceptable. However, in an age of postmodern influence, where everything is questioned and all things are relative, living a life in black and white has become, well, gray.

A few years ago, David Kinnaman, president of the Barna Group, published an insightful book on why Millennials no longer go to church. In his book *You Lost Me*, he shares that young people find the church irrelevant, closed-minded, and antagonistic towards gays, and judgmental towards people who "sin."¹

There is no doubt in my mind that the church must be more loving and grace oriented. However, does that mean we should soften our standards? Today our society views the biblical principles that guide our moral compass



to be irrelevant and stupid. In fact, there is a growing tension between society and the Christian church on issues such as Creation, sexuality, fornication, same-sex marriage, among other issues. Chelsen Vicari says, "But now popular culture is being aided by Christ-professing bedfellows whose message to 'coexist,' 'tolerate' and 'keep out of it' is more marketable to the rising generation of evangelicals."² As a result of the overwhelming influence from the prevalent culture, some leaders and pastors have become so apologetic that they have opened the doors to immoral behaviour and beliefs as an acceptable norm in the church.

Discussion for Your Church Board and Elders

Who guides us? Are we willing to stand for truth, even when it is thought to be unfair, unjust, and illegal? Are we willing to worship God even if our pews no longer attract crowds because our message feels too narrow? Are we willing to remain peculiar and unpopular as the culture calls us inhospitable?

In light of these questions, read the following Bible verses to guide your discussion: Matthew 8:21, 22; 10:38, 39; 16:24; Galatians 2:20; Luke 14:28-32; Philippians 3:7, 8; John 6:66. ■

Kumar Dixit is the pastor of Oakridge Adventist Church in Vancouver, B.C. He is the author of Branded Faith: Contextualizing the Gospel in a Post-Secular World. You can follow him on Twitter @kumardixit.

¹ See David Kinnaman, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church ... and Rethinking Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011).

² Chelsen Vicari, "How the Christian Left is Twisting the Gospel," *Charisma News*, March 11, 2015, www.charismanews.com/opinion/48678-the-new-christian-left-is-twisting-the-gospel.



Get Up



Words by God —Galatians 5:1, NIV

"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery."

Think of the different challenges or struggles you are facing in your life today. Is there something God is asking you to trust Him with that seems too difficult to face? Is He asking you to step forward in faith?

In the story of the Israelites, God freed them from slavery and brought them to the land He had promised. It had everything you could ever imagine—wonderful fruit trees, good land for harvest, and abundance! The Bible called it "the land flowing with milk and honey." Moses sent 12 men to explore the Promised Land and bring back evidence of what they found. The twelve went out and discovered everything they had heard of this magnificent land to be true; it was beautiful! One problem stood in their way: the enormous nation that occupied the land. They were huge people with numerous resources and strength that far outweighed the Israelites.

When the Israelites saw the obstacles in front of them, they were terrified. Instead of moving toward the promise and freedom God was offering, they wished to go back to Egypt, where God had rescued them from slavery. Can you imagine being so terrified you wish to be enslaved? God had shown them over and over His miraculous power and glory, but they allowed fear to hold them captive and wandered in the desert for 40 years. I wonder how often we choose to stay in our fear rather than accept the grace and freedom God has for us.

When we come up against our own great walls of Jericho, do we retreat and spend the next 40 years wishing we had some faith in God's promise, or do we look at it with faith and walk toward it. What if Joshua had decided to retreat from the great wall of Jericho and headed back to Egypt? We would have a very different Bible history of all the miraculous things God did in the lives of people because they said yes and followed Him in faith even when they were afraid. Let us not live under the yoke of slavery and fear, but let us be willing to follow the call of Christ, even in uncertainties, with the faith that He has set us free. "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go" (Josh. 1:9, NIV).

God's miracles and power didn't stop at the Red Sea; He continues to show us His grace each day as we walk in His faithfulness. Our story doesn't end with one heroic story of God; it is an everlasting story that started from the beginning of time and will continue forever. He asks us to get up and walk with Him daily in faith. It isn't an event of faith but a lifetime of following. Do we accept God's grace and freedom from the past and get up and walk into His promises?

Be Blessed. ■

Tia Lawrence is 20 years old. She is a member of the Comox Adventist Church on Vancouver Island. Tia's blog—refreshwithtia.com



refresh with Tia



Watch "Greater" by Mercy Me on YouTube:
<http://goo.gl/yAUwJ8>

* Story found in Numbers 13 and 14.



From Thunderous to Beloved

"Prayer changes lives that thunder and transforms them into people who learn to see their neighbours with compassion and love."

The Holy Scriptures record two contrasting events in the life of one of Jesus' disciples, John, the son of Zebedee. Jesus humorously referred to the brothers as the "sons of thunder," a description of their characters.

They were known to be calm and collected. When confronted with certain situations, however, their fiery and rough characters would flare out. They would burn with anger, resembling thunder silently flashing in the sky followed by a frightening rumble or explosion that at times could even shake the earth.

On one occasion Jesus was passing through some Samaritan villages on His last trip to Jerusalem. He knew the cross awaited Him. The disciples had been commissioned to go ahead of their Master to prepare the way for the Teacher's visit.

The Samaritans were insulted by the fact that the Teacher would not stay with them. Sadly, they had concluded that Jesus "preferred" the Jews over worshipping with them at Mount Gerizim. This prompted John and James to request of their Lord something He could not grant. "Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" (Luke 9:54, ESV). That was young John, the "son of thunder," when He met Jesus.

After spending time personally with the Saviour and dedicated his life for the cause of spreading the good news of His Master, John is seen praying "in the Spirit on the Lord's Day" (Rev. 1:10). To John was given the privilege of recording one of the most beautiful apocalyptic messages that has ever rained redemptive grace, not condemning fire, on the followers of Jesus throughout generations. Prayer changes lives that thunder and transforms them into people who learn to see their neighbours with compassion and love.

Prayer is God's ordained method of communication between heaven and earth. As such, prayer is a privilege that God extends to sinful humanity after being expelled from His holy presence. God desires that His fallen creation would pour out their concern through prayer, because He longs to give. This privilege was exemplified by our Lord Jesus Christ, who Himself depended on prayer to communicate with His Father. His humanity made prayer a necessity in His life and mission; how much more, then, should we avail ourselves of the privilege of prayer? (see Mark 1:35; Matt. 14:23; Luke 6:12). God seeks to transform our minds through prayer.

For the Christian, prayer must become a habit of daily life. (1) Prayer must develop from formal public utterances to the pouring out of the soul akin to one who thirsts for water in the middle of a desert. (2) If there is no regular family worship, then it is most likely that public prayer is just a show of piety. (3) Prayer helps build community; those who love to pray privately also love to join others in prayer at someone's home or at the weekly prayer meeting. (4) Prayer can be scheduled or spontaneous; the public square is a good place to engage in prayer. (5) The reading of the Scriptures drives us to prayer. Here are some psalms that inspire prayer: 3:1-7a; 84:10-12; 63; 51:1-12; 139; 30:6-12; 42:1, 5; 23; 91; 145:1-16.

Ultimately, prayer drives us to the foot of the cross as it brings us closer to Jesus, who desires to transform us from thunderous to beloved so that the world around us may be sweetened by our witness. ■

Victor M. Reyes-Prieto is the prayer coordinator for Newfoundland and Labrador.



barry's

blog

"... the right of our community to operate within a religious ethos is foundational and must be preserved."

The Onward March of TWU Part Two: The Religious University

This is the second of a two-part article about the Ontario Divisional Court's rejection of Trinity Western University's (TWU) request that the decision of the Law Society of Upper Canada (LSUC) be overturned.¹

INTRODUCTION

In my last article I canvassed the decision of the Ontario Divisional Court that ruled against Trinity Western University (TWU). I argued that the decision is problematic, as it failed to take into account the Supreme Court of Canada's requirement that state actors must remain neutral on matters of religious belief. The Law Society of Upper Canada's decision not to accredit TWU School of Law was because the Society rejects TWU's stance on the issue of marriage. Now I want to consider the court's comments on the matter of "discrimination" and the right of a religious community to operate a law school.

THE RIGHT OF RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS TO SELF-DETERMINATION: A MATTER OF DISCRIMINATION

The Divisional Court took issue with the term "discrimination." It noted that the belief system of TWU does discriminate, and rejected TWU's argument that it was not discriminating. There is a difference of opinion about what is and is not acceptable discrimination. This is something the Court of Appeal will have to address. In essence, it is a right of self-determination of its internal rules.

The fact remains the discrimination practised by TWU is a

"lawful" discrimination. The university is not for everyone, as the Supreme Court of Canada noted in 2001 and stated:

"TWU is not for everybody; it is designed to address the needs of people who share a number of religious convictions. That said, the admissions policy of TWU alone is not in itself sufficient to establish discrimination as it is understood in our s. 15 jurisprudence. It is important to note that this is a private institution that is exempted, in part, from the British Columbia human rights legislation and to which the Charter does not apply. To state that the voluntary adoption of a code of conduct based on a person's own religious beliefs, in a private institution, is sufficient to engage s. 15 would be inconsistent with freedom of conscience and religion, which co-exist with the right to equality."²

TWU claimed that it is not discriminating in requiring students to sign the Community Covenant (which expects students to adhere to certain lifestyle principles while studying at TWU). However, the Divisional Court rejected TWU's claim. TWU's position, said the court, "is to turn a blind eye to the true impact and effect of the Community Covenant."³ Such umbrage is directed not only at TWU but also at the very reasoning of the Supreme Court of Canada's decision of 2001. Indeed, the Divisional Court makes a frontal attack on that 2001 decision when it states the following:

First, discrimination is still discrimination, regardless of whether it is unlawful. ... Second, the fact that the Community Covenant may promote an important right, that is, the observance of a particular religious belief, does not mean, by virtue of that itself, that the effect of the Community Covenant is not discriminatory. Third, while TWU may not be subject to the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, the [LSUC] is.⁴³

Further, the Divisional Court was not impressed by TWU's position that it treats everyone with fairness, courtesy, and open-mindedness. Such "does not change the fact that notwithstanding TWU's stated benevolent approach, ... in order for persons who do not hold the beliefs that TWU espouses to attend TWU, they must openly, and contractually, renounce those beliefs or, at the very least, agree not to practise them. The only other option [for students whose beliefs do not align with TWU's] ... is to engage in an active deception ... with dire consequences if their deception is discovered."⁵

Unfortunately, the Divisional Court's discomfort with the TWU Community Covenant is a discomfort with the entire religious institutional reality. From one end of this country to the other we have religious institutions that have established rules of admission based upon religious beliefs and practices. Just as the court noted that "sexual conduct is an integral part of a person's very identity," so, too, are the religious beliefs and actions of a person. The challenge made by the Divisional Court on the internal administration of TWU is, in reality, an attack on the very idea of religious community and their institutions.

The Court of Appeal will have to decide whether a religious institution can continue to have the right of making its own internal rules that govern the moral and ethical ethos of its operations.

THE RELIGIOUS FREEDOM TO HAVE A UNIVERSITY

The Divisional Court expressed reservations about whether evangelical Christians should have a right to claim protection of religious freedom for religious beliefs and practices that are not mandatory. Here is what the court said:

There is no evidence before us that the ability of an evangelical Christian to gain a legal education requires that they study at a law school that only permits the presence of evangelical Christian beliefs and only permits the attendance of those persons who commit to those beliefs. Indeed, the contrary would appear to be obvious from the fact that evangelical Christians have been attending secular law schools, and successfully becoming lawyers, for decades, if not longer.⁶

That is a very troubling rationale. First, the Divisional Court appears to have misunderstood TWU's position. It is not that evangelical Christians *are required* to study law at a Christian law school. Rather, it is that they *choose* to do so. Second, the Divisional Court appears to be directly at odds with the

Amselem decision of the Supreme Court of Canada,⁷ in which the Court stated the following:

Consequently, both obligatory as well as voluntary expressions of faith should be protected under the Quebec (and the Canadian) Charter. It is the religious or spiritual essence of an action, not any mandatory or perceived-as-mandatory nature of its observance, that attracts protection. An inquiry into the mandatory nature of an alleged religious practice is not only inappropriate; it is plagued with difficulties.⁸

"Plagued with difficulties" is an apt description of the reasoning of the Divisional Court. To limit religious freedom by saying, in essence, "that since law schools are not required by the evangelical Christian community, it is therefore not something to be protected under the charter," is to totally ignore the charter right of religious freedom.

In the end, the Divisional Court did not allow this rationale to deny protection under s. 2(a) of the *Charter*, but it nevertheless reveals an analysis that is, to say the least, troubling. We will watch with interest how the Court of Appeal deals with the religious freedom claim of a community to operate a law school.

CONCLUSION

The Divisional Court took a very radical approach, quite different from the decision of Justice Jamie S. Campbell⁹ (whom the Ontario Division Court referred to as "a judge in Nova Scotia"). The Ontario decision has called into question the right of a religious institution to determine its own internal operations in accordance with its religious beliefs and practices. This is a cause of concern for the Canadian Council of Christian Charities (CCCC). As an umbrella group of 3,300 charities across the country, the right of our community to operate within a religious ethos is foundational and must be preserved.

Religious freedom of religious institutions is at stake in this case. When one considers the fact that TWU is now fighting on multiple legal fronts on virtually the same issues it fought over about 15 years ago, we cannot but conclude that this is a fight for justice that is bigger than the sum of the parts. It remains a challenge to establish the right for all religious institutions to determine for themselves how they ought to operate while being faithful to their religious ideals.

The Divisional Court's decision may appear to be a step backward, but in the grand scheme of things, it is a march forward to the ultimate tribunal at the Supreme Court of Canada, which will ultimately determine whether its 2001 decision, which respected the rights of religious institutions, continues to be good law. ■

Barry W. Bussey is vice-president of Legal Affairs at the Canadian Council of Christian Charities. You can read his blog at www.lawandreligion.ca.

1 *Trinity Western University v. The Law Society of Upper Canada* 2010 ONSC 4250, July 2, 2015.

2 *Trinity Western University v. College of Teachers*, [2001] 1 S.C.R. 772, 2001 SCC 31, para. 25.

3 para. 106.

4 paras. 108–110.

5 para. 112.

6 para. 78.

7 *Syndicat Northcrest v. Amselem*, [2004] 2 S.C.R. 551, 2004 SCC 47.

8 *Syndicat Northcrest v. Amselem*, para. 47.

9 *Trinity Western University v. Nova Scotia Barristers' Society*, 2015 NSSC 25, <http://decisions.courts.ns.ca/nsc/nssc/en/100659/1/document.do>.



Photo: Keith Chant

Almost vegan

*F*all is in the air, and with it come a multitude of colours and some of our favourite squash. There are many different varieties of squash available now, each with its own unique characteristics—in both texture and flavour. We are always on the lookout for a squash we have never tried, and a few years ago we found a new favourite, the sweet potato squash.

The sweet potato squash is a long, skinny squash with a mildly sweet flavour. When roasted, this squash develops a lovely flavour that pairs well with many different foods. For us the following is a perfect Thanksgiving squash recipe, and while the squash is available we prepare this many times. ■

Keith and Cheryl Chant, along with their son Ben, enjoy baking, cooking, and experimenting with flavours and recipes.

Roasted Sweet Potato Squash

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 sweet potato squash
- ¼ red onion, diced
- ¼ yellow onion, diced
- 1 sweet banana pepper, sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- olive oil
- salt, to taste
- black pepper, to taste

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Cut squash in half, lengthwise, and remove seeds.
- Place into an eight-inch square glass baking dish.
- Coat inside of squash with a thin layer of olive oil.
- Lay onion, garlic, and banana pepper into squash (should almost fill halves).
- Sprinkle salt and black pepper over squash filling. Drizzle with a little more olive oil.
- Bake at 375°F for 40 to 45 minutes, until squash is tender. Remove from oven and let sit for a few minutes.
- Scoop from skins, then mash and mix everything together. Serve.
- For a spicier variety use a hot banana pepper instead of the sweet.

VOAR— 85 years of broadcasting



106 Frodsham Road

This fall marks 85 years that Voice of Adventist Radio (VOAR) has broadcasted into the homes of Newfoundlanders, sharing the love of God through music, programs, and spoken word. Though the personnel and programming have changed over the years, the goal remains the same: to spread the love of God around the world.

In a letter we received from Donald, aged 73, from Ashcroft, B.C., she wrote, "I so enjoy listening to VOAR! I enjoy all the teaching programs, such as Night Sounds, Unshackled, Joyful Sounds, and the more traditional music."

For over 85 years we have received calls and letters of how VOAR has helped families during difficult times in their lives, and stories of how programs inspired or helped someone in desperate need.

You cannot see our smiles of thanks, but we want you to know that those of us who work here at VOAR are very encouraged to receive your letters and gifts of support for VOAR.

"Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it" (Psalm 127:1). We are building this station together with you and especially with the Lord.

Like our founder, Harold Williams, we still have dreams for this Christian station. Thanks to listeners like you, God is still building this outreach for listeners like Donald.

If you or someone you know has been touched by VOAR, then please let us know! We would love to hear from you and share your story with the *Messenger* to encourage others. ■

Tina Taylor is the communications director for VOAR.



Rebecca Johnson

ON THE ROAD WITH

Becky

AT THE ACTS FOR CHRIST CONFERENCE
HELD IN EDMONTON, ALTA.

Complete this sentence: Prayer is ...

Joshua St. Louis: ... communication with God our Father, Friend, Counsellor, Master.
Edmonton, Alta.

Mikyla Bunnett: ... talking with God.
Dawson Creek, B.C.

Andrea Bunnett: ... the best way to find comfort.
Dawson Creek, B.C.

Cera: ... a way to communicate with God and a very special opportunity.
Edmonton, Alta.

Georgian Jones-Swabey: ... like talking to a close friend, sharing your thoughts, joys, sorrow, interests, and what bugs you. It is like knowing that God listens intently to you without interruptions. He doesn't ask questions or need clarification, because He knows your heart and He wants to hear you. It makes talking to Him very easy and comforting.



Q & A

BY STAN JENSEN

Winston Hurlock is pastor of the Scarborough Adventist Church in Toronto, Ont. Besides being a pastor, Winston is a musician and a visionary. This month I sat down with my old friend to pick his brain about his path in life and how to make dreams become a reality.



Winston Hurlock

Pastor Hurlock's book, *Music and Worship: Contemporary Issues*, is available at the ABC Christian Book Centre in Oshawa, Ont. (905/579-2311); Cornerstone Bookshop, North York, Ont. (416/224-8999); Canadian Bible Society Book Store, Toronto, Ont. (416/701-1761); and online at www.praiseandstudyworship.com. Read the book review in the September issue of the *Canadian Adventist Messenger*.

EDITOR: *You had plans to pursue another career. How did you find out God wanted you in the ministry?*

WINSTON HURLOCK: I was born into a Methodist family to whom church attendance and worship were important. As a child I was impressed with the need to participate and positively contribute to my church activities. Around age 10 I played the role of an evangelist and preached to my four- to seven-year-old friends, who served as my audience. I was later baptized and joined the fellowship of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Those early experiences informed my passion, love, and desire to become a Seventh-day Adventist minister.

However, along the path to becoming a minister I worked as a carpenter, and at college I changed my major from ministerial to vocational studies and eventually graduated from college with my diploma in auto-mechanics. My love for the ministry persisted, and my passion reinvigorated thanks to the high hopes, compassion, and encouragement of fellow church members. Thus, my dream to become a minister led me to Oakwood and Andrews universities, from where I graduated with degrees in music and ministerial studies.

EDITOR: *What would you say to a young person in a near impossible financial situation who believes he or she is called to the ministry?*

WINSTON: For individuals who wish to undertake ministerial studies but lack adequate financial resources, a more extensive discussion would be useful. At a minimum, maintain hope, faith, and commitment to your dreams. Never give in to doubt, fear, or despair; never give up. Additionally, consider a range of creative financing options, including but not limited to personal bank line of credit, as well as provincial and federal loans and grants. I wonder whether the time has come for congregations to make priority commitments to establish freestanding scholarship programs to assist needy students who desire to pursue post-secondary education in ministry and other areas of study.

EDITOR: *You are known as one who dreams dreams of church mission, including overdrawing to build a new church building. Tell us about that.*

WINSTON: Over the past 25 years I have enjoyed overseeing the construction of a few church buildings. That has also been one of my passions nurtured from as early as age 10, when, along with my equally young friends, I played at constructing a church building out of small pieces of wood, strings, and thatch. That early interest and passion have continued to the present time,

being both a pleasure and an awesome responsibility. The need to acquire or construct larger church facilities has often grown out of necessity in response to congregations exceeding the capacity of their accommodations. Completion of such projects bring their own rewards and tend to engender a sense of corporate pride and ownership in such accomplishments.

EDITOR: *What advice would you give to a growing church that has no sanctuary of their own?*

WINSTON: In the case of a growing congregation needing a church building, a careful needs assessment should be an important component of a more comprehensive planning process in consultation with all relevant parties, consistent with the principles of sound business practice. The capacity and commitment of the congregation to the project will be important indicators of success. I offer a few additional suggestions that may be useful to pastors and officers who are either planning to or are currently managing a church building project: (a) model responsible governance, (b) become personally involved in activities along with your members, (c) be open and honest in your communication, and (d) be inclusive and respectful of all inputs, suggestions, and comments.

EDITOR: *Is there anything you wished you could have done differently, that others can now learn from?*

WINSTON: Better self-management. By that I mean learning to more effectively handle the daily stress and anxiety associated with church building projects and ministry. For me, this is a work in progress. To prevent burnout, I am benefitting from practical strategies to manage my stress and anxieties through proper diet, rest, relaxation, and exercise for mental, physical, and emotional restoration and maintenance of my personal health status.

EDITOR: *Do you have a favourite Bible text or promise that gives church builders courage?*

WINSTON: I have been strengthened and encouraged by verses such as, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your paths" (Prov. 3:5, NKJV). ■

Stan Jensen is the communication director for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada and editor of the Canadian Adventist Messenger.

Growing God's Kingdom in Ontario Through REACH Committed to the Gospel Com

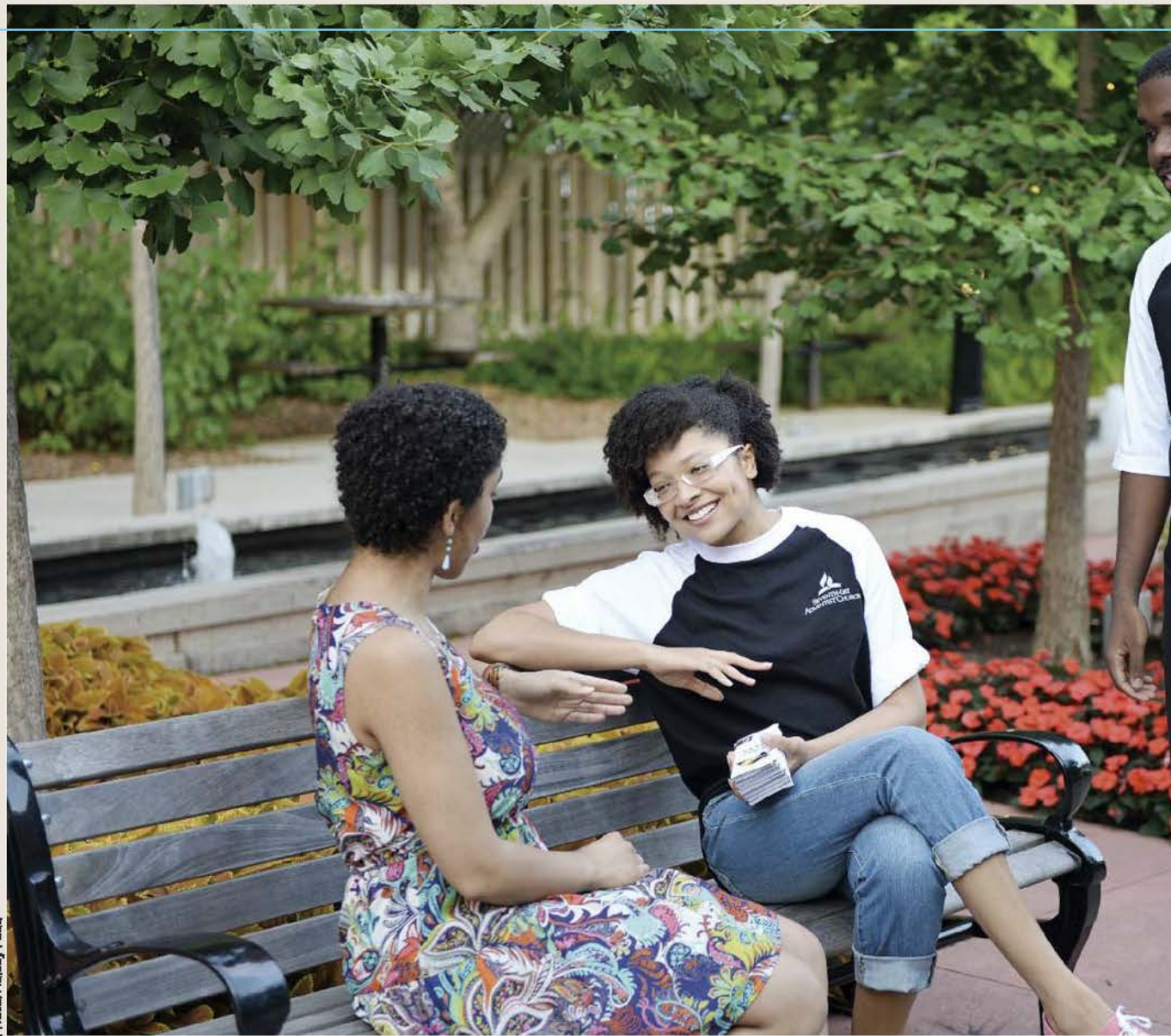


Photo: Halsey Peart.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ontario is experiencing a transformation! It is a transformation that is creating a new culture among Ontario's Adventists.

mission



"WE HAVE RECAPTURED THE ESSENCE OF WHAT WE ARE ABOUT, AND IT IS CHANGING US," says Mansfield Edwards, president of the conference. "Simply put, we have designated mission as the priority for our conference and we are becoming a church where mission drives everything we do."

Edwards identified the 2015 Pan American and Parapan American Games in Toronto during July and August as an example. Easily recognizable in their black-and-white T-shirts emblazoned with the church logo and their white baseball caps, nearly 500 Adventist volunteers worked alongside other faith groups to distribute appealing literature designed to stimulate interest in God and, along with the Salvation Army, provided water and other forms of support to the many visitors and residents in Toronto. Pastor Daniel Saugh of the Bronte Adventist Church was among a number of interfaith volunteers who as chaplains provided spiritual support to the athletes. Pathfinders and Master Guides emphasized the church's creationist and environmentally friendly approach to the games by helping with clean-up and recycling initiatives.

"We didn't simply say, 'Let's get involved in the games so that we may get some name recognition,'" explains Edwards. "No, we were strategic. We were intentional. Nearly two years ago, as we were praying, looking at our strategic plans, and discussing how to be more relevant as a church in our outreach to the community, one of our strategies was to volunteer at the games in Toronto. Consequently, we mobilized volunteers from a number of our churches who served to meet people's needs and share the good news of salvation with a number of people."

The way in which the conference's involvement in the Pan Am games was organized is another indicator of the change that is taking place in Ontario. Directors from departments in church growth; personal ministries; community services; women's ministry; children's, youth, and young adult ministries; health, Pathfinders; and ministerial, aligned themselves to effectively implement, fund, and manage the strategy. "[Communication director] Halsey Peat," credits Edwards, "has been key to coordinating these

strategic planning meetings." A number of pastors from the Greater Toronto Area also played significant roles in making the conference's involvement not only memorable but also effective.

The approach to planning at the conference office has clearly shifted away from single departments working in isolation, to one where alignment and working together weekly to carry out the mission of the conference, is now the norm—the new culture. Another recent example of this is Relevant, the ministries convention held at the Sheraton Parkway Hotel in Richmond Hill earlier this year.

Over 900 people braved the freezing temperatures of Jan. 30 and 31, 2015, to attend Ontario Conference's first Ministries Convention. Relevant brought together over 36 expert presenters from the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (GC), North American Division (NAD), and elsewhere. It was the first training event of its kind in Ontario for at least two decades in terms of its magnitude and purpose. It was planned as part of the Ontario Conference's strategic initiative to help churches in their outreach to the community. It provided pastors and local ministry leaders with effective tools to help their churches become more relevant to their communities. This was clearly visible in the training sessions and in the periods of worship.

The organization for planning and implementation of Relevant was again accomplished by the administration and directors working in alignment. Attendees were enthusiastic in their approval.

"It was incredible!" said Julia Clarke from Philadelphia church in Scarborough.

"The convention surpassed my expectations in every way," said Kingsview Village's Audrey Mitchell.

Alex Bryant, NAD executive secretary, was equally impressed and said so.

"There are very few conferences in our division that run training events like what you have here in Ontario," he told attendees.

Mansfield Edwards identifies alignment as a key element in the change that is taking place in Ontario. "When we first sat together as administrators and directors in late 2011 to carefully consider our conference and began to critically analyze



Daniel Saugh (second from the right) with fellow volunteer chaplains and two athletes at the Pan Am games.

our method of operation," he said, "we realized that we were operating in the same way as our predecessors had done for decades—both at the conference and local church level. Administrators administered the conference, maintaining its structures; directors provided resources and held training events for local churches. It was very much like what often takes place in local churches—departments, often competing against each other, simply going from one program to the next. There was no real direction, no readily recognizable mission. However, as we prayed together and seriously considered our mission, we saw how we could be more effective when we aligned ourselves to identify clear goals and objectives for the conference, create strategies to achieve them, and then carefully shared skills and resources to implement them."

The conference has moved away from having training events and retreats simply because tradition has created the expectation that they are to be held. The new approach is that all events and retreats must meet a need; they are strategies designed to fulfill a particular objective that is clearly in harmony with its mission as the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ontario. If it is not part of its mission, the Ontario Conference will not do it. "Mission must drive our church," insists Edwards.

According to Edwards, the move toward being a mission-driven conference is the result of the Ontario Conference embracing the strategic framework of the NAD-wide REACH model of giving leadership to its constituent churches in fulfilling the Gospel Commission.¹

"REACH has forced us to rethink all that we do," he says. "For example, as we considered our evangelistic goals over the next five years, we found ourselves looking at how we can grow our church. This took us beyond baptism numbers and led us to also look at retention and reclamation. As we considered retention we had to consider other factors, including spirituality, Bible study, worship, hospitality, and discipleship."

Edwards has concluded that REACH is fostering a complete change of church culture at the conference level, not only in terms of operations but also in spirituality. The emphasis on spirituality is seen as a result of having a renewed sense of mission. Godliness, or having a revived spirit and living a life transformed by the Holy Spirit, has long been a hallmark of Adventist teaching and practice. For over 18 months since 2012, the Ontario Conference has emphasized revival and transformation

(the "R" in REACH). It has been the theme for workers' meetings, camp meetings, publications, and departmental events such as worship and prayer conferences.

"For an effective change to really occur in our church, it must be the outgrowth of a strong relationship with God," explained Edwards. "Otherwise, we would simply be looking at an organizational mode of operation that could be applied to any organization. As a spiritual framework for the church, REACH must be dependent on the Holy Spirit. Today in 2015, more than ever, we still see the need for our members to experience both a revived spiritual experience with God and a life in which the Holy Spirit resides."

The emphasis on revival and transformation has greatly helped pastors lead their congregations to move from suspicion about "another new program from higher church organization" to a gradual embracing of the REACH framework.

Implementing REACH has been gradual, even among pastors. However, as conference administrators and directors have travelled across the province, holding are a meetings for local leaders, there were many members with whom REACH struck a chord. Tired of the status quo, refusing to accept minimal growth, disturbed by seemingly lack of direction in the church, saddened by the alarming rate at which newly baptized members and youth leave the church, disappointed that the church is too often content to settle for mediocrity, instead of aiming for excellence in all things, these members have seen the



Dr. Mansfield Edwards leading out in a weekly strategic planning meeting.

¹REACH is an acronym and stands for (1) Revival and transformation, (2) Education for discipleship, (3) Alignment within the church, (4) Community outreach and evangelism, (5) Healthy leadership and management. See www.nadadventist.org/article/13/reach-north-america.



Left to right: Denise and Alex Bryant, and Mansfield and Sharon Edwards, attending the ministries convention, "Relevant."

remarkable potential REACH offers and have readily embraced it. They have become advocates in their local churches and, in some cases, helped some reluctant pastors to be receptive of REACH.

Perhaps many of these were among the 900 delegates at the 33rd constituency meeting of the Ontario Conference in 2013 who voted the acceptance of REACH as the framework for strategic planning for both the conference and for local churches.

Some members, highly motivated by aspects of REACH to see their churches minister to the needs of their communities, have even aligned themselves, pooled personal resources, and set out to minister to vulnerable youths and the disadvantaged in society. The work of one such group in Toronto has been so effective that it has attracted funding from local agencies and admirers in society. On Aug. 15, 2015, their three churches concluded a joint series of meetings held under a tent in a hotel parking lot in Toronto. The hotel owner, an admirer of the group's work with youth in the area, provided the parking lot and electricity at minimal cost. Twelve people were baptized.

While some pastors and their churches have slowly embraced REACH, others did not need much convincing. They immediately worked with their churches to adopt it. Those churches are now reaping the benefits. Board meetings reflect a more cooperative atmosphere. Departmental rivalry and fierce competition for dates are beginning to fade. Departments are learning to align

themselves to reach the congregation's objectives. Members know both the mission of their churches and exactly what their churches are attempting to do in both long and short terms. There is a clear sense of direction and of how they will get there.

Pastor Jesse Ammacion of Mount Zion Filipino in Toronto was an early REACH convert. "Our church is reaping the benefits of REACH," he says. "For one, we have aligned the different departments/ministries into five teams. These teams are working very well to implement the goals and objectives that the church made for the year. There is now more cohesion and collaboration and less friction and competition among the different departments and ministries. The church is now working more as a team."

Another early REACH convert, Pastor David Baker of Immanuel Church, is happy that his church has adopted REACH.

"There is a lot of positive energy!" said Baker. "We have discovered that leaders have been more accepting and willing to participate in this plan as it has been tailored to our church. There are less individual ministry programs and more collaboration on the pivotal activities. These activities are better supported by the church, and all the ministries work toward contributing to the event. As a result, each quarter we are seeing at least one training event, at least one Prayer, Testimony and Praise Day, at least one social, and at least one community outreach event. The plan is working extremely well!"

As more churches embrace REACH and implement it, Mansfield Edwards is becoming more confident of seeing the Seventh-day Adventist Church fulfilling its mission in Ontario.

"We give God thanks for how He has led us in implementing REACH so far," said Edwards. "However, there is still a long way to go. More churches need to experience the numerous advantages REACH offers. We have long-term goals for REACH and we want every church to be involved. No church must be left behind. No one must miss out on this opportunity to fulfill our mission and see the return of Jesus." ■

Halsey Peat is the director of communication and REACH committee chairperson at the Ontario Conference.



Youth respond to appeal at evangelistic meeting led by lay group inspired by REACH



If My People Pray

"I would like to leave this book with you as a gift, but on one condition. Promise me that you will read at least one of the promises written inside it every day."

Student literature evangelists Waren and Andre were working in a neighbourhood in Ottawa, when they approached a house and saw two men sitting on the front porch and looking intently at a document. When Waren and Andre introduced themselves, the younger man, whose name was Daniel, looked up and said, "This is not a good time." Waren asked what was wrong, and Daniel explained that the document was a diagram of the cancer in his father Arnold's bladder. Arnold, who was sitting next to his son, remained silent.

Waren explained that he and Andre were missionaries who prayed for people and he asked if he and Andre could pray for them.

"Yes!" said Daniel.

But Arnold, speaking up for the first time, said, "No, I don't want you to pray for me."

Shifting the conversation, Waren asked, "When did you learn the news?"

"Just a few days ago," Daniel responded.

At these words, Waren reached into his bag and pulled out a book called *Peace Above the Storm*. Showing it to Daniel and Arnold, he explained that it had touched many people's hearts. He then said, "I would like to leave this book with you as a gift, but on one condition. Promise me that you will read at least one of the promises written inside it every day." Waren paused for a moment, then continued, "I told you that we are missionaries. Well, there is a whole group of us, 18 missionaries in total. We will all commit to pray for your dad every day at least twice a day. And if it is OK with you, we will come and visit from time to time to see how you are doing." Waren paused again, then asked, "Would you like us to pray for you right now?"

"Yes!" said Daniel, but once again Arnold answered, "No."

Waren and Andre felt that they could not leave, could not give up, not just yet. So they continued to talk, sharing stories and experiences of ways in which God had shown His faithfulness and power through answered prayer. Then Waren once again opened the book *Peace Above the Storm* and read one of the Bible verses. Looking up, he caught a sudden change of expression in Arnold's eyes. Instantly, he felt impressed to ask again. So looking into Arnold's eyes, Waren asked, for the third time, "Would you like us to pray for you?"

The response was immediate. "Yes," Arnold replied.

The four men held hands in a circle, and Waren and Andre prayed, pleading with God for healing on Arnold's behalf. That night, when Waren and Andre went home and shared their experience with the rest of the team, all the LEs prayed together and continued to pray day after day. Then, two weeks later, Waren received a call. It was Daniel.

"Waren, you will not believe what happened!" he exclaimed. "My father went back to the doctor and did another test. When they got the test results back, they could not find one trace of the cancer!"

Waren and Andre invited Daniel to come and visit the local Seventh-day Adventist church with them the following Sabbath. Enthusiastically, Daniel agreed, asking what time services started. "9:30," they responded.

At 8:30 Daniel was at the church, eager to meet the people whose love, faith, and persistent prayers had brought a miracle to his family and had given his father the gift of health and life. ■

Lifestyle Canada Education Service (LCES), a charity organized to better fulfill the mandates of the literature ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church across Canada. If your life has been impacted by the literature ministry, please contact us at marie@lifestylecanada.org. We want to hear your story.



Never underestimate the power of an Adventist school or the influence of a dedicated Adventist teacher! Rosthern Christian School, located in Rosthern, Sask., about 70 kilometres north of Saskatoon, reopened in 2010 after being closed for 17 years. In the past five years, Rosthern's enrolment has grown from six to 17 students, and the school is quickly running out of classroom space. Alex, a nine-year-old Grade 4 student, recently transferred to Rosthern. In an interview with Shad Lehmann, educational superintendent for the Manitoba-Saskatchewan Conference, this is what Alex had to say about his school.

Mr. Lehmann: "Alex, thanks for being willing to do this interview with me. What do you think about having your interview published in a magazine?"

“

Alex: "Fine, I guess. Will I get a copy of it?"

Mr. Lehmann: "Yes, you can have a copy. So why don't we start with some easy questions. When did you start going to Rosthern Christian School?"

“

Alex: "This is my first year."

Mr. Lehmann: "What is your favourite subject?"

“

Alex: "Hmm, I don't know. I like a lot of them. Maybe physical education. I like that we have no gym, because we always get to go outside and play fun games and get exercise."

Mr. Lehmann: "OK, this may be a tough question. What is your least favourite subject?"

“

Alex: "Sweeping."

Mr. Lehmann: "I don't think that is a subject?"

“

Alex: "OK, maybe social studies. It's not fun, but I like what we learn. Mrs. Landry made a game called Settlers of Saskatchewan that was so much fun; now I know all about Saskatchewan."

Mr. Lehmann: "That sounds like something I would enjoy playing. So tell me, why did you leave your other school?"

“

Alex: "Because I was bullied a lot and because my mom said so."

Mr. Lehmann: "Do you get bullied here?"

“

Alex: "No. The teachers don't let it happen at all."

Mr. Lehmann: "OK, what do you like about your school? What makes it great?"

“

Alex: "Well, there's a lot. I like that it's not crowded, and I like having my own water bottle, and math class and the math books, and I really like our bells choir, but sometimes I get nervous up front. Oh, and I love worship in the morning. We always sing hymns."

Mr. Lehmann: "What is your favourite hymn?"

“

Alex: "Every Star Shall Sing a Carol."

Mr. Lehmann: "Have you joined in with anything in the church?"

“

Alex: "My mom takes me to Pathfinders, and that is a lot of fun."

Mr. Lehmann: "Alex, would you tell someone else to come to this school?"

“

Alex: "That depends. They would have to be the right person, someone who does not swear or is bad, and they can't treat people badly. They would need to make that school a good place."

Mr. Lehmann: "That is very insightful of you. It sounds like you want to make sure that the school stays a good place?"

“

Alex: "Yeah."

Mr. Lehmann: "Is there anything else you would like to include in this article?"

“

Alex: "No. May I go now? I don't want to miss anything fun."

Shad Lehmann is the superintendent of education at the Manitoba-Saskatchewan Conference.

faith and sacrifice



THE EASTERN CANADIAN UNION OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS was established in 1902. Concerned with keeping Canadian youth in Canada, one of the union's initial objectives was to establish a school in Ontario. The membership was not wealthy, but at the 1902 campmeeting, after seeking the Lord's blessing on this project, members sacrificed and pledged \$3,500. Thus the story of Kingsway College was born.

Throughout history many Christian educational institutions have been founded and maintained by a supportive church community. When church members see the value in Christian education, our institutions flourish with God's blessing.

A story recently came across my desk of a family who listened to God's calling for their son to attend Kingsway College.

He is the youngest of three children from this family to attend Kingsway, and their story is a powerful one.

"The idea of sending my third child to Kingsway seemed impossible. My husband had just started a minimum wage job, and I was unable to return to work after an injury. Finances were tight, and we even struggled to pay our rent, so the thoughts of paying for tuition was far from our minds. My son dreamed of attending the same school his two older sisters had graduated from, but our hope faded because of unemployment and a meagre income.

Halfway through the summer, we learned that our Child Tax Benefits were increased for the coming year. With that extra money, I had the intention of starting

an RESP for my children. One morning I woke up to God impressing me to put the money toward my son's dream. There are many things we could have used the money for, but when God speaks, you must listen. I contacted Kingsway and requested a meeting and inquired about all the possibilities that would allow my son to attend the school.

I know God is blessing us and loves our family. In 2006 my husband was the only one employed when my eldest started at Kingsway. We took a leap of faith and believed that God was our Great Provider. In March of the following year I was blessed with a job. In 2009 we made the decision to move from our house into an apartment so we could afford the school fees, now that both of our daughters were enrolled. Four to six years in high school compared to having a mortgage of 25 years was like making an investment for eternity. Our greatest gift and investment is our children and their future. While we believe education on the whole is important, Christian education is the best inheritance we can give to them. For an adolescent, high school leaves a lifelong impact on their adult lives. These years should have a positive influence in their lives because it is the most crucial time that molds our children.

God used people to answer our prayers and to show us His miracles. With Him, nothing is impossible. Gratefully, my son is attending Kingsway. We know that it is God's will for him to experience His love and to trust that God is always in control."

Truly the Lord blessed these plans for Christian education. The school's objectives were clear and distinct: "To nurture young people in ways that will forge strong relationships with Jesus [and others] and to prepare for Christian service." One hundred and twelve years later the objectives remain the same. ■

Christina Lister is the development coordinator at Kingsway College



Travis (Grade 8, MANS) executes a great MIG weld using the welding circuit.

"I wanna weld!" beamed Dylan, a Grade 6 Mamawi Atosketan Native School (MANS) student, after attending Mind Over Metal, a five-day welding summer camp, with assistant Mike Willing.

Welding Camp Confirms Interest in New Industrial Arts Classroom

The Edmonton camp, sponsored in full by the Canadian Welding Association (CWA), brought together 20 students from Grades 6 through 9 from the northern part of Alberta, including five students from MANS.

"Welding is actually fun," affirmed Wayne, Dylan's classmate. Their enthusiasm comes as no surprise to Deborah Mates, director of the Canadian Welding Association Foundation.

"We're seeing kids that didn't have a direction get inspired," says Mates. "It's changing lives." It's not uncommon, she says, for 18 of the 20 students to want to continue with welding. They see a reason to continue through high school to get to apprenticeships.

It was a win-win venture: the CWA wants to encourage talented students in a trade with a shortage, and MANS got to gauge student interest in industrial arts, which is included in the blueprint for MANS's high school building—a much-needed solution for meeting the NAD space requirements for denominational accreditation.

"The camp was an absolutely fantastic opportunity for the students," says Willing. "The instructor's enthusiasm just spills over!"

It's an excitement that lingers. "My son loved this camp," wrote parent Kristen "Krissey" Omeasoo in a MANS Facebook post after her son returned home with his welding camp certificate. "He keeps talking about welding. We were both very happy he got to experience this with the school and other fellow students."

For Mates, the camp was a success on several levels. "Just having someone say [to the student], 'You did a good job—'" she says, smiling, "and you can see them light up." ■



MANS students Dylan and Ryker in full welder gear give Mind Over Metal welding camp an enthusiastic two-thumbs-up.

Lynn McDowell is director of Planned Giving, Alberta Conference, and campaign manager of The Bridge Campaign to build a high school building at Mamawi Atosketan Native School.

Students Honour Asi's Investment

In recognition of Adventist-Laymen Services and Industries' (ASI) award of financial support for MANS's high school building project, Braydon Omeasoo-Steinhauer (sign language artist) and Krista Abt (beadwork artist) represented the students of MANS at the school's ASI convention exhibit. The ASI convention was held in Spokane during the same week as Mind Over Metal. ■



Braydon Omeasoo-Steinhauer



Krista Abt

Parkview Profiles

by Katelyn Ruiz

"The whole school just feels like a family."

In his first year at Parkview Adventist Academy (PAA), Alden Yabut shared his personal testimony with classmates, teachers, and supportive church communities. He talked about the difficulty of moving to a new place and leaving old friends behind. The Grade 10 student's point of comfort was found in John 11:35, where "Jesus wept," illustrating how God sympathizes with our pain. Alden's living witness at PAA confirms that God also celebrates with His children in their joy.

The Yabut family moved to Edmonton just four years ago, leaving their relatives and the Arizona sunshine behind. "I'm not used to the snow yet," Alden says, "but staying inside helps."

On PAA's campus, Alden has found many things to keep him busy even during the cold winter months. "There are always fun times here," he says. "My class made popcorn at a basketball game, planned a worship service for the junior academy, and I've helped out with chapel and had fun in the dorm."

At first, Alden was not excited about life at PAA. "My parents encouraged me to give PAA a month. I told them it was expensive and they shouldn't worry, but they told me it would be good for me. They could see I was becoming stagnant back in my old school and would do anything for me to be successful in life."

Alden's parents demonstrated their commitment to finding the best educational outlet for their eldest, a search that led them to PAA, an Adventist school able to offer the most opportunities for personal, academic, and spiritual growth.

Within his trial month, Alden began to develop his skills and expand his relationships as he volunteered for various things at PAA. He auditioned for Dauntless, PAA's leadership ministry club, and became a valuable member of the team. He shares, "Dauntless tour was one of the greatest things that happened to me this year. I got to be a role model for kids and I got very close to my group of friends."

After agreeing to give PAA a try, Alden found that it was easy to engage in life at the school. "I don't make close friends that easily, but in the dorm, I've met people I can look up to



Alden Yabut

who have been able to mentor me and teach me things."

When his Grade 10 class bonded over winning Class Challenge in September, Alden knew that he should stay. "It was cool to know that the Grade 10s hadn't won the campus-wide games in 40 years, and that we were the first class to do so. We won because we're young and full of energy—at least most of us are!" he jokes.

His peer connections were not the only ones who gave Alden enough reasons to remain at PAA; the teachers who took an interest in getting to know him did as well. "Mrs. Purviance [Grade 10 religious studies teacher and Alden's class sponsor] is a person with whom I've really connected, and Ms. Reyes, because math is one of my favourite subjects. Also, drama class, because it helped me get out of my bubble and open up to people. The whole school just feels like a family."

As he plans to return to PAA for Grade 11, Alden also has some ideas for giving back to the school community that helped him grow: "For once in my life, I want to join a team! Maybe basketball or soccer." He has also been elected PAA's Student Association president for 2015/2016.

To individuals wondering whether Adventist education can benefit them, Alden says, "Do what I did and give it a chance. You never know what you'll find! PAA is a place where you can grow." ■

Katelyn Ruiz is the director of public relations at Parkview Adventist Academy.

Advocates for Religious Liberty

by Gerald Chipeur

On July 2, 2015, the Ontario Divisional Court ruled against Trinity Western University ("Trinity") and against religious freedom. The court held that graduates of Trinity's law school could not be lawyers in Ontario because of the religious beliefs of the Evangelical Free Church, Trinity's owner.

Similar cases are currently before the courts in Nova Scotia and British Columbia. In Nova Scotia, the court ruled in favour of Trinity and expressed this conclusion: "Religions ... abound in a ... multicultural society. The law protects them and must carve out a place not only where they can exist but flourish."

The British Columbia Court heard arguments the week of Aug. 24, 2015, and has not yet ruled.

The decision of the Ontario Divisional Court is probably the greatest threat to religious liberty in Canada today. The Ontario decision will not be limited to just Christians or just lawyers. If the decision is not overturned, potentially no individuals who have attended faith-based schools will have the right to practise their profession in Ontario. Health professionals, engineers, teachers, and others will all be subject to discrimination by government, just because of the school they attended.

This unprecedented assault on religious freedom has been matched by an unprecedented defence led by Seventh-day Adventist lawyers. No fewer than five Adventist lawyers are involved in defending religious liberty in the Trinity litigation.



Kevin Boonstra

British Columbia lawyer Kevin Boonstra argued the case for Trinity in the British Columbia Supreme Court. He is also part of the legal team that advocated for Trinity and religious liberty in Ontario and Nova Scotia.



Jay Cameron

Jay Cameron is an Alberta lawyer who acted on behalf of the Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms as it intervened in support of Trinity. The centre is a public advocacy organization that litigates in defence of rights and freedoms protected by the constitution.



Grace Mackintosh

Grace Mackintosh, general counsel for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada (SDACC), represented Adventists as the church intervened in support of Trinity. The outcome is of critical importance, in light of the extensive school system operated by the SDACC.



Gerald Chipeur, Q.C.

Gerald Chipeur's firm represented Canada as an intervener in support of Trinity in British Columbia. The decision of the federal government to support Trinity is without precedent. No other Canadian government has advocated for religious freedom in such a meaningful manner.



Barry Bussey

The Canadian Council of Christian Charities was represented by its general counsel, Barry Bussey, as it intervened in support of Trinity. The law society attacks against Trinity represent an existential threat to the Christian universities amongst the 3,200 members of the council.

The intervention in support of Trinity follows the appointment of a Canadian ambassador to promote religious liberty worldwide. The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists honoured Canada's Foreign Minister at a dinner in the Canadian embassy in Washington, D.C., for the decision of Prime Minister Harper to establish an Office of Religious Freedom. ■

Please note: Items in the "News" section may originate from various sources. The Canadian Adventist Messenger will give credit, via a byline, to authors of material submitted directly to us for first printing. Stories without a byline may have been written by Messenger staff, reprinted from other publications or supplied to us by a general press release.

SDA Church in Canada

Marilyn Pazitka Celebrates 40 Years at National Headquarters

Joins Staff of Canadian Union



Marilyn Langill-Pazitka

Marilyn Langill-Pazitka recently joined the Staff of the Canadian Union Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church as secretary to Publishing Department, under the direction of C. K. Okuno.

Marilyn spent most of her time in Sarnia till her parents moved to Moncton, New Brunswick. She is a graduate of Kingsway College.

When the new office building is completed, Marilyn will also serve as a receptionist and switchboard operator.

L. L. REILE, President
Canadian Union Conference

Canadian Union Messenger,
Volume XLIV, No. 22, December 15, 1975, p. 3.

On Sept. 15, 1975, Marilyn Pazitka joined the staff of the Canadian Union (now the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada, the SDACC) as the secretary to the publishing department under the direction of Clifford Okuno and then Walter Ruba. On her first day of work, she pencilled in her name in the dictionary at her work station because she felt that she would not be working here very long.

Well, time has a way of changing plans, and Marilyn was still here when the new office opened in 1976. As predicted in the *Messenger* article announcing her employment, she became the receptionist and switchboard operator while continuing to work for the publishing department and for Les Dunn (auditor). As the years continued to progress, she settled in and worked for church legends such as former treasurer Norman Klam, former Canadian union presidents Doug Devnich and James W. Wilson, Orville Parchment (secretariat) and Roy Adams (associate secretariat/*Messenger*).

With the finalizing of plans, under the direction of Bob Lemon, for the church's Canadian retirement plan, she became the associate administrator of the North American Division's (NAD) Retirement Plan in July 1992. Today church employees and retirees across Canada consult with her as the director of the Seventh-day Adventist Church Retirement Plan for Canadian Employees.

On this momentous occasion, we wish to express our deepest appreciation for her 40 years of dedicated service to the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada. ■

—Charisma Hodgins, Retirement
Specialist/Quality Assurance



A surprise celebration was held for Marilyn at national headquarters on the anniversary date of her first day of employment. L-R: Larry and Marilyn Pazitka, Mark Johnson.

Alberta

A Little Love Goes A Long Way

It was early Tuesday morning at the Alberta Conference Campmeeting when 47 eager, bright-eyed and bushy-tailed volunteers loaded a cramped school bus headed for the city of Chestermere. "Good morning, I will be your bus driver," said a smiling Kristina, the bus driver from Prairie Bus Lines.

Chestermere had been hit with flash flooding. The Garden Road Seventh-day Adventist Church is a designated local reception centre for Chestermere in the event of a disaster. Because of ADRA's presence during the 2013 southern Alberta flooding, ADRA was called upon to assist with the recovery efforts.

Synergy, a non-profit youth organization in partnership with the City of Chestermere, helped to organized volunteer organizations such as ADRA to assist with clean-up efforts.

One of the first homes cleaned belongs to a Filipino family whose basement was severely flooded. As David Benjamin, assistant youth director, pulled up to the house with the ADRA Disaster Response Trailer and the school bus packed with volunteers, the family was happy to receive us. Several Filipino ADRA volunteers from the METRO Filipino Adventist Church and the Parkdale Adventist Church, both in Calgary, volunteered to help clean the first house. "It was good to connect with our Filipino brothers and sisters in the Chestermere community. ... We had a great time with them. We laughed, shared stories, and even took selfies," said Gloria Diwa.



Volunteers gear up beside the ADRA Response trailer to tackle flash flood damage in Chestermere, Alberta.

One ADRA volunteer shared, "In the house we visited the lady was so happy to see us. She mentioned that in the midst of the disaster, someone offered to help fix her home but instead ended up stealing her car. ... She was at a low point in life and thinking of suicide. ... When she heard that ADRA was offering to sanitize basements for free, she knew it was a sign ... that God was still with her and cared for her."

As ADRA volunteers started to file into the last house, Dennis, the husband living in the house, walked into his home with his eyebrows raised. "So many of you—wow," he said.

After the cleaning was all over, the last of volunteers grabbed their mops and

buckets and cleaning supplies. Dennis leaned over and said, seary-eyed, "If only the world had a few more good people like you guys, this world would be a better place!"

That hot and muggy Tuesday I realized something. It's not always the big things that you do for people that they will remember; sometimes it's just the small things you do to help people that they will remember. God can do much with what little you have and the little you give. In the end, a little love goes a long way! ■

—Lyle Notice, Associate Youth Director, Alberta Conference

Little Children Shall Lead Them

On the afternoon of August 15, as the pouring rain hit the rough top of the Bonnyville Seventh-day Adventist Church, a tightly packed congregation listened intently about the benefits of having an Adventurer Club and how to start up a club.

Parents, supportive church members, well-wishers, and many eager children all listened intently as Leah Malekano,

the Southern Alberta Adventurer area coordinator, shared about the Adventurer Family Network. "It's a good place for parents to meet, share ideas, be inspired, and learn from other parents about what's working. We have it in our church, and it is exciting," said Leah.

"I am fairly new to the church," asked Melisa. "What are Master Guides all about?" Lundi Malekano, an active master



Bonnyville SDA Church Adventurer Club

guide shared. "It is a powerful training program where you are equipped to be a Christlike leader in your church and your community. You learn church history, leadership skills, social

skills, spiritual teaching, and of course physical fitness. ... We will be going on a canoe trip in September, and you are more than welcome to come."

Many were interested in supporting the Adventurer ministry and becoming master guides and even going on a three-day camping and canoe trip. It was great to see a church so on fire about youth ministries in their church.

Caroline Dzingirayi, the new Adventurer club leader, shared, "I am so excited about starting our new Adventurer club. The kids are deeply looking forward to it, and the church is very supportive, as you can see. Before, I had about four volunteers to help; now I have over 10 people!"

Although it was a rather cold, damp, and rainy Sabbath afternoon in Bonnyville that day, the warmth of love, kindness, and smiles heated up the church building. As we took a picture to capture this historic event, it was none other than the children who eagerly lined up to take the picture. I guess it is true, "A child shall lead them." ■

Manitoba-Saskatchewan

Manitoba-Saskatchewan Conference Regional Meetings



During the months of March and April 2015, the Manitoba-Saskatchewan Conference held in-depth regional meetings with a focus on discipleship. The meetings were held in our three regional centres of Winnipeg, Saskatoon, and Regina, which included participation from nearby rural churches as well. Each registered attendee was blessed with not only presentations by Melvin Santos and his wife, Juliet, of the First Adventist Church in Nashville, Tenn., but also a discipleship textbook and a prayer journal.

Each weekend began with a Friday night keynote address by the president of the Manitoba-Saskatchewan Conference, Ron Nelson, which was followed by Part 1 of discipleship training by Santos and his wife. Each meeting from Friday night through Sunday morning focused on what true discipleship is and what it would do for the local church's growth and sustainability.

Some of the unique and exciting aspects of this program focused on creating and retaining new members/disciples, managing pastoral workload and layperson workload,

and removing the proverbial 20/80 ratio (which refers to the common problem that 20 percent of the people do 80 percent of the work). The information that was shared is nothing revolutionary, since we have seen it all before in reading about the early church in the Bible. What was revolutionary, however, is how easy it can be to put into practice the concepts of the early church even in our busy and increasingly complex world.

Each of the three weekends felt like a small version of campmeeting. It allowed the Manitoba-Saskatchewan Conference to reach more people than it might usually be able to at campmeeting, by taking it to the people in each of the major centres and then inviting the rural church communities to join in as well. The conference also helped those who travelled from a distance, by providing some funding for transportation and lodging.

It was a truly enjoyable experience to have Melvin and Juliet Santos join us for three separate weekends. This was a major commitment, and we know that God will deeply bless them in their ministry for Him. We pray the God will bless you as well as you look to find ways to be a disciple for Him. ■

— Shad Lehmann,
Director of Education,
Man-Sask Conference

British Columbia

Concert in the Park

The Creston church has been using a multi-faceted approach to REACH¹ out to the local community: public evangelism, health lecture series, the Fall Fair booth, a faithful lay witness team who have covered the entire town door-to-door under the leadership of Jay Nawalkowski, as well as musical programs and concerts.

On a warm and sunny evening in July, the church hosted a "Concert in the Park" with guest singer Laura Williams. Laura comes from Washington State, has recorded four albums, and has been singing Christian music at churches, evangelistic meetings, and events for the past four years. Laura intersperses Scripture and devotional thoughts with her songs that are a powerful testimony to the influence of Christ in her life.

Approximately 250 people attended this event, most of them from the community, and the feedback was very positive. Creston is a retirement community, but this concert was also attended by a number of families with children of all ages. Many thanks to Lee Ann Nawalkowski, who arranged this concert. ■

—Averil Cotton, Creston church



¹REACH is an acronym that stands for (1) Revival and transformation, (2) Education for discipleship, (3) Alignment within the church, (4) Community outreach and evangelism, (5) Healthy leadership and management. REACH is a group of core values of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists. "REACH is a strategy for best accomplishing the mission of the church with excellence." See www.nadadventist.org/article/13/reach-north-america.

Pathfinders Investiture Service



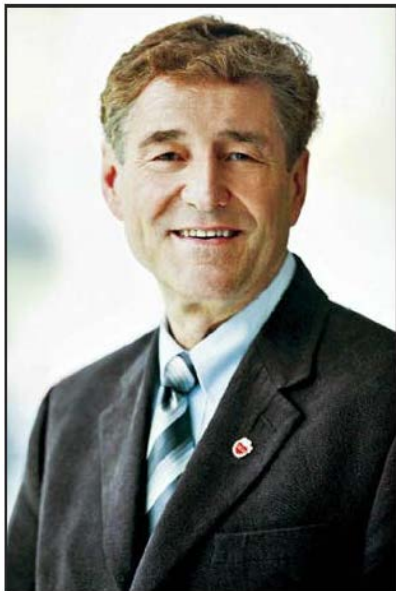
There was excitement as the Pathfinder leaders Lester Lorenson, Josue Sosa, and Aide Sosa, and their Pathfinders, Nathan Caneles, Abdiel Sosa, Geovana Javier, Sarah Bissoondatt, Cristian Javier, Cora-lee Tissuer, Justin Adams, and Brennan Caneles, were getting ready to go up to the front of the church that beautiful Sabbath morning of June 13, 2015. They looked so neat in their uniforms with sashes, which had all the honour tokens they had earned before, sewed on.

They took their seats in the first two rows in church. Their leader, Josue Sosa, had them stand and repeat the pledge and law. He then gave a summary of the activities they had done during the year as they worked on more honours. Lester Lorenson, the overall leader, gave them some admonition to live to uphold the pledge and law. Then Jose Sosa had them line up on the rostrum, where he gave them the honours they had earned. They received a standing ovation and heartfelt clapping for the work they had done. ■

—Trudi Charles, Communication Secretary, Maple Ridge Church

North American Division

Dr. Hans Diehl Inducted Into the North American Vegetarian Society (NAVS) Hall of Fame



Dr. Hans Diehl

Giving speeches is nothing new for Dr. Hans Diehl. A lifetime devoted to spreading a message of health and hope through simple lifestyle changes has taken him around the globe. He has confidently stridden onto stages and in front of cameras countless times, passionately delivering his health message with trademark humour and charm.

But on Thursday, July 9, 2015, it was

a humble Dr. Diehl who made a very different speech to the ones who have defined his life's work as he accepted the induction into the North American Vegetarian Society NAVS hall of fame, an elite club that honours the most forward-thinking people in plant-based eating, among them Mahatma Gandhi, T. Colin Campbell, Caldwell Esselstyn, and Howard Lyman.

"Because of these honorees, millions of people in our world have had their eyes, minds, and hearts opened. Today, we're blessed [to be] living at a time when many people fit this bill, and that's why it can be a challenge to choose just one recipient a year," said NAVS board member Maribeth Abrams.

She went on to say that this year, the board felt that it was important to give proper recognition to Dr. Diehl's work alongside other great doctors previously inducted into the Hall of Fame.

The honour is one of the many Diehl has collected in a life devoted to empowering others to take control of their health. In 1988 he created the Coronary Health Improvement Program (CHIP)¹ with the aim of making this powerful knowledge accessible not to the few but to thousands. Almost 30

years later, more than 70,000 CHIP graduates in many countries have learned how to take control of their health through the Complete Health Improvement Program. Dr. Diehl's *Dynamic Living* and *Health Power* books (co-authored with Aileen Ludington, M.D.) have spread the word with over 2 million copies in circulation and published in 25 languages. His expertise and passion have made the difference in helping people to better understand the amazing benefits of a whole-foods, plant-based diet.

For more than two decades, the North American Vegetarian Society has been honouring those who have made a particularly significant contribution to the advancement of vegetarianism with induction into its Vegetarian Hall of Fame. The exclusive list of 25 inductees includes recipients from the fields of medicine and dietetics to filmmaking and print journalism and to personal training and education.

Visit www.chiphealth.com for more information on Dr. Diehl's work and the Complete Health Improvement Program (CHIP). Learn more about the North American Vegetarian Society at www.navs-online.org. ■

For more info, or to talk with Dr. Diehl directly, call: 909/799-5523, or email: hans.diehl@chiphealth.com.

PS: Hans Diehl (Kingsway College, '67) is married to Lily Pan Diehl (Kingsway College faculty 1967). They have lived in Loma Linda, Calif., since 1972. Diehl is a clinical professor of preventive medicine at the School of Medicine and the founder of CHIP and the Lifestyle Medicine Institute. Dr. Lily Pan Diehl just celebrated 43 years of running her Lily Diehl Music Study, teaching primarily piano. They have two children, Byron (an orthodontist in Redlands, Calif.) and Carmen Thieszen (a psychologist living in Fort Collins, Colo.).

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Ontario

Family Reunites After 4.5-Year Separation



The story began when Parris (Peter) Bhatti arrived in Ontario as a refugee from Pakistan on Oct. 29, 2010. Waiting 7,000 miles away, on the other side of the world, were his wife, Zubera, and three teenagers, Zebdiel, Zarrish, and Zarsen, who were longing to come to Canada.

The wheels of immigration were scarcely turning, or so it seemed. Peter made numerous trips to Toronto, numerous checks with members of parliament, and endless email investigations to determine the status of his application.

Year after year passed, and each week Peter was grilled at church and prayer meeting as to whether he had received any word. The local church family has been extremely supportive

and encouraging in many ways. His answer was always, "Nothing." He waited; we waited.

Fortunately, they were able to stay in contact via Skype. All the while, he was working 60-plus hours a week in order to provide a home, which he did purchase on Oct. 31, 2015. At long last, the family was requested to appear for their medical exams. Finally, their passports and visas were delivered by local courier, and all that remained was to arrange airline reservations to close the 7,000-mile gap between Islamabad and Toronto.

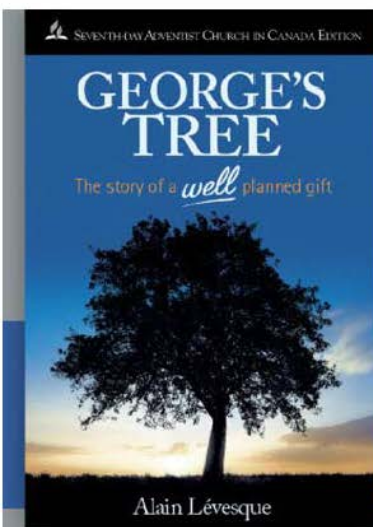
On Friday, May 22, a delegation of some 10 friends from the Bowmanville church, including two pastors, Pastor Bueno and Pastor Nunez, descended on Toronto's Pearson International Airport. A large "Welcome to Canada" sign greeted the four-some from Pakistan. Also, a sign on the church lawn read, "Welcome home, Bhatti family."

You can only imagine the surge of joy felt by husband, wife, and children as they could finally see and hold one another in the flesh. We, the welcoming party, were rejoicing as well.

The next day, on Sabbath, Pastor Bueno invited the family forward to receive a grand welcome. Following this, at the conclusion of the fellowship meal, all enjoyed a piece of cake to celebrate the event.

Zubera is currently seeking to enter the work force, and the young people have made arrangements to begin school in September. Praise God from whom all blessings flow. ■

— Bob Russell, Bowmanville church



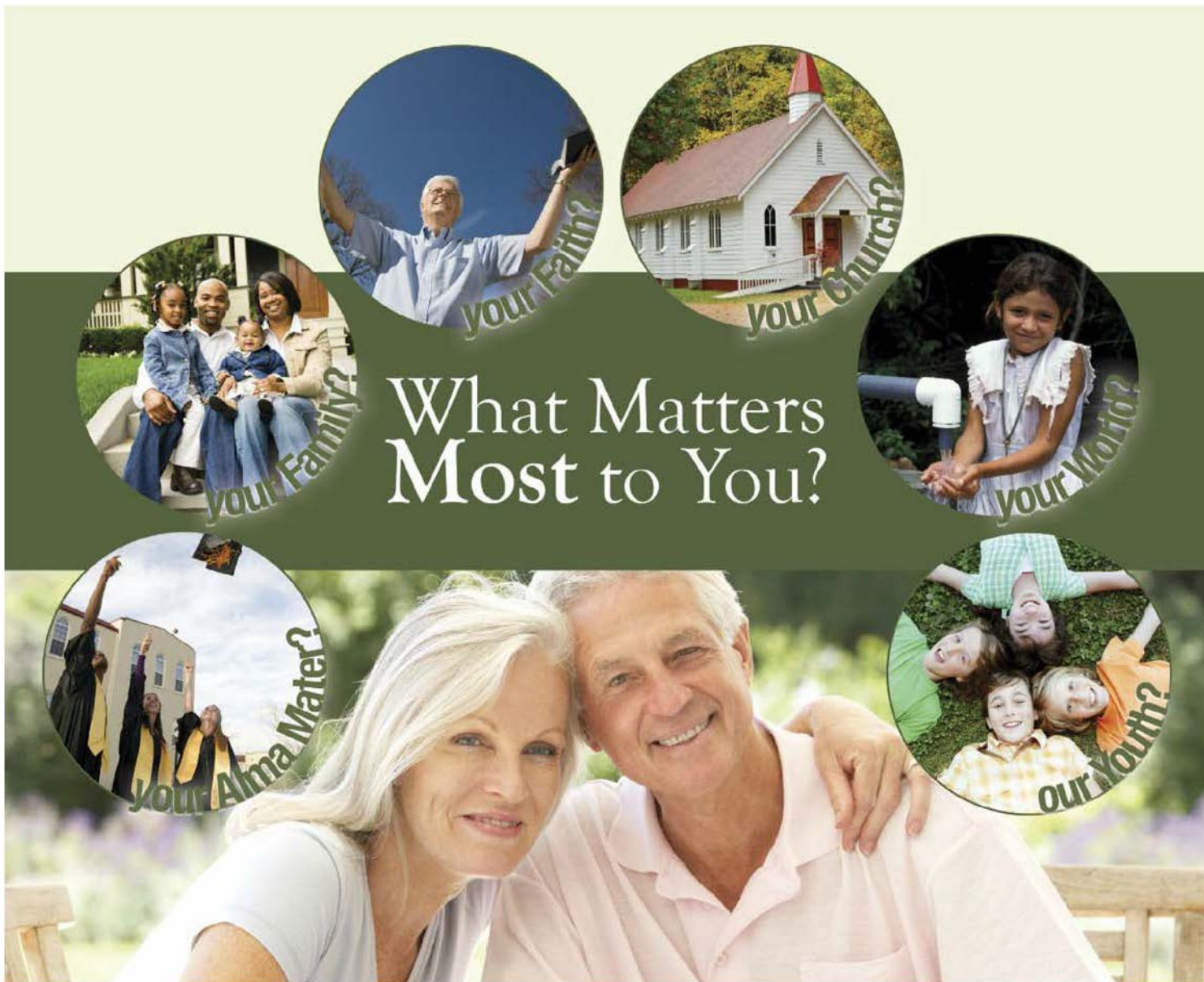
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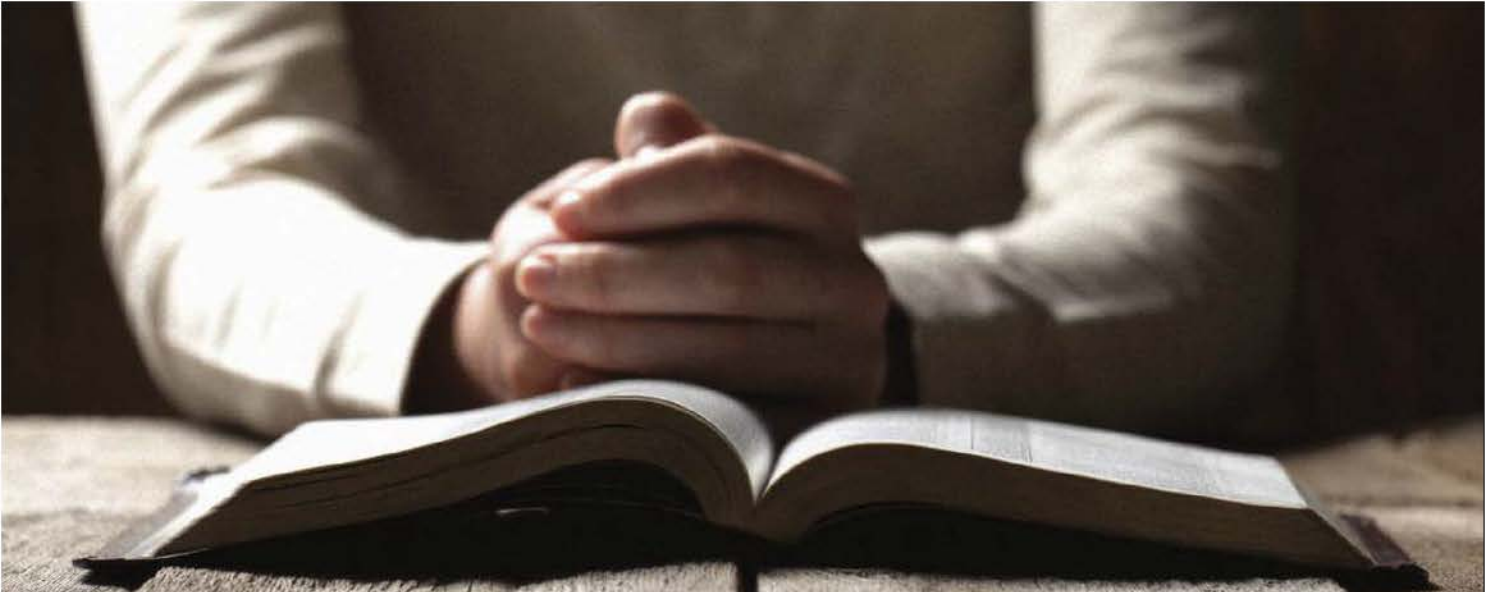
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- All announcements (non-profit events, new member notices, birth announcements, weddings, anniversaries, obituaries, and tributes) should be emailed to Aimee Perez (perez.aimee@adventist.ca) or faxed to her attention at 905/433-0982.
- Every individual named in the announcement must be aware of the submission and have granted the submitter approval for printing.
- Obituaries must be submitted on the appropriate form, completed and/or approved by a family member of the deceased. The forms (both printable and electronically submitable) are available at www.adventist.ca/messenger.
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- For more information about Messenger announcement policies, go to www.adventist.ca/messenger, click "Writers' Guidelines" then click "announcements."

New Members

ONTARIO

Anasta Allen was baptized in Hamilton, Ont., on June 20, 2015, by Francis Douville. She is now a member of Living Word Christian Fellowship.

Abigail Nyamuzuru was baptized in Hamilton, Ont., on June 20, 2015, by Francis Douville. She is now a member of Living Word Christian Fellowship.

Aaron Roque, Ethan Miller, Eren Roque, Sophie Roque, and Taylor Roque were baptized in Hamilton, Ont., on June 20, 2015, by Francis Douville. They are now members of Living Word Christian Fellowship.

DeWitt Showline was baptized in Hamilton, Ont., on June 20, 2015, by Francis Douville. He is now a member of Living Word Christian Fellowship.

Michael and Vanja Wengel were baptized in Carleton Place, Ont., on July 11, 2015, by Oidier Fourry. They started watching Amazing Facts on TV and began looking for a church around the same time they met Michaela and Brady, members of the Carleton Place church. They are

now members of the Carleton Place church, as well.

Births

Jaco Jaden Gallant was born on May 12, 2015, to Darla (née Holm) and Blaine Gallant, of Watson, Sask.

Birthdays

Goldie Chittchley of Soreby Creek, Ont., celebrated her 95th birthday on Aug. 11, 2015. Wife



of the late pastor Max Mercer, Goldie is still living on her own; she enjoys walking, knitting, and long drives. She has three daughters, nine grandchildren, and 10 great-grandchildren.

Dorothy Jewson of Victoria, B.C., celebrated her 100th birthday at home with family and friends on March 27,



2013. She has three children, eight grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandchild.

Obituaries

Loyda Abarca was born on Nov. 10, 1968, in Managua, Nicaragua, and died on June 19, 2015, in Hamilton, Ont. Loyda was a beloved member of Living Word Christian Fellowship, where she served faithfully as a small group co-leader and transportation ministry coordinator. Surviving: parents, Ludwig Danilo Abarca and Sara Obando; brother, Daniel Abarca; and sister, Sheyla (Tony) Abarca-Barreira.

Leon Gray was born June 28, 1929, in Port Antonio, Jamaica, and died

on Jan. 19, 2015, in Windsor, Ont. Leon dedicated 36 years to the healthcare field, and was an active member of the senior ministry in his church. He is predeceased by his parents, Hubert and Ethel Gray; and sister, Ione Skyers. Surviving: wife, Locheta Gray; and son, Leroy (Lod) Gray of Windsor.

Wolfgang Hessel was born on Jan. 28, 1931, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and died on March 21, 2015, in Abbotsford, B.C. He was born to missionary parents and continued the love for the mission field in Peru and various European countries as a pastor and teacher, as well as within Canada in Alberta and British Columbia. Wolfgang is predeceased by his parents, Albert and Martha Hessel. Surviving: wife, Reinhold (Knikinski) Hessel; sons, Conrad (Cheryl) Hessel of Campbell River, B.C., Ronald (Barbara) Hessel of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, Harold Hessel of Port Coquitlam, B.C.; daughters, Barbara Hessel of Abbotsford, Sharon (Ken) Sear of Orlinwah, Tenn.; sister, Rosemarie (Karl) Rieckmann of Queensland, Australia; eight grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Gary Johnson was born on Oct. 7, 1941, in Essex County, Ont., and died on June 28, 2015, in Abbotsford, B.C. He taught for 20 years at Fraser Valley Adventist Academy, and was a dedicated teacher, counsellor, and administrator. Gary is predeceased by his parents, Douglas and Olla Johnson. Surviving: wife, Virginia Johnson; sons, Brian (Summer) Johnson of Abbotsford, Scott (Assunta) Johnson of Abbotsford; daughters, Jennifer (Doug) Gilmore of Abbotsford, Jessica (Sam) Serdowich of Bellingham, Wash.; brothers, Ron (Francine) Johnson of New Oundee, Ont., Brent (Shirley) Johnson of Elliot Lake, Ont.; and four grandchildren.

Victoria Kuralak was born on Jan. 6, 1930, in Canora, Sask., and died on Aug. 7, 2015, in Caldwell, Id. She was a colporteur for many years. Victoria is predeceased by her parents, Steve and Denny (née Bugara) Kuralak. Surviving: son, Doyle (Debra) Bull of Caldwell; daughter, Diane (Mike) McCann of Benville, Id.; and Shawna Maher of Portland, Ore.; four grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

Perry Junior Rhina was born on March 7, 1925, in Lacombe, Alta., and died on March 22, 2015, in Red Deer, Alta. He was raised in the church but wandered away in his youth. His greatest joy was returning to the faith of his childhood. He loved Football Camp and enjoyed attending for campmeeting. Surviving: wife, Violet of Alix, Alta.; sons, Dan,

David, Wade, and Karl; daughters, Linda, Beverly, Gloria, Melody, Anita, Lucy, and Erica; many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

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Tributes



Craig Edwards graduated from the University of Saskatchewan with a Master of Public Health degree, majoring in epidemiology (the distribution and determinants of disease, disabilities, and death in the population). Two years prior, Craig completed his Bachelor of Arts degree in biology with a pre-med emphasis at Burman University.

Craig speaks commendably of the great academic foundation he got at Burman University, which enabled him to succeed at the higher academic level.

Craig is congratulated by his dad, Dr. Mansfield Edwards, president of the Ontario Conference; mom, Sharon; and younger brother, Matthew, who is about to complete his undergraduate degree at Burman University. The family thanks God for His leading and appreciates the prayers of the church.

Advertisements

Cambodia, Laos, and North Vietnam with SAGE and ADRA, Feb. 7-24, 2016. This unique tour combines Southeast Asia's top tourist attractions with hands-on experience at ADRA sites in all three countries. Sponsored by SAGE Alberta. Contact Darlene Reimche at Alberta Conference of SDA, 403/342-5044 (dreimche@albertasda.ca). (10/15)

Mathematics professor sought by Union College, Lincoln, Neb. Doctorate or ABD required for tenure track position. Strong commitment to integrating Adventist faith, teaching, and scholarship essential. Submit cover letter and CV to Dr. Carrie Wolfe, chair, Division of Science and Mathematics, cwolfe@ucollege.edu (10/15).

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Mt. Olive Seventh-day Adventist Church announces their 25th Anniversary and Homecoming services, (1030 Allison Road, Embleside, Ont.) Theme: "Moving Forward Together." The Mt. Olive Seventh-day Adventist Church will be celebrating its 25th anniversary on the following dates: Sabbath, Oct. 3, Speaker Pastor Matthew Feeley, church site; Wednesday, Oct. 7, Speaker Pastor Denver Smith, church site; Friday, Oct. 9, Speaker Evangelist Andrew Fuller, church site; Sabbath, Oct. 10, Speaker Dr. Steve Cassimy, West-End Worship Centre, 1344 Martin Grove Rd. (south of Rexdale); Sunday, Oct. 11, Banquet, Destiny Banquet Hall, 4220 Steeles Ave., West, Woodbridge. An invitation is being extended to all current members, past members, and friends to attend these special services and events in celebration of God's goodness to us as a church. All are welcome. (10/15)

Burman University seeks Vice-President for Academic Administration. Burman University requires an experienced academic leader to serve as Vice-President for Academic Administration (VPAA) and to act for the President in his absence. This position will provide leadership to the faculty and will work collaboratively with administration and academic deans to develop new programs and enhance the overall academic experience of all students. The VPAA will serve as a liaison with government agencies, accrediting bodies, and other educational institutions on academic issues; guide the recruitment, selection, retention, and promotion of superior faculty; and provide institutional leadership and support for the university's research efforts. The VPAA will maintain academic quality and ensure the availability of adequate academic resources and technology. Applications should consist of a substantive letter of interest addressing the listed qualifications, a curriculum vitae or resumé, and a list of at least five professional references with full contact information. For more information, visit www.burman.edu/humanresources or call 403/782-3381 x4147 or email audreyc@burman.ca. (11/15)

Union College seeks Seventh-day Adventist experienced in K-12 education and eligible for Nebraska teaching certification to teach curriculum and instruction courses and supervise elementary student-teachers. Ten years elementary teaching experience and multi-grade teaching experience are essential. Doctorate strongly preferred. Email letter of interest and CV to Dr. Denise White, chair of Human Development, dewhite@ucollege.edu. Effective summer 2016. (10/15)

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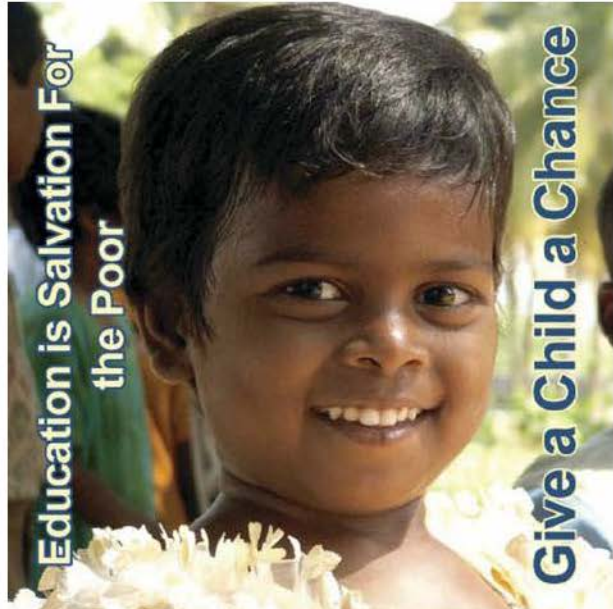
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from the editor

reaching the unreached

AT A RECENT MEETING THE QUESTION WAS ASKED, "What are we doing to reach the people we are not reaching in order to connect them with Christ and His church?" I thought this was timely, as I was recently asked to do some consulting with media entities that had minimal consumer growth.

First of all, I think that is the right question to ask. I would like to take it a step further and ask our members across Canada, What are you doing to reach the people you are not reaching in order to connect them with Christ and His church? Whether we realize it or not, we all have influence, so it is up to us to be deliberate about how we use it.

I also ask: What is your church doing to bring awareness to the abundance of Adventist television programming available in your area? What is your church doing to increase viewership of *It Is Written Canada* as well as United States-based Adventist programming that is being shown on Canadian television stations? If you live in one of the nearly 50 communities that broadcasts Voice of Adventist Radio (VOAR), what are you doing to bring awareness to its presence?

Looking to do something for both of these great Canadian-based media ministries? Contact *It Is Written Canada* at information@iiw.ca or VOAR at voar@voat.org. Let there be an advocate in every church for these ministries.

Significant funds are being put into Adventist media production and distribution, and we need to make sure that these inspired messages of hope and wholeness are reaching the people who need them the most.

I am thankful to Charles Aguilar, now communication director for the B.C. Conference, who, while pastoring

in Terrace, B.C., went to his local cable provider, CityWest TV, and asked them to carry the Hope Channel and Esperanza TV in their product lineup. He told the manager that the church and its members would promote the channel to their friends and neighbours. Hope Channel has now been on the air for several years in British Columbia, just because he asked.

Here are a few items you can share with your friends and neighbours to promote Hope Channel:

- Watch Hope Channel; it is a great Christian network.
- Longevity secrets of Adventists are revealed on the Hope Channel.
- Learn practical lessons on enhancing your marriage.
- Understand Bible prophecy, made easy.

Or perhaps you could promote *It Is Written Canada*: "Is Heaven for real? When does it happen? Watch *It Is Written* this Saturday on CTV at 11 a.m."

There is no point in making media if it is not used. Connect with the people in your community and do your part to spread the gospel message. We provide a message of hope and wholeness that must be shared with the world.

Makesense? ■

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Stan". The signature is stylized and fluid.

Stan Jensen, editor
Canadian Adventist Messenger

PS: Please email me and let me know what your church is doing to spread the word in your community.

ON JAN. 31, 1957, THE SECOND MONDAY OF OCTOBER WAS OFFICIALLY PROCLAIMED BY THE PARLIAMENT IN CANADA AS THANKSGIVING, to be “a day of general thanksgiving to Almighty God for the bountiful harvest with which Canada has been blessed.” While we may enjoy the holiday a bit sooner than our neighbours to the south, regardless of the date, Thanksgiving is a day set apart for thankfulness and fellowship. What better time to reflect on God’s goodness and grace?

This month we take a look at past Thanksgiving events and how our fellow believers chose to celebrate His goodness.



The team who worked at the Montreal West school preparing food for meals-on-wheels.

January 1993— Parishioners in Quebec celebrated Thanksgiving by organizing a meals-on-wheels program for elderly people and shut-ins. They shared God’s blessings with 75 people in Montreal. (*Canadian Adventist Messenger*, Vol. 62, No. 1, p. 23)

Thanksgiving

We’re thankful for the winter frost
That made the snowflakes fall;
For every snowball that we tossed,
And skates and sleds and all.

We’re thankful for the flowers we found
In Maytime long ago;
Spring beauty peeping from the ground,
And bloodroot white as snow.

We’re thankful for the holidays
That came with summer heat,
And all the happy summer plays
In Grandma’s garden sweet.

We’re thankful for the autumn’s store,
When fields are bare and gray—
And all the year that brings once more
Our dear Thanksgiving Day.

—Selected.

Oct. 30, 1912—This poem by Zarth Howland appeared on the front page of the *Canadian Union Messenger*. (Vol. 12, No. 43, p. 1)



Above: One of four tables, filled several times to accommodate crowd



Nearly four hundred joined in thanksgiving service at Yorkton.

Nov. 28, 1956—Members of the Yorkton, Sask., church met for the first time in their new building in October 1956, and the next day enjoyed a large Thanksgiving dinner with nearly 400 guests. (*Canadian Union Messenger*, Vol. 23, No. 24, p. 3)

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