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february 2016

Messenger

Maintaining Spiritual Momentum

PLUS What About the Bible? (p. 3)
Magnetizing Your Church (p. 7)
I'm Not a Christian. Is that a problem? (p. 28)

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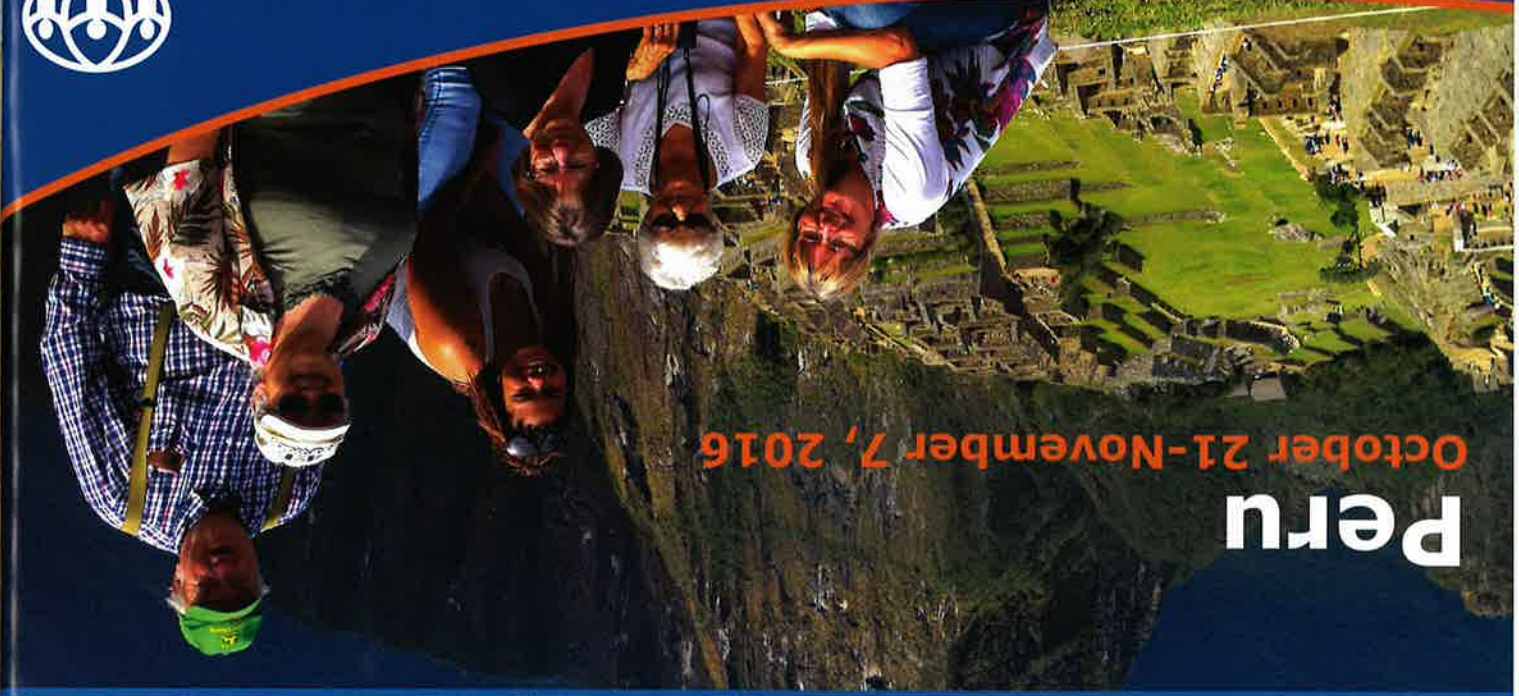
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Communication Director/Editor Stan Jensen
jensen.stan@adventist.ca

Art Director Joan Tanasiychuk
tanasiychuk.joan@adventist.ca

Ad Manager/Circulation Aimee Perez
perez.aimee@adventist.ca;
messenger@adventist.ca

Copy Editor Vesna Mirkovich
messenger@adventist.ca

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Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada

1148 King Street East
Oshawa, ON L1H 1H8
phone 905/433-0011 fax 905/433-0982

President Mark Johnson
johnson.mark@adventist.ca

VP Administration Daniel Stojanovic
stojanovic.daniel@adventist.ca

VP Finance Joyce Jones
jones.joyce@adventist.ca

General VP Dennis Marshall
marshall.dennis@adventist.ca

Conferences

Alberta 5816 Highway 2A, Lacombe, AB T4L 2G5,
phone 403/342-5044

British Columbia Box 1000, Abbotsford, BC V2S
4P5, phone 604/853-5451

Manitoba/Saskatchewan 1004 Victoria Avenue,
Saskatoon, SK S7N 0Z8, phone 306/244-9700

Maritime 121 Salisbury Road, Moncton, NB E1E
1A6, phone 506/857-8722

Newfoundland 1041 Topsail Rd., Mount Pearl, NL
A1N 5E9, phone 709/745-4051

Ontario 1110 King Street East, Oshawa, ON L1H
1H8, phone 905/571-1022

Quebec 940 Ch. Chambly, Longueuil, QC J4H
3M3, phone 450/651-5222

Burman University 6730 University Drive,
Lacombe, AB T4L 2E5, phone 403/782-3381

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“I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.”

—Psalm 119:11, ESV

What About the Bible?

Why is the Bible important today? First, Scripture will guide me through the maze of competing ideas to what I should believe as a person of Christian faith. And secondly, it will guide me in my attempt to choose right from wrong so that I live as a committed follower of Christ.

We live in a time of information overload. Never before has so much information been available at our fingertips—and never before has it been as unauthenticated and unedited as it is today. Thanks, Internet! So much opinion passes as fact. The words “urban legend” legitimately apply to the area of faith.

When it comes to matters of faith, legends can be deadly. This is why studying the Bible is especially important today. The folks at Berea many years ago had the right idea. “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11, KJV). I think we need to make sure that we’re following the example of the Bereans, don’t you?

Those who read and study Scripture learn that the promise of eternal life is not earned; it is a gift. Students of the Bible will also know that following God will change how you live and what you do. The person who really knows Christ would rather die than willingly do something that would bring dishonour to Him. And in that light, this verse is important: “I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you” (Psalm 119:11, ESV).

We are surrounded by competing ideas of right and wrong. As society has drifted away from biblical faith, many have poorly developed notions of what is good and what is evil. In fact, many folks don’t even want to use the word sin anymore. It sounds so judgmental. But God uses it, doesn’t He? And if He does, perhaps it would be wise for us to do so as well—not in an effort to condemn those around us, but as an acknowledgement of His sovereignty over us and our need for Him to guide us in life.

I’m so glad for the Bible, the Word of God. Let’s not let ours get dusty; let’s wear it out. And as we join the Bereans and the psalmist in turning its pages, we can pray for guidance as we seek to live what it teaches us today. ■

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



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Michael Kirkby is the Connections Coordinator at ADRA Canada.

Outside of one small house the owner was working in the yard with her sheep. With the help of a translator I asked her what having a new stove would mean for her family. She told me that she would now be able to have a clean house and would not burn so much fuel. She also emphasized how grateful she was that we had taken the time to come all the way to her home to help build the stove. She smiled as she looked through the door at the people inside laying the bricks and mortar for the new stove's base.

This trip helped the local Peruvians, but it also gave us a new perspective on life. After noticing the joy the people we worked with had, trip participant, Nicole Renaud from British Columbia, reflected, "Life is more than the material things we possess, and the Peruvian people taught me great lessons."

Most importantly, this trip allowed people to show the love of Jesus in a tangible way. Another group member, Linda Liedehilds from Alberta, summed it up perfectly: "It's one thing to talk of Jesus' love, but it's another to do something." If you would like to travel with ADRA Canada on a project like this, visit www.adra.ca and click the "Connections" banner to see a list of upcoming trips to our projects around the world. ■

Experiencing Peru



AS I WALKED DOWN THE DUSTY STREET OF THE SMALL

VILLAGE, I couldn't help but notice the sun reflecting off the shiny new chimneys on a number of homes. I knew that below many of these chimneys were brand-new stoves that had just been installed by a group of Canadian volunteers who had travelled to Peru with the ADRA Canada Connections program. The group was made up of people from all over Canada who spent two weeks from October to November exploring this South American country.

In order to maximize our effectiveness, we divided into groups of three. Reaching a house down the road from where I had been helping construct a stove with my group, I found some members of another group busily working to install a stove in a small adobe brick home. In the corner a small fire still burned in the traditional open stove. Smoke from the small fire filled the house, adding to the black tar that had accumulated on the walls and the ceiling over the years.

The smoke from these traditional stoves has led to major respiratory illnesses in the remote areas of Peru. To improve people's health, ADRA has been replacing the traditional stoves with "smoke-free" ones that vent the smoke outdoors. ADRA is in the process of installing roughly 25,000 stoves around the Cuzco region in South-Central Peru. Each stove takes roughly one day to build. Our group of nine people, with the help of local experts, was able to complete 25 stoves during our trip.

Magnetizing Your Church

As an excited 10-year-old I remember a physics class on magnetism. I was fascinated by a magnet's ability to attract and retain particular metallic objects. For days I walked around with a magnet in my pocket enthralled by its pull on other objects and in turn magnetizing them, thus giving them their own magnetic properties.

The concept of a magnet, as I see it, has a powerful application to the role of the church, namely, in attracting and retaining people. Jesus clearly had this in mind when He said, "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you ... that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain" (John 15:16).

We often focus on attracting new converts—and we correctly celebrate their baptisms—yet this is only part of the church's magnetic property. If we attract but do not keep new converts, our church will not grow in the way God desires. So attracting and retaining new members is essential to the growth of God's church. It is a solemn assignment from Jesus Himself.

Many years ago George Brown, then president of the Inter-American Division of Seventh-day Adventists, crafted a three-part motto to guide the division: "Win, Train, and Retain." Years later in his exit interview, as he was transitioning to retirement, he credited the outstanding growth of the division to the adoption of that motto. What is clear is that there was intentionality in creating a new culture in the church.

A recent global research conducted by Dr. David Trim, of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, supports our call for intentional growth through evangelism and retention. The findings have shown that over the past 50 years when we baptized the last 13,648,281 members, we lost 5,918,483 (not including those who died). This reflects a loss rate of 43.364 per hundred new converts! Trim estimates that our potential world membership without losses would be approximately 24 million. Some 40 percent of former Adventists surveyed said that they were never contacted when they stopped attending church. It is time for the church to have comprehensive strategies

to retain members, as well as to attract new converts.

In Ontario we are intentional about retaining members. For the past few years we have been promoting the REACH¹ values as necessary ingredients in the culture of our churches and schools. I am convinced that as churches take the time to adopt this strategic framework of operating, its benefits will be reflected in our fruits remaining.

We have also been praying and seeking God's leadership as we seek to fulfil His command to not only preach the gospel and baptize new converts but also to make them His disciples. We long to see every church become a centre of discipleship. This will not happen overnight, but it can begin with your church today.

Research for my recent book, *Worship Matters*, significantly reinforced my previously held conviction that our corporate worship is an important key in our retention strategies. Do we know what we are doing—and why—when we gather on a Sabbath morning? Is your church worship joyous? Do you miss it when you are absent? Do you feel you have experienced God's presence in such a way that you long to share it with others?

I long for each church to discover the wonderful evangelistic and retention possibilities of inspirational worship and then work to make it all happen! It will not happen by chance. Local leaders must begin the conversation. David Kinnaman, in his book *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church ... and Rethinking Faith*, uses the term "shallow Christianity" to describe the superficial knowledge of the Bible held by many youths and young adults in today's church.² It is a failure on the part of the church and parents to give them deep roots. It is time for us to return to deep Bible study in our churches. ■



Mansfield Edwards is president of the Ontario Conference.

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.

²(Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), pp. 113–129.

teen talk

Q: I think about things of a sexual nature all the time. Sometimes it happens when I pray. This is a very big problem for me. Even when I pray, the problem does not go away. What should I do?

A: This is one of the most frustrating things that Satan does to sabotage your prayer time. He knows that prayer is crucial, so he'll do whatever it takes to make it fail.

There's good news, though. Prayer failure doesn't occur when you have sexual thoughts during your time with Jesus; prayer failure is not praying at all. How am I so sure of this? It's right in the Bible. The apostle Paul says, "In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words" (Rom. 8:26, NASB). So, if you think your prayer is all messed up, worry not, because Jesus has got you covered!

Don't give up, my friend. Keep praying and avoid temptation. ■



Kinkajou

One dark night in a jungle in Costa Rica, a baby kinkajou fell from a very high branch. She lay still on the forest floor. She looked dead. After a while, the baby lifted her head and tried to get up to go back to her mother, but she couldn't move her legs. She had never been on the forest floor before. Now she was lying on the cold ground, hurt and alone. A jaguar might have found her. Instead, a hiker came across her the next day and brought her to Alturas Wildlife Sanctuary.

The staff at the sanctuary cared for her wounds and fed the baby kinkajou all the tasty figs she wanted. They named her Rosita. The vet exercised Rosita's legs, hoping she would climb again someday. Rosita can now use her monkeylike tail and legs, but she will never be able to climb well enough to live in the treetops again.

Think about it.

No cure for paralysis has ever been found. When friends brought a paralyzed man to Jesus, Jesus told him, "Your sins are forgiven." The religious leaders didn't believe Jesus could forgive sins, because they believed He was just a man, not God. Then Jesus healed the paralyzed man. Everyone knew that only God could heal paralysis. Because of this miracle, some people believed that Jesus could forgive sins, too.

Have you ever felt so guilty for something you've done, that you didn't really believe Jesus could forgive you? Don't trust your feelings! Jesus wants to forgive you. Tell Him you're sorry and believe you have His forgiveness.

Do it!

Keep track of prayers that have been answered in a notebook or on smooth pebbles. When you need a reminder that Jesus loves you and forgives you, re-read your list or look at your pebbles.

In His Time

PROFESSOR JULIA FALLA-WOOD DID NOT PLAN TO BE A TEACHER.

Her first love, languages and cultures, led her to study and graduate with her bachelor's degree in Translation and Interpretation. A native of Peru, she added the mastery of English and French to her Spanish. Her love of languages led her to travel to France to study and master the French language. It was during her time in France that she discovered her passion for teaching. While in France she learned that she could spend hours and hours researching for ways to introduce and explain new concepts. One of her professors told her that not only was she a great teacher but she was born to be teacher! Falla-Wood's teaching career began shortly and has spanned from Quebec to British Columbia. She has taught classes from Kindergarten to high school and has served as principal of Greaves Adventist Academy in Montreal.

Upon completing her PhD, she was offered a position at the University of Montreal but instead chose to stay within the church educational system. It was her dream to work at a university, but she had told God that if it was at all possible, she would first work within in the church system. She also wanted to prioritize her children and felt that the teaching and research load of a university would take away from that. She put her trust in the Lord and felt assured that her university teaching career would come.

As the newest professor in the Burman University School of Education, she has much to share with her students and is excited about the methodology, classroom management, and philosophy of education in the best profession and that her infectious love for teaching will be passed on to her students. "I would tell them [the students] that they cannot choose a better profession from all possible careers in the whole world but that they need to work hard, because there is no place for mediocrity in this profession. They must also be well-prepared to give the best of themselves to their future students. In addition, I would tell them that they will be largely rewarded by all the joys that this profession brings: to be able to see the academic progress of their students, the maturity the students acquire year after year, and the influence they will exert on them to make decisions concerning the relationship with their loving Saviour," says Falla-Wood.

Her dream of working at a Seventh-day Adventist university has come true, and Falla-Wood is not content with just teaching and sharing teaching methods. Falla-Wood stresses, "Nothing is perfect in this world, and the education system does not escape from this reality, but students need to know that they can make a difference wherever they go. I want them to be ready to never give up on any student, no matter how helpless the situation seems. Excellence is the only standard for which they should aim in any school and in any classroom in which they will teach. I would like to share with my students the love of our mighty God. I would also like to instill in my student-teachers the desire to be teachers whom their students not only for the knowledge they learned

"She put her trust in the Lord and felt assured that her university career would come!"

Julia Falla-Wood is an assistant professor in the Burman University School of Education.



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Where Are They Now

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

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



Millie and Verne Snow

Messenger: Tell me about your childhood.

Verne Snow: My mother, Nellie

Korchinski, at the age of 17 (Polish

Catholic) left the farm in Ramara, Sask.,

and headed east to find work. My father,

Harold Snow, left school at the age of 16

in Powell River, B.C., and joined the army

and I was born.

M: Where did you go to school?

V: My schooling was all along the coast

of British Columbia (from the Queen

Charlottes' to the southern tip of Vancouver

Island) in those little, white, one-room

schoolhouses. Some places there was no

school, so it was either correspondence

or homeschooling with Mom.

M: Describe your call to the ministry.

V: I had never planned to be a minister.

When I came to CUC² in 1961, I planned

to work in the forestry, so I took every

course on biology sciences that was

offered. My wife and I left CUC for a

year to work in the logging camp just

out of Sidney, B.C. On Sabbath we

would attend the Rest Haven Adventist

Church. Pastor Harry White got all the

youth involved in an evangelistic series.

I was one of the speakers. After the series

Pastor Harry came to me and encouraged

me to go back to CUC and take theology.

So that's how it all started.

M: Where did you pastor?

V: Elder Howe, president of the B.C.

Conference, called me to pastor three

churches in northern British Columbia

—Dawson Creek, Chetwynd, and Fort

St. John. In those days they never put you

with an experienced pastor. You either sank

or swam. I sank! After six months in the

pastoral work, Elder Howe, realizing I was

having difficulties, invited me to come

and assist an evangelist they were calling

in from Montana. His name was Dale

Brusset, and he wanted an intern to help

him. This was a definite answer to prayer.

M: What led you to full-time service in

evangelism?

V: God, my wife, Dale Brusset, and my

praying mother. Thirty-eight years of

evangelism—never pastored a church again.

And what joy and fun we had raising our

three sons and all the travelling we did.

M: In what conferences did you conduct

evangelistic services?

V: I was the conference evangelist in

B.C., Alberta, and for Amazing Facts, I.

of course, held series in other conferences

as well as on my own.

M: Do you have a favourite conversion

story from your evangelistic services?

V: To see our children give their hearts

to Jesus. Also, my sister and her Mormon

husband, with whom we studied over the

Internet—and then flying to Courtenay

and baptizing them. I think the most

exciting campaign we had in Canada was

with Elder Bill Kennedy in Winnipeg.

Over a hundred were baptized as a result

of the series and follow-up.

M: Tell me about your family.

V: We have three sons. Our oldest,

Mark, is a first-aid man and welder at

Williams Lake, B.C.; John, the second

oldest, works here in Lacombe. Our

youngest son, Paul, and his wife, Cindy,

live in Golden, B.C., with their son,

Weyland. He works as a mechanic for

the B.C. government.

M: Your wife Millie (Jamieson) has

excelled in volunteering. Please describe

her contribution.

V: She has worked for many years with

the soup kitchen in Red Deer, having also

started soup kitchens in Calgary, Edmonton,

Riga (Latvia), and Moscow. She is currently

working with Adventist Community

Services, managing the Lacombe Com-

munity Food Bank and the thrift store.

M: Where are you now and what are

you doing?

V: We retired in Lacombe. Still travelling

all over the world, ice fishing, and holding

a few evangelistic campaigns a year. ■

¹The Queen Charlotte Islands, now called the Haida Gwaii.
²Canadian Union College, now called Burman University.

Dog Tricks Taught Me Spiritual Training



A couple of years ago I surprised my children with a puppy. Her name is Fifi and she is a two-pound Maltipoo. I never grew up with pets, so this experience was new to the kids and me. In preparation for a new addition to our home, I read everything on how to raise a puppy. Unfortunately, even with all of the reading, I failed to follow some important rules.

It wasn't until around April when I finally realized that it was time to get serious and potty-train her. This decision was made because my wife was fed up with all of the "accidents" that were taking place on our white carpets. I once watched the famed dog trainer Cesar Millan say that there is no such thing as training a dog. Rather, the job rests with the owner. "Nobody would ever pay for human training classes," he surmised.

After several weeks Fifi was still doing her business in the house. I would take her for long walks—and nothing. I started taking her outside every 15 minutes and made her stand on a mat on our back porch—nothing. I began to get frustrated and angry. I contemplated that perhaps it was time to give her away. Finally, I did some more research and attempted another approach of house training her. What I discovered was there are some strong similarities between house training your dog to discipleship. If you would allow me some leeway, let me explain:

Fifi needed some boundaries.

The house was too big for such a small dog. She needed to be limited to one floor. When we were away or unable to monitor her, she was confined to a crate or gated area. I began to restrict her meals to only twice a day. Every night I began to crate her so

she couldn't wander and have an accident. She would have to wait till the morning. At first, I felt bad and thought it was cruel. However, I discovered she preferred this. She felt better and safer in a closed-in environment.

In the same way, Christians need boundaries. We are inquisitive creatures that often get into trouble because of our own curiosity. Limiting our own space keeps us from temptation. See Titus 2:12; Gal. 6:16.

Fifi needed a routine.

When my children were toddlers, we followed a stringent system from the book *On Becoming Baby Wise*. This book taught that children need strict routine in order to thrive. In the same way, our dog needed a routine that was predictable. I started taking the dog out every morning for a walk before she ate. It only took three to five minutes before she went to the bathroom. I am not sure who was more happy, the dog or myself.

Human beings are creatures of habit. We prefer predictability. Similarly, if we are going to grow spiritually, there needs to be a routine. Do you have a routine or discipline for your spiritual life? Prov. 16:3; Prov. 23:28; 1 Cor. 9:27.

Fifi was rewarded for doing what was expected of her.

Every time she went to the bathroom outside, I rewarded her with a treat and praise. She became accustomed to her reward and learned very quickly how to win my praise. Human beings are not too different from dogs. We, too, like to be rewarded and praised. Our rewards come in the form of blessings. As we continue to grow deeper and develop spiritual discipline, we will experience incredible rewards from God. See Prov. 10:22; Exod. 23:25; Col. 3:23, 24.

These simple dog training tips gave me incredible insight into how we can grow as Christians in our faith. ■

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.



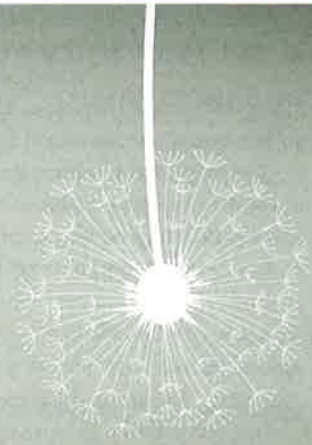
Three Girls, Three Lives, Three Legacies



Gail Mohns

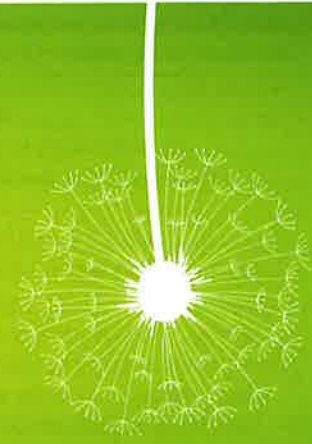
IT WAS THE LAST DAY OF SCHOOL IN EARLY JUNE 2015, and for 18-year-old Savannah Bettis, it was her last of high school. Graduation was just a few days away. Savannah was going places. She was a good student and had been accepted to Ivy Tech, where she planned to begin studying in the fall. Described by all who knew her as caring and courageous, honest and helpful, it was fitting that she wanted to become a special education teacher.

But Savannah would never begin college classes. She would never have a career doing what she loved: helping others. In fact, she would never don a cap and gown or walk proudly across the stage, or shake the principal's hand and receive her diploma. In the early evening on Thursday, June 4—her last day of high school—near Avon, Ind., Savannah and her boyfriend suddenly veered off the highway, and Savannah's life was tragically lost in the car crash.



REWIND BY A LITTLE MORE THAN A DECADE. It was a summer evening in 2004 when a police officer interrupted dinner at the Mikel family home in Elkhart, Ind. It was a dinner the Mikels will never forget: it was the night they learned that their 16-year-old daughter had been in a serious car crash and was in critical condition and on life support at the hospital.

That night the Mikels were among approximately 75 people in the waiting room. Schoolmates, friends, and family, all waited with bated breath for some news of Kelsey's condition. Ultimately, it was discovered that Kelsey had suffered brain death, and the difficult decision to remove her from life support had to be made. Young Kelsey, clearly loved and cherished by everyone she knew, would never grow up to become a pediatrician or elementary school teacher, careers in which she had shown interest. In fact, she would not even have the opportunity to finish high school, let alone apply to college or university and pursue a career at all.



¹ "Parents Remember Amazing Little Angel Killed in Avon Crash on Last Day of High School," WTHR.com, Channel 13, June 4, 2015, www.wthr.com/story/29244908/two-critically-injured-in-avon-crash, accessed Oct. 23, 2015.
² Shaun Gallagher, "Legacy of 16-Year-Old Killed in Car Accident Living on Through Organ Donation," WNDU.com, Nov. 25, 2014, www.wndu.com/home/headlines/Legacy-of-16-year-old-killed-in-car-accident-living-on-through-organ-donation-283893111.html, accessed Oct. 23, 2015.

REWIND EVEN MORE, TO SPRING 1970. Gail Ruth Mohns was only weeks away from her graduation from Kingsway College. After graduation, she had plans to go to nursing school and was excited about this next big step in her life. Nursing seemed to be a perfect fit for a girl with such a caring nature. By all accounts, she was a young woman with a big heart, a big voice, and a big personality. She was sweet and kind, outgoing and fun, smart and active; she was also a talented singer and a soloist in the choir, a pathfinder, a good student, and a member of the tumbling team. She was loved and appreciated by parents, teachers, and friends alike.

On Sunday, April 20, 1970, after singing at a wedding shower that morning, Gail decided to go home for a while, as she was scheduled to return to a Kingsway College Homecoming event in the evening. Gail's friends, Bonnie and Jim, noticed that she did not show up and were concerned. Bonnie will never forget the call her mother received later that evening, which explained Gail's absence at homecoming. Around 6:30 p.m. an intruder had broken into Gail's home, attacked her, and, after a fierce struggle, Gail's assailant strangled her to death on the floor of her bedroom.

THESE THREE STORIES ARE TRAGIC BEYOND DESCRIPTION AND COMPREHENSION. Three young women—just 16, 18, and 19 years old—taken much too early and never given a chance to live lives that surely would have blessed everyone who knew them. It seems that no good could come from such horrific, senseless, and unfair loss of life. However, within the circumstances, beyond the immediate grief and with the passage of time, the friends, families, and other loved ones of these three girls have kept the memories of each girl alive in ways as unique as these girls were themselves.

During her lifetime, Savannah Bettis was passionate about raising money for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. This was important to her, as she had lost a young cousin to cancer.³ Savannah's parents knew this, so they asked that donations be made to this charity in Savannah's name.⁴ On the Sunday following her death, Savannah's friends rallied together and sold orange #savannahstrong awareness bracelets outside the deli where Savannah had worked. Their goal was to raise funds for her family to use as they wished in Savannah's name and memory.⁵

Kelsey Mikel's legacy is twofold. Kelsey had checked that little box on

her driver's license indicating that she wished to be an organ donor. This seemingly small deed has allowed Kelsey to live on through others, as her sacrifice directly saved the lives of four individuals—among them a man who had been on dialysis for 17 years, received a kidney, and was then able to go back to work; and a young girl, who received Kelsey's liver, made a complete recovery and was able to return to competitive gymnastics.⁶ Beyond these victories, Kelsey's tissues and other organs went to improve the lives of over 50 individuals. Now Kelsey's family organizes an annual running event called the "I'm Thankful Four," which raises scholarship money in Kelsey's name to be awarded to students at her high school.⁷

The legacy of Gail Mohns lives on in the community she was once a part of: College Park Church and Kingsway College. In the years following her death, Gail's family established "The Gail Ruth Mohns Student Aid Memorial Fund," to which many alumni, along with others in the church community, give generously. Gail's legacy is also twofold, as it results in two separate awards. Firstly, a gift of \$300 goes to a Grade 12 female student who exemplifies Gail herself—friendly,

committed, studious, a joy to know. Secondly, \$100 goes to a choir member who also exudes these characteristics and is chosen as most outstanding member by fellow choir members.

Three beautiful, caring girls; three lives tragically and unexpectedly lost; three legacies as different, generous, and helpful as the girls who inspired them. There are so many ways—awareness events, scholarships, awards, and the list goes on—through which lost loved ones can live on in our hearts and minds and in those of people who may have never known them but who, because of their legacy, will now never forget. ■

Leah Keys writes from Newcastle, Ont.

³ "Parents Remember 'Amazing Little Angel' ..."

⁴ Amanda Rakes and Charlie De Mar, "Hundreds Remember Ben Davis High School Senior Killed in Car Accident," FOX 59, June 6, 2015, <http://fox59.com/2015/06/05/ben-davis-high-school-senior-killed-in-car-accident/>, accessed Oct. 30, 2015.

⁵ "Parents Remember 'Amazing Little Angel' ..."

⁶ Gallagher.

⁷ Gallagher.

Adventures Ahead!

Words by God — Phil. 2:13, NIV

Have you ever wondered if God has designed a unique purpose for your life? Sometimes we ask God the big questions: *What do you want me to do with my life?* or *How can I serve you?* Those are excellent questions to ask, not because we get all the answers but because our heart is willing and listening for God's plan.

When we look at the amazing people in the Bible who followed after God's own heart and saw incredible miracles and events in history, it can be daunting. We can get discouraged when we don't see how God is using us to deliver His miracles to the world we live in.

However, I believe we are no different from the people of Bible days. He didn't choose them because they were perfect or had it all together. In fact, most of them were just like you and me: Moses shied away from public speaking and had a stutter, Esther was an orphan girl who was taken in by her uncle and became a queen, and David made many mistakes and yet was called a man after God's own heart.

Perfection is not a prerequisite; what pleases God is a willing heart. A heart moldable and pliable to seek after God's heart and desires to follow Him. The great thing is we can be used by God to deliver His miracles right now. "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Eph. 2:10, NIV). You don't have to wait until everything is in place; He can use you where you are.

God can use you right where you are today. ■

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



Watch "Do Life Big" by Jamie Grace:
<http://bit.ly/1oJRIQK>

refresh with tia



Revival, Through Prayer

"What if we became humble, called to the Lord, and devoted ourselves to prayer?"

The hope of the Adventist Church in Canada is for a *revival*—a return to spiritual vigor and fervency in personal and corporate piety. This heartfelt cry can be heard through many sermons, published articles, and even in the prayers of the saints. But how can we be reawakened to a burden for saving souls? A stronger relationship with God?

Sometime ago I desired to try my hand at the culinary arts so I could treat my family to some out-of-the-ordinary meals, so I purchased a recipe book. As I carefully scanned through many of the recipes, I was excited at the idea of providing my family with exotic meals. However, instead of acting immediately, I decided to wait until there was a special occasion—Christmas, for example. As many of you may relate, I lost my excitement in the meantime. To this day, what I still have is an unused beautiful recipe book sitting on a shelf.

Could it be that one of the reasons we have not yet realized revival is that we are procrastinating or even reluctant in using and applying the recipe God gives us? I believe we are aware of many of the recipes in Scripture that promise spiritual restoration and a reawakening to God's calling. What might happen if we as a church, corporately, were to take seriously such promises as 2 Chronicles 7:14, Joel 2:28–32, and the Pentecost story of Acts 2? What if we became humble, called to the Lord, and devoted ourselves to prayer?

As I travel and converse with people, I realize that many individuals are experiencing a good measure of growth in their study and understanding of God's Word and their relationship with Him. This is indeed a sign towards the goal of revival and reformation. It is my sincere hope that many more will find joy in committing time to Bible study and prayer.

Recently, two concepts in support of prayer in revival have stirred my thinking. The first is a conviction I share with author John Franklin. He says, "The greatest workings of God come by corporate prayer, and we will not see the power of God in sufficient measure to transform the world around us until we pray together." Without minimizing the value of our personal prayer lives, he continues by asserting that personal prayer "alone will not result in the working of God to the degree needed for spiritual transformation in our lives, churches, cities, or our nation." He believes that "God in His sovereignty has determined that something happens when we pray together that transcends praying separately. His working increases exponentially."¹

The second concept I appreciate is drawn from the work of Daniel Henderson. He believes that many Christians employ an approach to prayer that actually devalues their prayer time. He opines that our prayers are too request-based. In other words, they are top-heavy with lists of things we want or need from God. He advocates that our prayers should be worship-based—prayers in which we seek the face of God first instead of seeking only His hand. His conclusion is that "worship-based prayers ignite a desire for spiritual intimacy and personal transformation. ... A worship-based approach fixes our heart first on the majesty, the person of Christ, the purity of His Word, and excites within us an appetite for Him."²

As we become more aware of these realities, we could be empowered and enlightened to pray about issues and needs in a brand-new way. ■

Eustace Williams is the director of personal ministries and the School of Evangelism at the Ontario Conference.

¹ John Franklin, *And the Place Was Shaken* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2005), pp. 4, 5.

² Daniel Henderson, *Transforming Prayer* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2011), pp. 26, 27.



"...charity reform is now on the public agenda"

barry's blog

Will Trudeau's Election Bring "Real Change" to the Charity Sector?

With Mr. Justin Trudeau having been elected as Canada's prime minister, charity reform is now on the public agenda. He promised "Real Change." His platform, "A New Plan for a Strong Middle Class," states that the new government "will modernize the rules governing the charitable and not-for-profit sectors." The extent of the proposed modernization has yet to unfold, but the platform did give one of the charity law issues that will be under review: political activity:

We will allow charities to do their work on behalf of Canadians free from political harassment, and will modernize the rules governing the charitable and not-for-profit sectors. This will include clarifying the rules governing "political activity," with an understanding that charities make an important contribution to public debate and public policy. A new legislative framework to strengthen the sector will emerge from this process.

The issue of charities being involved in political activities was a big concern for former prime minister Harper's government. Notably, that government was concerned that environmental charities were criticizing the oil extraction projects in northern Alberta. But soon questions were being raised about other advocacy groups. The federal government suspected that Canadian environmental groups were using foreign money to attack the oil industry, and so the government implemented a number of measures to control and monitor the political activity of charities. Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) has been tasked with the monitoring process.⁴

In a strange twist of fate, we now have a new prime minister whose principal advisor, Gerald Butts, served as president and CEO of the World Wildlife Fund Canada (WWF Canada) from September 2008 to October 2012. Butts got to see firsthand the effects

of increased scrutiny by the federal government on the activities of charitable advocacy groups. According to many news articles, people have expressed the sentiment that the heavy auditing of charities resembled a “witch-hunt” of sorts.

During the election campaign Butts was quick to criticize the Harper government’s September announcement in Port Moody, B.C., by Industry Minister James Moore, accompanied by Laureen Harper, that a new Conservative government would give \$35 million to match donations to the Terry Fox organizations across the country. In a Twitter post, Butts said, “Harper spent a decade attacking charities for political activity, and now he politicized one of our very best charities mid-campaign.”⁵ Matt Gurney, a columnist and deputy comment editor with *National Post* agreed with Gerald Butts’ assessment, re-tweeted his post, adding, “When Gerry’s right, he’s right. I’m usually a fan of James Moore, but his comments on this were hugely disappointing.”⁶ To which Butts replied, “Thanks, Matt. People have no idea what this is like if you run a charity.”⁷

In 2012, Butts was critical of any suggestion that Canadian environmental charities do the public policy bidding of foreign donors. “I kind of take offence to the suggestion that people give us money in order to tell us what to do,” he said. “It’s quite the other way around. We decide what our conservation priorities are, and then we go out raise money from people who want to support those priorities.”⁸

With Gerald Butts whispering in his ear, we can expect that Prime Minister Trudeau will be robust in reviewing, if not removing, much of the political monitoring apparatus of charities that the Conservatives have implemented. We have yet to see what kind of policy will be put in place.

But more interesting questions will arise when the

new government begins to review other areas of charity that are subject to modernization. The rules regulating charities originated in the common law. On July 20, 1891, the House of Lords decision in London, England, become known as the “Pensel Case,”⁹ and it defined the term *charitable* in the context of law.¹⁰ It is because of this particular case, for instance, that charities are granted tax-exempt status. *Charitable*, according to the Law Lords, can mean

- the relief of poverty;¹¹
- the advancement of education;
- the advancement of religion; and
- other purposes beneficial to the community, not falling under any of the preceding heads.

For the past 124 years these four “heads” of charity have guided our charitable status guidelines. However, some are not at all pleased that the advancement of religion should be recognized as charitable.

For example, last year on CBC’s *Power and Politics* program, Ian Capstick, a guest on the show, argued that his tax dollars should not be “going to subsidize monks meditating in temples, priests preaching from pulpits.”¹² Of course, that is only one person’s point of view. Yet, it is a view that appears to be increasing in acceptance by a sizable group in the general public.

The Trudeau government has yet to issue a statement about their intended process to review and modernize charity rules. Those of us involved in religious charities will want to pay close attention. ■

Barry W. Bussey is director of Legal Affairs at the Canadian Council of Christian Charities. His blog “Intersection: A Current Discussion on Issues Involving Law and Religion,” is found at www.cccc.org/barry.

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2 Evan Solomon and Kristen Everson, “Seven Environmental Charities Face Canada Revenue Agency Audits,” CBC.ca, Feb. 6, 2014, www.cbc.ca/news/politics/7-environmental-charities-face-canada-revenue-agency-audits-1.2526330.
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8 www.cbc.ca/news/canada/wwf-canada-says-senator-wrong-about-u-s-donations-1.1138284
9 *The Commissioners for the Special Purposes of Income Tax v. Pemsel AC 531 [1891]*
10 See a great writeup on the case at The Pemsel Foundation’s website, at www.pemselfoundation.org/The-Pemsel-Case-Foundation#_ftn24
11 Per Lord Macnaghten, “Charity in its legal sense comprises four principal divisions: trusts for the relief of poverty; trusts for the advancement of education; trusts for the advancement of religion; and trusts for other purposes beneficial to the community, not falling under any of the preceding heads.” At 583.
12 CBC’s *Power and Politics*, Host: Evan Solomon, Topic: Is there bigotry against certain faiths? Anti-evolution Tory MP James Lunney defends views; Ian Capstick and Charles McVety debate MP’s assertion about bigotry against religious faith, April 1, 2015.

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

In our house everyone likes to get involved in the cooking, and sometimes there can be disagreements about what to cook. What we have found is that it is important to let every family member get involved in the decisions and the cooking, regardless of age, because when everyone participates, no one can complain. One day a couple years ago we let Ben decide on what to have for supper. He suggested bean burritos. As we set out to make the burritos, we decided to allow Ben to define what went into the pan and into his wraps. This is the result. One advantage to a recipe like this is that each family member can build their own take on the bean burrito. Have everyone experiment with the toppings listed or try other additions of their choice. ■

Almost vegan



Photo: Keith Chant

almost vegan

Ben's Bean Burritos

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 tablespoon oil
- 1 medium onion
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 yellow pepper, minced
- 1 jalapeño, minced
- 1 can beans (medley or black), rinsed
- black pepper, to taste
- pinch of salt
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 6 large flour tortillas
- lettuce, shredded
- tomato, diced
- sour cream (vegan)
- salsa
- sauerkraut

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Dice onion and sauté in large frying pan until it starts to brown.
- Add garlic, yellow pepper, and jalapeño. Stir frequently as it heats and partially mash the beans with the back of the stirring spoon.
- Add pepper, salt, and lemon juice. Remove from heat.
- Warm the tortillas, and divide the beans between them.
- Top with sour cream, salsa, tomato, sauerkraut, and lettuce. Wrap and serve.

Who are the ADVENTISTS?

In Shellbrook, Sask., people know who the Adventists are. Members of the Shellbrook Seventh-day Adventist Church are stopped on the street and in local businesses by people they don't even know. Even though most of the members don't even live right in the community, they are greeted with smiles and words of appreciation. People in the area know that it is the Adventist church that is responsible for bringing Christian radio to their community, and they really appreciate it! Listeners in the area will tell them, "We heard this ..." or "We really enjoy ..." One Anglican gentleman attended the church and described VOAR as his lifeline, saying that it was a real boost to him when things weren't going well.

VOAR provides a common ground for communication and opens doors for the church. The local ministerial association took the initiative to invite one of the Adventist church members, Fred Pomrenk, to join their association even though he isn't a pastor. In fact, if you check out the town's website, www.shellbrook.net, select the "Community Profile" tab, then select "Worship," you'll notice that the Adventist church has the biggest section and even lists VOAR's dial position. With all the things out there clamouring for our time and attention, VOAR sparks interest in spiritual things.

The screenshot shows the Town of Shellbrook website. At the top, it says "TOWN OF Shellbrook, SK" and "The Heart of the Parkland Come for a visit... Stay for a lifetime". Below that is a navigation menu with links for Home, Community Profile, Events, Business Directory, Town Office, Education, Employment, Recreation, Forms, and Contact Us. The main content area features a large image of a globe with "SHELLBROOK" written on it. Below the image is a "Worship" section with a table listing various churches and their services.

Worship	
LUTHERAN CHURCH 205 - Glenwood Sunday School Worship Sunday: 8 a.m.	PRESBYTERIAN Mainwold Sunday worship 11 a.m. Rev. Bev Shephard
St. John's - Shellbrook Sunday School Worship Sunday: 11 a.m. Pastor Doug Schmeier	SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST 607 - 2nd Ave. E., Shellbrook Sat.: 9 a.m. - Sabbath School Sat.: 11:30 a.m. - Worship Broadcast on VOAR 92.1 FM 306-920-3377 Lay Pastor John Radtka 306-921-2018 Spartanwood Bible Study
Perakle, Immanuel 11 a.m. - Worship Pastor Gave Dean	PENTECOSTAL CHURCH Perakle 10:30 a.m. - Worship
	Lat. Sat. of each month: 10 a.m. Eggs and Pancakes Feast Centre 227-2nd St. E. Spartanwood

The town of Shellbrook, Sask., has an extensive listing for Seventh-day Adventists on its worship page including the dial position for VOAR.

Those sparks are about to ignite spiritual interest in Big River, Sask., as the members in Shellbrook launch a new VOAR tower in that community as well. In an upcoming article, we'll learn more about how VOAR is impacting Big River. At VOAR we love to hear your stories about how VOAR is impacting you and your church, so please contact us by checking out our website at www.voar.org. ■

Christine Bergen is the secretary/treasurer for the Newfoundland and Labrador Conference.



Rebecque Johnson

ON THE
ROAD WITH

Becky

If you could have anything you wanted in heaven, what would it be?

AT THE NEWFOUNDLAND CAMPMEETING.

Katie Worden: A playground.

Thomas Daniels: I would like to see the big table [at] the first family meal and God's beauty for my eyes.

Sheila: [The] peace and quiet of Woody Acres.

Marlene Michael: Ice cream—a different flavour every day!

I

very year the arrival of the truck carrying loads of boxes filled with Florida oranges triggered an annual tradition: a youth get-together. Asher-lee Gratto would join the other young people of her church to spend the night together, get up early the next morning, and help unload the truck as a group. "The other young people in the church were really my best friends at the time," Gratto reminisces.

"We would have lots of sleepovers and activities. Those were some of my best memories." Gratto was raised in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Growing up, she used many of her talents for God. She facilitated programs for vespers and Sabbath school. She helped plan events with the social committee. She sang in the church choir. She was thoroughly involved in the work of her church,

"You deny the Holy Spirit's voice once, then twice, and before you know it, you don't even hear it anymore."

James, Asher-lee, and Adley Gratto



Coming home

Chatham Seventh-day Adventist Church in Chatham, Ont. Gratto flourished in the church as a child and as a teen, but her spiritual growth slowed down in her young adult years until it came to a complete stop during adulthood.

"I didn't change overnight," Gratto explains. "You deny the Holy Spirit's voice once, then twice, and before you know it, you don't even hear it anymore."

For her last year of high school, Gratto decided to leave Kingsway College and attend a public school near home. Her decision introduced her to people outside of the Adventist Church. "I often felt out of place, and I just wanted to fit in," Gratto confesses. "I just wanted to do the same things they did without feeling any guilt." She began to experiment with a myriad of things: drinking, smoking, drugs, inappropriate relationships, lying, stealing. "I had one foot in the door of the church and one foot out," she admits. "I was still attending church, but I had mentally checked out."

Gratto credits her father for keeping her in the church during her experimental years. He tried his best to keep his daughter on the right path. When he passed away from cancer in 2008, Gratto physically checked out of church. There was no longer a parental figure urging her to stay; her mother had been out of the church for years. "I felt completely lost after my father passed away," Gratto discloses. "It wasn't long before I was no longer attending church."

Life continued. Gratto finished college and landed a good job. She established a vibrant social life with many friends. She got married and became pregnant with her first child. Life seemed great. "But I was longing for something more—I wasn't happy," Gratto acknowledges. "Ironically, Asher means 'happy' or 'blessed.'" Despite being distant from God, He blessed her. But because she was distant from God, she could not experience happiness over her blessings.

In March 2013 Gratto received devastating and life-changing news: her mother was diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). ALS is a progressive neuromuscular disease that causes nerve cells to die and leaves voluntary muscles paralyzed. Gratto rushed to her mother's side, hoping to help her mother navigate through challenges caused by the disease. Eventually, her mother could no longer speak or move any part of her body.

As Gratto witnessed the physical changes in her mother, she also witnessed the changes in her mother's heart. "Before my mother lost the ability to speak, she repeatedly voiced her thankfulness for the disease," she recalls. "Because God had given her a second chance to connect with Him again." Gratto joined her mother in reading the Bible and watching sermons

online, as well as praying and singing hymns. Despite the negative effects of the disease, her mother continued to trust God. "It was an eye-opening experience for me," Gratto acknowledges. "I've watched both of my parents face their struggles, their pain, and ultimately death with such faith and peace." She wanted to know that same faith and peace.

In July 2014, shortly after her mother passed away, Pastor Dirk Zinner persistently requested to conduct Bible studies with Gratto and her husband. She had gotten to know Pastor Zinner during his visits with her mother and his help with the funeral service. "I was still hesitant to get involved or be committed to the faith, but I felt I owed it to him for all of his help," Gratto reasons.

Growing up in the Adventist Church, Gratto was familiar with the material presented throughout Bible study, but she was hearing biblical truth through different ears. She was no longer the young girl who longed to fit in with her friends of the world. "I had actually become one of the people I thought I wanted to be like," she acknowledges. "But it turns out the grass isn't greener on the other side."

The pain and the despair that Gratto experienced throughout her life was a means to prepare her. "We often find examples in the Bible of God allowing heartache and troubles to come upon His people to show them their need for Him and to bring them back to Him," Gratto explains. "I realized I needed Jesus."

As a result of Bible study, Gratto found a new connection with God through renewed faith and belief. Early 2015, Gratto recommitted her life to Christ through baptism. Her husband, who had grown up in an atheist home, was also baptized.

"I'm not perfect, far from it," Gratto accepts. "But I know God's working in my life." Gratto and her husband hope to raise their son in a faithful Christian home, teaching him important biblical truths. Maybe he'll have his own memories of getting up early to help unload the truck filled with oranges. "I hope and pray that unlike me, he will remain faithful to God and the church everyday of his life," Gratto hopes. "However, even if that's not the case, I take comfort in the words of Proverbs 22:6, because that's my story. I'm a prodigal daughter."

Asher-lee Gratto found her way back home toward God and her church, bringing her husband and son with her. ■

Kryzia Abacan is a recent graduate of the MA in Communication program at Andrews University. You can read her personal blog at www.kryziaabacan.com.

Maintaining Spiritual Momentum

by Brian Bell

“God’s kingdom had been growing when everyone pulled together instead of expecting the pastor to do it all. God had planted in me the seed of a dream; I wanted to be part of a movement to plant churches.”

I still remember where I was when the power of church planting blew my mind. I was at the ACTS for Christ youth conference in Vancouver, B.C., in 2010. Pastor Shane Anderson was unearthing Adventist church history. In the 19th century our pioneers were on the move. The 1890s were the most prolific growth period in the church, with an average growth rate of 10 percent. An average of 88 new churches were planted each year. However, by the 1920s, growth had dwindled and eventually flat-lined at around 3 percent for much of the 20th century.¹

The key to success during that prolific growth period had been church planting. You see, after sufficient training by a pastor, church members were expected to lead churches largely on their own, in order to allow the pastor to move on to plant another church. Both Ellen White and A. G. Daniells, the then president of the General Conference, strongly supported this approach, but after she passed away and he was not re-elected, the focus on planting new churches began to wane: the movement had lost momentum.

I found this realization to be galvanizing. God's kingdom had been growing when everyone pulled together instead of expecting the pastor to do it all. God had planted in me the seed of a dream; I wanted to be part of a movement to plant churches.

Five years later God made my church planting dream come true. In January 2015, I became a founding member of a thriving church plant in Edmonton, Alta. In October 2015, I took a position with the Manitoba-Saskatchewan (Man-Sask) Conference, where church planting is thriving as well. Being part of new church growth has been one of the greatest spiritual journeys of my life, and it's only picking up speed. I would like to share some of my experiences in hopes that it may inspire you to add to the spiritual momentum of God's church on earth.

Overcoming Inertia: ACTS for Christ

Attending numerous Adventists Commissioned to Train Servants for Christ (ACTS) for Christ youth conferences in Western Canada was how God started setting me free from spiritual inertia. It was at ACTS that I really learned about discipleship for the first time from Pastor Angelo Grasso. At the time he was the director of STRIDE, a ministry equipping Adventist students for outreach in Boston, one of the most secular cities in America. He taught me that evangelism was not about information but investment. If I allowed Christ to invest Himself in me, He would enable me to invest His life into others.

Grasso explained in practical terms this meant a willingness to “come alongside” someone wherever that person may be in his or her spiritual journey. Eat with

them. Talk with them. Laugh with them. Cry with them. Pray with them. For as long as it takes. I realized that evangelism is not an event; it's a lifestyle. The lifestyle of Jesus. It's the greatest calling that exists.

At another ACTS for Christ conference, Dan Vis from FAST Missions provided a practical way to live out discipleship. His ministry developed small-group Bible studies to first teach church members how to be disciplined by Christ and then how to disciple others in small groups.

A core group of friends caught the vision for discipleship groups. It was a revelation to us. In our experience, small groups were primarily for “in-reach.” Most of us were used to the information-driven, event-focused style of evangelism. We learned that these so-called reaping events are critical, but they are only one component of biblical discipleship. If our non-Christian friends had an initial connection to our discipleship groups and were exploring a connection with Christ in that small-group setting, they were more likely to attend an evangelistic series and then stay plugged in afterward.

We spent the next year together in discipleship studies. Quite frankly, we needed all that time as God helped us work through our pride, personality differences, discouragement, fatigue, and difficulty that are inevitable whenever we work for God. At times it felt as if we were spinning our wheels, as if the momentum was slipping. But God helped us find traction by leading us to persevere in His Word and with one another.

In the midst of our discipleship process, Pastor Jeff Potts presented a SEEDS church planting seminar in Edmonton, which several individuals from our group attended. Our vision grew, and we longed for an opportunity to plant a church to help grow God's kingdom. In 2015 we got our answer.

Picking Up Steam

Impact 2015 was a citywide, multiyear, collaborative evangelistic outreach to the city of Edmonton. It was a “go big or go home” approach that intentionally included discipleship and church planting dynamics. The planning team asked our home church to plant

¹Source: www.adventiststatistics.org

one of two new church plants. Many of our discipleship group leapt at the opportunity, and a core group of 30 started planning our church plant in November 2014. The ball was finally rolling.

Unity is critical in church planting; prayer and perseverance are vital to maintain it. Many of our core group had been in discipleship studies together for years, so we benefited from a near immediate sense of unity. In one instance, though, we could not agree on the church name. Everyone was getting quite frustrated until Nyater raised her hand and said, "We should pray." It was the reset button we needed. Peace flowed as we prayed. After finishing, our friend Adam looked at the list of names on the board and pointed out that when he had recently come to know Jesus, there was one thing he had been seeking: an abundant life. You could almost see the lightbulbs turning on. We had lost sight of our focus. We had been choosing a name for ourselves instead of for our future friends. On Jan. 24, 2015, Abundant Life Seventh-day Adventist Church held its first service. Spiritual momentum is a balancing act. One of the greatest struggles in church planting is finding that balance. For example, if all your energy is spent on preparing for church services, the effort to invest in others during the week falls off. To help with this, we intentionally designed a service that was simple and streamlined. We included a social "tea time" in between divine service and Sabbath school to allow for chatting. On the whole, it resulted in a relaxed yet reverent service that was spiritually rejuvenating. The tea time and weekly potluck allowed us to invest in our visitors. Six months later the average Sabbath attendance had doubled to 60.

Children's story at Abundant Life Seventh-day Adventist church in Edmonton, Alta.



Momentum Shift

with a growing sense of community, ongoing personal Bible studies, and regular baptisms or professions of faith. Abundant Life was a church on the move.

Part of healthy spiritual momentum requires a willingness to change course as God directs. Although I was living my spiritual dream in Edmonton, it seemed God was leading me in a new direction when I was offered the position of Communications Director for the Manitoba-Saskatchewan (Man-Sask) Conference. As I was getting acquainted with Ron Nelson, the president of the conference, and the rest of the leaders and staff of Man-Sask, it was humbling and exciting to observe how these godly leaders sustain the church's spiritual momentum.

Ron Nelson consistently talks of trying to maintain unity and alignment amongst conference workers by first "creating a culture that enables God's voice to be heard." This was best demonstrated to me at the conference leaders' retreat in late September 2015. Instead of a jam-packed, lecture-heavy weekend, Nelson used short sermons to challenge us to use the ample free time provided for personal prayer and reflection to get re-centered on our ministry passions. He even designed a worksheet to help us structure and capture our thoughts. His goal was unity of purpose and alignment with God's will so we could move forward together. Even though I was among many new people, I sensed the same unity of spirit and momentum that I had enjoyed with my church plant family in Edmonton.

"Sheep make sheep," Nelson often comments. The

First church members learn how to be disciple by Christ and then how to disciple others in small groups.





Some of original Edmonton church plant group.

conference staff has clearly invested in a first-century discipleship and church planting approach. Since 2013, they have provided ongoing discipleship training for all their pastors as well as interested lay workers.

Executive Secretary and Church Planting Coordinator, Jeff Potts, provides coaching support to both pastors and lay leaders of fledgling church plants. The conference encourages formation of seeker-friendly discipleship groups by providing copies of the *Thunder in the Holy Land* DVD series. These 30-minute documentary-style videos introduce Bible topics and make it easy for members to host a small group.

The cycle of evangelism in Man-Sask is well illustrated by the church in Brandon, Man. In 2012 the church hosted a youth rally that God used to revive and inspire the congregation. They made an outreach plan and, during the following years, have provided community events such as depression-recovery seminars, a winter fair, as well as a two-week Messiah's Mansion exhibit that brought in 1,900 visitors. From those interests, they run weekly Thunder Groups [based on the afore-mentioned DVD series] as well as Pathfinder and Adventurer groups. Regular evangelistic series have steadily added to the church's membership, and Pastor Oscar Gutierrez reports

that the members are regularly engaged in outreach. They're on a roll!

In Man-Sask, unified momentum and God's grace has led to a conference-wide membership growth exceeding 11 percent over the past five years, which is the second-highest in Canada. Church planting is a regular strategic priority. The North American Division's new "Plant 1,000" church-planting initiative encourages conferences with less than 15,000 members to plant three churches per year starting in 2016. By God's grace, Man-Sask planted three new churches in 2015 from a total membership of only 4,000, and we pray He will continue to add to the momentum.

Christ's method for changing the world started by investing Himself in the lives of 12 men for three and a half years. It almost seems too simple. But by Christ's investment and the Spirit's power, His empowered disciples moved the world as they invested in people with the love of God. Let's all join in this global movement! ■

Brian Bell is the communication director for the Manitoba-Saskatchewan Conference.

Spiritual Momentum Resources

ACTS for Christ—www.actsforchrist.org

Church Planting and Discipleship Resources—www.nadei.org

FAST Missions—www.fast.st

Thunder in the Holy Land DVD series—<http://qlp.tv/thunder-in-the-holy-land>



I'm not a Christian. Is that a problem?

...Mariana knew she had touched the woman's heart, and that was payment enough.

Mariana walked up to a house, approached the door, and knocked. She stood back, waited a little, and after a while a woman came to the door. Mariana began to introduce herself and explain that she was a student missionary with Canada Youth Challenge (CYC), but before she finished, the lady gently but firmly said she was not interested and turned to go away. Before she did, Mariana asked, "Is it OK if I pray with you?"

The lady paused, then said, "I'm not a Christian. Is that a problem?" "No way!" Mariana asked. "Do you have anything special you want to ask?"

"Peace," the woman replied. The woman's answer struck a chord in Mariana. She remembered a time when she was searching for answers and struggling to find peace herself, and she remembered a book that had showed her where peace could be found. That book, *Steps to Happiness*, was in her bag. So pulling it out, she talked to the woman about it and shared her own experience.

The woman was interested and went inside to find some money. But when she returned, she only had \$5. It wasn't enough to cover the cost of the book, so Mariana gave her another book, *History and Hope*, instead. Then she prayed, "Dear heavenly Father, I know what it is to try to find peace and not be able to find it. Please give it to this lady as you have given it to me. Show her that you are by her side, that you are a loving Father who cares for her. In Jesus' name, amen."

Mariana opened her eyes, and as she looked into the face of the woman, she saw that her eyes were filled with tears. After saying goodbye, Mariana turned and went on her way. But she hadn't gone far before something stopped her. Something impressed her to go back to the woman and give her *Steps to Happiness* for free. So she went back. The woman, filled with gratitude, accepted it, and Mariana again went her way.

Throughout the day Mariana earned almost all the money she needed to cover the cost of the book. But before ever receiving money, she had already been repaid. In the woman's tears, in the gratitude with which she had received the book, Mariana knew she had touched the woman's heart, and that was payment enough.

In Luke 14, Jesus told a parable about a great banquet and the rather unorthodox order given by a master to his servant: "Then the master told his servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full'" (verse 23, NIV). To the master, what a person called himself or herself didn't matter—the invitation was extended to all, and all the master wanted to see was that his house was full and that as many people as possible enjoyed the feast he had prepared.

There is another Master who is sending out another invitation, and whether those His servants meet call themselves atheists, Jews, or Muslims is not a problem for Him. All that matters is that when the invitation goes out, those who hear it answer the call. But His servants must go. We are called by our Master to be His servants and to share the invitation He extends to all. Will we go? ■



HopeChannel

CANADA

Now Coast to Coast

January 23, 2012, was huge for me. That was the day the Canadian Radio and Television Commission (CRTC) gave permission for Hope Channel to be broadcast on cable and satellite anywhere in Canada. This milestone led to negotiations with some cable companies, including Eastlink Cable, one of Canada's large, nationwide cable networks. As a result, as of December 2015, Hope Channel Canada is on Eastlink, Channel #893, from coast to coast.

Being broadcast on Eastlink* is only the beginning. We want Hope Channel on all the other Canadian cable networks. If you live in Canada, contact your local cable company and tell them you want Hope Channel in your home. We need advocates for Hope Channel to team together and approach their local cable companies, big or small. If you belong to a church, tell your cable company your church can promote Hope Channel in your community. I envision a day when Hope Channel Canada offers programs in all the major languages of the world so that Canada's diverse population can hear the gospel message in their native language. Millions are desperate for the wisdom that comes from the testimonies of people whose lives have been changed by the grace of God—and Hope Channel is the place to find the stories and resources that inspire people to live wholesome, balanced, and rewarding lives. ■

Stan Jensen is the director of Hope Channel Canada.

*As of December 1, Hope Channel Canada is also broadcast on CityWest, Delta, and Coastal.

You've Got Answers and we want to hear them! For the April 2016 issue of the Messenger, editor Stan Jensen asks, "What do you like best about the Hope Channel?" Send your answer, in 18 words or less, to messenger@adventist.ca, or to Messenger's Facebook or Twitter page.

You've Got Answers

"What is your favourite Sabbath activity?"

Sabbath school. I love to worship, learn about the Bible, and benefit from others' experiences through discussion.



Paul Musafili Whitby, Ont.

The best moment is when the Sabbath starts. I relax while listening to classical music and/or reading.



Rémy Ballais Saint-Basile-Le-Grand, Que.

Singing and bringing cheer to senior citizens is a blessing to us and a joy to them.



Danielle Drabik Cornwall, Ont.

Hiking and snowshoeing, although this requires some travel to find snow, given that I live in "Lotusland."



Kevin Boonstra Abbotsford, B.C.

My brother and I [used to] watch Hanna-Barbera's *The Greatest Adventure: Stories from the Bible*.



Erin Mortenson Oshawa, Ont.

Reading God's Word, Spirit of Prophecy, and books by other Adventists. Favourite topics: religious liberty, health, and church history.



Daniel Cho Toronto, Ont.

Lunch with family and friends followed by walk by a river, lake or ocean ending with a campfire at sunset.



Almyra Hodder Courtrice, Ont.

Our live worship service is my favourite Sabbath activity!



Tracy Willauer Bon Accord, Alta.

Spending time in God's creation with my family.



Steve Matthews Conception Bay S., Nfld.



Spiritual Cooperation

I SAT QUIETLY IN THE SMALL GIRLS' DORM PRAYER ROOM:

ALONE AND 14, I began to weep. When I saw no point in hiding, I let myself go and began sobbing. Deeply unhappy and feeling helplessly alone, I had become a sorry soul by that young age of 14. I had always found comfort in my family or my friends; they had always protected me from my insecure, doubt-filled thoughts. At that moment, though, sitting alone in that room, I had no one. Even I wanted to abandon myself. Then I looked up and saw the only decorative item in the room: a portrait. Although just an image, that picture of Jesus Christ comforted my spirit. I wasn't alone.

As a student at Kingsway College, what I believe Christian education did for me was provide an environment where major influences of the world were hushed, allowing God to speak to me. What He had attempted to tell me for 14 years. He was finally able to whisper to me in that room: "I love you." During my four years at Kingsway, God was able to begin stripping me down to my inner core. In my stay at Kingsway, God broke down every barrier of communication and was able to let me know He had received my S.O.S. Most importantly, in those four years, God developed a relationship with me that could withstand the upcoming whirlwind of university. Kingsway College was an instrument to all that preparation.

Looking back now, I understand that it was the Holy Spirit who changed my life, and it worked for me because I was in an environment that facilitated spiritual cooperation. Even the physical location, being away from Toronto, allowed me to contemplate: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou vighest him?" (Psalm 8:3, 4, KJV). I cherish my relationship with God more than ever. Kingsway College helped lay the foundations of my relationship with my Maker, so that no matter how far I stray, I *always* come back to God. The battles I have faced with Satan during my university career were fights I would surely have lost, had it not been for this substantially real connection I had made with God in my teenage years.

I was such an angry little girl, with so much angst and very little direction. The Kingsway faculty were not only teachers, administrative personnel, and deans; they were psychologists, financial advisors, career mentors, spiritual consultants, and friends. They encouraged, developed, led, facilitated, and, at all points, directed us toward prayer. It was a place where I developed my leadership skills, skills that led me to become the president of the Adventist Christian Fellowship Chapter at York University. Most importantly, it was the place where I became first acquainted with God.

The truth is, had I gone to public school—the path I contemplated prior to Kingsway—I very much doubt I would have done so well academically, socially, mentally, and spiritually. I look around me and see my peers turning to drugs, alcohol, or sex to ease the stress of life. They have no peace and have no idea where to find it, so they accept what the world offers as a solution. If there is one thing I do not regret for a moment, it is attending an Adventist school. ■

Akosua Seta-Annumwah is in her last year, studying International Business at York University. Schulich School of Business. She aspires to be led by the Holy Spirit.



Akosua Seta-Annumwah



More than a Performance: The students of MANS's sign language group, Total Praise, learn about the joy of Adventist community and catch glimpses of university life and role models as they join Unspoken Testimony (Burman University) to raise funds for the Adventst church in their reserve community.

MANS's Total Praise and Burman U Raise Funds for Maskwacis Church

"Learning sign language helps me learn more about God."

—Larell, Grade 6 MANS student

Combining a university sign-language choir with a junior high sign language choir is a "representation of what heaven will be, where people from different backgrounds and experiences will join together to worship Jesus in complete harmony," says Cheri Notice, Grade 6 teacher at Mamawi Atosketan Native School (MANS). Notice is also director of Total Praise (at MANS) and Unspoken Testimony (at Burman University)—both signing choirs that minister with sign language interpretations of gospel music selections.

The two choirs joined forces to form Unspoken Praise, a highlight of a concert in the Burman University church held November 6 to raise funds for the Maskwacis Seventh-day Adventist Church on the Samson Reserve. Over \$2,000 was raised to assist in providing materials for the children's Sabbath school classes as well as expanding their summer outreach program to include additional First Nations communities in Western Canada.

The new, combined group represented the partnership between Burman University (BU) and the Maskwacis community. Bringing MANS junior high students into a partnership ministry with university students allows MANS students to observe university life and gives them hope that they can accomplish great things in their lives.

"Ministering with the Burman students allows MANS students to know that they are cared about by a larger community of

students and Christians," says Notice. "It is also a great way for the university students to truly understand the power of ministry to heal others and unify people."

Notice further comments, "My MANS students and my BU girls inspire me daily with their tenacity, commitment, resilience, and their faith. We are all working together to create an environment of hope and to spread Jesus' love.

"My students not only hear about God's love but also are able to show others how He is slowly changing their lives for the better through sign language," continues Notice. "We need to pray that God can use us to continue to have a life-changing impact on the lives of these young people and their awesome community."

The impact is evident in Larell, a Grade 6 student. "The concert with the Burman University girls was fun because we were able to sign all together," she says. "My favourite song to sign was 'Holy, Holy, Holy.' Learning sign language helps me learn more about God. Last year I didn't talk much. This year I am more excited about school and I'm more confident."

To Notice and *all* others who work to empower children and youth to develop their God-given potential: Thank you! Together we can grow! ■

Linda Steinke writes from Millet, Alberta.

*Donations can be made to the Maskwacis mission church on an ongoing basis through www.maskwacisadventist.ca or mailed to: PO Box 778, Maskwacis, AB T0C 1N0. Go to www.mans1.ca (video section) to see other performances of Total Praise and soloist Brayden Omeasoo-Steinhauer.

Goran Milutinovic introduces himself as a German-born Croatian from Vancouver, B.C., now living in Alberta to go to school at Parkview Adventist Academy (PAA). He first heard about PAA at B.C. campmeeting, where he met the vice-principal, Rod Jamieson. "I went to talk to him every day of the week and knew from a young age that I wanted to come to school here."

The process by which Goran gained support from his family to attend a boarding school in another province represents the kind of strategic and critical thinking that has made him a successful Grade 11 student at PAA: "One summer I first told my mother to come check out the PAA tent at Camp Hope. Then the next, I introduced her to Mr. Jamieson. As years went by, my mom got interested in sending me to school, and she and I were both excited. Now that I'm here, I'm so glad I got to come to PAA."

Goran anticipated the year he would be old enough to enroll in Grade 10, and when he finally arrived, he learned it was everything he had wanted: "I was happy. There were so many opportunities for different things. The deans and the rest of the teachers are much more professional than I would have hoped or imagined. PAA is a great environment."

For Goran, the experience of living in a dorm and having a variety of ways to be involved is the best environment for him to mature. He shares, "At PAA you have your independence while being away from home, but at the same time you have a new family. School feels like one big field trip!"

In addition to his leadership role in Dauntless, PAA's student-led praise band, and as president of the dorm's student club, Goran has also found opportunities for spiritual development. "To say that I knew God two years ago would be a lie. Just because I could read my Bible and go to church, it didn't mean that I knew Him on a personal level. In the last little while, I've grown to actually know who He is. The people here at PAA are all a reflection of God's character. The campus is full of people who have chosen to live an outstanding life, not for themselves, but for God."

"The campus is full of people who have chosen to live an outstanding life, not for themselves, but for God."

Parkview Profiles

by Katelyn Ruiz



Goran Milutinovic

In Grade 10 Goran joined the ranks of the outstanding people at PAA by his willingness to be involved in leading worship. A skilled pianist, he left his comfort zone to pick up the cajon and complete Dauntless. He admits he was motivated because, as he says, "I like to be a good influence as I lead by example," and his faith and commitment continue to be an example to his peers. PAA's curriculum is shaped around a framework of faith, and students, like Goran, can see the difference this makes. Goran says, "I realize that God shows His love to us, sometimes not directly but by placing people in our lives who love us. All the teachers at PAA love their students in different ways. They show love by taking time to understand us and by talking with us when we might be late for class or have incomplete homework. They love us because they first learned to love God and know what love is."

The people whom God places in our lives can change us, and certainly the years Goran spent learning about PAA were divinely appointed. Now, as he works to complete his high school education, God is preparing Goran for great things. He says, "PAA provides the opportunity for change. Here students can decide to be the best possible versions of themselves, and all for the glory of God. ■"

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

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.

Alberta

It Is Hard to Be Grateful in Times of Difficulty, But It's Not Impossible

It was a bright, clear, sunny Sabbath afternoon when we knocked on Molly Rossol's door. She invited us in as we extended a cheerful greeting to her and sat close by. I was accompanied by Felicite Niyigaba and Allis Mboya from our Edmonton Central Seventh-day Adventist Church for this special visit. Molly Rossol is one of our many shut-in members of our church. She does not attend church anymore, because of her many health issues. With a gleam in her eyes, a cheerful smile on her face, and no hesitation, she said, "I am so happy to see you ladies."

However, despite being confined to a wheelchair, being in poor health, and having encountered many other obstacles, Molly never complains. She enjoys telling everyone she comes in contact with how much she loves Jesus and that she is anxiously waiting for His return. Molly was introduced to *Signs of the Times* magazine many years ago after arriving here from Germany. And she still continues to read that magazine every month. She heard the Adventist message and was baptized after attending a six-week Bible seminar in Sherwood Park.

Next to her devotion with God, most of her days are spent doing things for others. She enjoys knitting and crocheting a sweater or a blanket or painting a picture for anyone who stops by to visit with her. Our church has many shut-in members like Molly Rossol—the pioneers of our churches and communities. Let us not forget about them. They need our love and compassion. We need to visit them, spend time with them, pray for them, and encourage them.

Molly showed great courage and integrity—the kind of courage and integrity that God is looking for from all of us. It is hard to be grateful in times of difficulty, but it's not impossible. Daniel "prayed and gave thanks" (Dan. 6:10), knowing that his life was in danger. Jonah called out with the voice of thanksgiving (see Jonah 2:9) while inside a fish. ■

—Ina Martin, Women's Ministry Department



Felicite Niyigaba, Molly Rossol (seated), and Ina Martin.

Our church has many shut-in members like Molly Rossol —the pioneers of our churches and communities. Let us not forget about them.

The Youth of Edmonton Say YES!

On October 8–10, 2015, the youth of Edmonton said YES! Youth Empowered to Serve (YES) is a ministry that engages youth and young adults in service ministries (ministries of compassion) under the umbrella of Adventist Community Services (ACS) for the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists (NAD). The mission of YES is to develop an active spirit of service among youth and young adults. An important part of YES is the network of young people throughout North America who engage in random acts of kindness, strategically planned service events, disaster response, and emergency relief. These young people demonstrate compassion and follow Christ's example in meeting the needs of others. This network is affiliated with various schools, youth organizations, youth ministries, and community service.

On the Sabbath of October 10, the Edmonton Filipino Church was packed with youth from all over Edmonton. "It's great to see so many youth ... come to learn about community services," said Ron Yabur, the senior pastor.

"I didn't know that Adventist Community Services (ACS) was made up of some many different ministries ... like elder care, disaster response, and tutoring and mentoring," said youth pastor Kingsley Moyoy.

Pastor Shawn Robinson, the YES coordinator, came down from the office of the North American Division for the weekend and empowered youth in the area of community service. Pastor Shawn informed the youth about Adventist Community Services and all the sub-ministries it comprises. He equipped over 100 youth with the tools to conduct a community needs assessment and community survey. He also taught them how to work with millennials in the community. At one point Pastor Shawn even divided the youth into groups and led out them into the neigh-



Edmonton youth participating in a community service ministry.

hoods to conduct actual surveys and community needs assessments.

Another highlight of the week was the annual #REACH10 initiative in downtown Edmonton. This year well over 100 youth from Edmonton came and shared the love of Jesus Christ with homeless persons in the city of Edmonton.

What floored me was I saw several pictures on Facebook of youth in their Adventist Community Service shirts who intentionally visited a plaza downtown Edmonton and volunteered to wipe down tables in the food court and clean washrooms within the plaza. This past Thanksgiving weekend the Youth of Edmonton said YES! They went above and beyond the call of duty—all because they were youth empowered to serve! ■

—Lyle Notice, Associate Youth Director, Alberta Conference

Ontario

Southwestern Soccer Tournament

On Aug. 31, 2015, the Sarnia Church hosted a soccer tournament for the churches in the southwestern region of Ontario. This tournament was the third time the churches had met to compete on the soccer field. Teams from Sarnia, London, Windsor, Leamington, and Chatham enjoyed a day of fun and spirited play. At the end of the day, the team from Leamington, with its undefeated record, was declared the champion.

The original soccer tournament took place in 2014. Karen Hansen, the organizer from the Sarnia church, was looking for a



London, Ontario team



Leamington, Ontario team

way that the youth in the various churches could get together. She also wanted to provide an opportunity for our youth and non-Adventist youth from their communities to share and communicate. That first tournament involved teams from Sarnia, Windsor, and London, with every team made up of both Adventist and non-Adventist players. The atmosphere was great and everyone was able to share their faith with others. At the end of the day, it was decided to make the soccer tournament an annual event.

The next goal is to encourage all of the Seventh-day Adventist churches in our area to participate. We want to allow more young people to mingle and share with one another. Hopefully, in 2016, teams from Kitchener and Guelph will join in the fun. ■

Ready to Serve!

On Saturday, Nov. 21, 2015, the Bowmanville Archers Pathfinder Club was inducted at the Bowmanville Seventh-day Adventist Church. It was a day of jubilee to see that for over 40 years this church has a Pathfinder club that is ready to serve its community. This Pathfinder club consists of only nine members aged 10 to 12 years old and two adult directors. It may be a small group, but they have a big heart for service.

For months prior to the induction service, the Bowmanville Archers were busy training in service. They trained in marching and drilling, initiated a fundraising drive, and participated in outreach projects. The Archers conducted a worship service at the Fosterbrooke Long-term Care Facility in Newcastle, Ont. They had the opportunity to sing, pray individually with the residents, and share their faith.

The vision for creating a Pathfinder club at Bowmanville Seventh-Day Adventist Church birthed from their Little Arrows Adventurer Club. They themselves were a brand-new club last year, but there was a vision to have a Pathfinder club for the little ones to aspire to be a part of one day.



The induction service of the Bowmanville Archers Pathfinder Club with visiting Pathfinder clubs, and members of the Ontario Conference Pathfinder Council in attendance.

And that day had finally arrived. The Archers stood tall knowing they had the full support of their visiting Pathfinder clubs, members from the Ontario Conference Pathfinder Council, and their church family behind them.

The induction service was the start of wonderful things the Pathfinder ministry has in store for Bowmanville Archers. They are already looking forward to the upcoming Eastern Canada Pathfinder Camporee in August 2016.

There is no doubt that the Lord will use the Archers to do great things in their community and in their church. We pray that when the next induction service comes, we will have more members who pledge to be a servant of God and a friend to humanity. Bowmanville Archers is now ready to serve! ■

— Sharon Ennis, Director,
Bowmanville Archers

Maritime

Maritime Evangelistic Series



Kevin Scott, speaker for the Halifax district fall series of meetings with Wendy Flint and Audrey Stoker. These two ladies attended all 21 meetings of the series. Wendy's brother and sister also attended. Audrey, who is in her 80s, was baptized from the spring series and came by invitation of her friend Rita Hack, who is 95 years young! They both attended all the meetings of that series.



From left to right: Wendy Flint, Darlene Flint, and Claudia MacLaughlin, who were received into the fellowship of the Halifax church. Wendy and Darlene are the first to join the church after attending the recent series of meetings. Claudia has faithfully attended the Halifax church for several years with her family.

When Pastor Kevin Scott came to pastor the Halifax/Dartmouth/Tanallan/Fox Point churches in June 2014, he promised to hold two series of evangelistic meetings per year, starting in the spring of 2015. We appreciate that he is a man of his word! The spring series resulted in eight baptisms. The fall series, held October 30–November 21, resulted in eight dear people accepting Jesus and doing further Bible studies in preparation for baptism under the direction of Pastor Scott and his associate pastor, Gary Belhomme. Kevin Scott gave a wonderful presentation of God's Word and end-time prophecies. Church members and visitors alike were richly blessed at each of the 21 meetings from the moment they entered the attractively decorated foyer of Sandy Lake Academy, where they received a warm welcome from the volunteer greeters and picked up their Bibles and other material from the other volunteers. The Lord

blesses His children living in unity (see Psalm 133:1). How can these two series fail when at each meeting three or four people gathered in a room around a cozily lit table praying continually for Pastor Scott and all those taking part, as well as those attending. Many prayer request cards came in from those attending, and it was deemed a privilege and honour to pray over these. Kevin, an attendee, came to the first meeting with a friend but did not return until about halfway through the series and then kept coming to almost all the remainder. It turned out that he is very health conscious and was impressed with our meat-free fellowship meals. He had been praying for an opportunity to learn and understand his Bible better, especially the books of prophecy that he could not comprehend. Kevin felt that his prayers were answered through the flyer that came in the mail inviting him

to these Bible prophecy seminars. He is continuing to study through the topics that he missed and looks forward to fellowshiping with the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Included in the 21 meetings were four meetings at 11 a.m. each Sabbath, followed by a fellowship meal. The auditorium was filled to capacity for these four meetings, and the people enjoyed plenty of great food and fellowship with one another. Of course, we wish the attendance would have been that way each night, but we praise God for the average attendance of 10 visitors and the support of the faithful members. It was thrilling to see people who were baptized in the spring series volunteering at this fall series. Another is planned for the district in the spring. ■

—Yvonne Crook, Communication Secretary, Halifax Church

British Columbia

See more at: <http://goo.gl/yKPCCY>

Avalon Adventist Christian Academy Implements REACH

We had a very exciting year implementing the core values of REACH¹ at Avalon Adventist Academy. Some of our activities are listed below:

R—Revival and Transformation

We had two weeks of prayer. Pastors Okumu, Randy, and Ed conducted our first week of prayer.

For our second week of prayer Pastor Mike Stevenson travelled up-island to bless us. Avalon is very fortunate to have the support of local pastors, retired pastors, and visiting pastors to enhance our spiritual program. The Avalon students were also blessed with visits from Parkview Adventist Academy (Alberta), Mamawi Atosketan (Alberta), as well as from schools in Port Hardy's twin city, Numata, Japan. It was great to see past Avalon students doing well at the high school level and reaching out to our current students.

Moreover, it was also great to have a visit from our brothers and sisters from Mamawi. Visits from fellow Adventist schools are always a welcome sight on the North Island. Meeting visiting students from a community school in Japan was also an enjoyable and educational experience.

E—Education for Discipleship

Our first curricular highlight this year was the Royal Canadian Legion Poster and Literary Contest, a writing and art competition. Abigail MacDonald received first place at the regional level, and a number of students won first, second, and third at the local level with their essays, poems, and posters. Our second curricular highlight was School District 85's science fair. Stephanie Lacasse placed first for her science project, and others received cash prizes and ribbons for their second- and third-place achievements.



Students, (standing left to right), Abbie MacDonald, Stephanie Lacasse, and Tabini Lighthouse. The adults (seated) are Salvation Army volunteers.

A—Alignment Within the Church

Avalon alternates monthly with the Port Hardy and Gwa'sala- 'Nakwaxda'xw churches to provide the church service. Students, teachers, staff, parents, and community members are involved. The annual Christmas program is always Christ-centred and is an event many people enjoy. This year Pastor Charles spearheaded a Pathfinders group, of which many students were members.

Community Outreach and Evangelism

The Terry Fox Run is an annual event at Avalon. We raised over \$1,000 this year for cancer research. At Christmastime we participated in Samaritan's Purse's Operation Christmas Child program to ensure children in need received a Christmas gift, and the Grade 8 class assisted the Harvest Food Bank with organization and putting out their Christmas display. Weekly the Grade 8 class served lunch at the Salvation Army to those who needed a hot meal. The students assisted with cleanup, dishes, and talking to the people; this was an excellent service project.

Classes also take turns to reach out to the residents of Eagle Ridge Manor. The students sing, mingle with residents, and sometimes even bring small gifts or cards. Avalon also participated in a mission trip to La Vida Mission, near Farmington, New Mexico, on the Navajo Reserve. In 2014 Avalon students cleaned the church, cleaned and refurbished a storage room, and converted the room into a social meeting place, which ended up being named the Canada Room.

H—Healthy Leadership

Avalon has monthly family groups that put older students with younger students. All teachers are strongly encouraged to complete professional development.

At Avalon we would like to thank the B.C. Conference of Seventh-day Adventists for encouraging us to REACH for excellence. We are looking forward to a great 2016. The Lord has truly blessed our school. ■

—Cliff Wood, Principal,
Avalon Adventist
Christian Academy

¹ REACH 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. 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.



Quebec

The Mount Carmel SDA Church is on a Mission



Baptismal candidates of the Mount Carmel church with Pastor Delroy Hamilton (back row, far right) and seminar speaker, Dwayne Lemon (back row, far left).

Mount Carmel Seventh-day Adventist Church (MCSDAC) is a small local church located in the Montreal West area born out of a church-planting initiative by its mother church, the Montreal Filipino Seventh-day Adventist Church.

For the past two years the church has been on a mission to preach the gospel to Core des Neiges community. Under the leadership of Pastor Delroy Hamilton and the dynamic personal ministries team, the church is now set on a path for growth. The last two years have been fruitful years, as the Lord blessed the church's evangelism efforts.

It seems as if it was only yesterday that the church baptized five precious souls at the conclusion of its two-week Bible seminar entitled "Time Is Almost Finished" by Dwayne Lemon.

During a follow-up series called "Prepare to Meet Your God," held Oct. 5-24, 2015, once again by Elder Dwayne Lemon, 13 dear individuals accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour and were baptized.

It was inspiring to see the church come together in a united fashion to dedicate their time and resources to fulfilling Jesus' great commission of Matthew 28:19, 20. The personal ministries leader, Jemary Cadanilla, together with her associates, organized outreach programs designed to inspire members and help them get involved. The elders and some dedicated lay members served as Bible workers to prepare candidates and develop interests. Members went and met people where they are through the church's weekly metro literature distribution, small-group Bible studies, and prayer meeting groups. It was like a big family working together in preparation for the series.

At opening night of the series, the organizers were excited and anxious. Fear set in as guests began to trickle in. Had they done enough to advertise? Were they going to fill the 250-seat capacity venue? Were their interested acquaintances and friends coming? The group prayed to confess their shortcomings,

acknowledging their dependence upon Him, believing He is the only One who can truly provide success. As they concluded their prayers, the fear and anxiety was replaced by peace and assurance that God would provide and bless.

The series started well, with people coming from all over Montreal area and even as far away as Ottawa. It was an amazing series. God touched people who were hungry for the Word. The teaching-preaching method of Dwayne made a tremendous impact on the people who listened intently.

Now in 2016, the Mount Carmel Filipino Church is ready and prepared for action; the youth is ready, the elders are ready, the church is ready, the light is turned on, and the people are waiting. ■

—Walter Pineda, Mount Carmel church

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Newfoundland



Woody Acres Gets Powered Up

On Wednesday, Dec. 16, 2015, Christine Bergen submitted the application and cheque to Newfoundland Power, entering into the agreement with them that electrical power be brought to the Woody Acres campground. The distance for the power lines is approximately 2.5 kilometres to the camp entrance and one kilometre from the entrance to the camp power house.

This is a huge step forward in opening up the camp for year-round use and full seasonal camping for our members in cabins and trailers. This will make electrical, water, and sewerage services available all year long.

Bringing in electricity was the next major step in fulfilling the master plan for the camp. The camp committee, office staff, pastors, and members in the pews praise God for this early Christmas gift to Newfoundland.

— Ken Corkum, President,
Seventh-day Adventist Church
in Newfoundland



Jack Baier, Ken Corkum, and Christine Bergen at the Newfoundland conference office.

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Alain Lévesque

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>> SDACC REVOLVING FUND REPORT: As of Dec. 31, 2015, there were 425 depositors with a total deposit of \$28,599,055. There were 88 loans with a value of \$25,689,027.

For more information or to make a deposit, contact Girly Quiambao—quiambao.girly@adventist.ca; 905/433-0011.

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ANNUAL OFFERING

MARCH 12, 2016

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-Stephan, Listener in Ukraine

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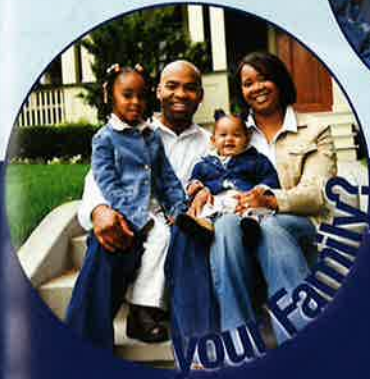
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Deadline April 15

Please take the time to nominate your Adventist School teacher or principal today. Nomination forms can be found on CAT^{net}, <http://catnet.adventist.ca> under Resources - SDAACC - Excellence in Education Award or you may call the SDAACC Office of Education at 905.433.0011 x2072.

It is our hope that the SDAACC Excellence in Education Award will inspire our teachers and school administrators to always strive for excellence in teaching and service, and that those who are presented with this prestigious award will truly appreciate it as a token of our thanks for having them as excellent teachers in our school system.

(A list of teachers who have received awards are posted on CAT^{net} – <http://catnet.adventist.ca>.)

- Must not have received an Excellence Award within the last five years.
- Must be a teacher or administrator who is employed at least half time for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada school system.
- Recipient of the administrator award must have a minimum of two years of administrator experience at the current school to be eligible for the administrator award.
- Recipient of teacher award must have a minimum of one full year teaching experience in the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada school system.
- Must have a valid Standard, Professional, or Administrator denominational teaching certificate.

Nominee:

Colleagues (Teacher, Pastor, or School Staff Member) and one from School Community (Parent, Student, or Church Member).
Principal, or School Board Member), the remaining two letters of recommendation must be from each of the remaining categories, one from
tion Form and write Letters of Recommendation. For example, if the nominator is someone from the School Leadership category (Superintendent,
• Must find two other stakeholders (one from each of the two other categories), unrelated to the nominee, to complete the Letter of Recommendation.
• Must complete the Nomination Form, Letter of Recommendation Form, and a Letter of Recommendation.


- the requirements for the Nominee noted below.
- *Important - please check with local conference or boarding academy to see if the teacher and/or administrator that you want to recommend fulfills
port the appropriate award they are being nominated for.
- If the nominee is a teaching principal, the nominator must select either Teaching or Administrator Award. All letters of recommendation must sup-
• Must not be immediate family members of the nominee.
- Must be a stakeholder (superintendent, principal, school board member, teacher, pastor, school staff member, parent, student, or church member).

The Process for Nominators:


The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada is now accepting nominations for the 2016 Excellence in Education Awards

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■ Announcements

PROCESS:

- 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 submittable) are available at www.adventist.ca/messenger.
- The *Messenger* assumes no liability for typographical errors or responsibility for inaccuracies originating in submitted material.
- For more information about *Messenger* announcement policies, go to www.adventist.ca/messenger, click "Writers' Guidelines" then click "announcements."

■ Announcements

The Homecoming Country Camp Meeting began in 1919. In 2016 it will be held the weekend of June 24–26 at the Beauvallon SDA Church, which is located on Hwy. 45 approximately 2 km from Beauvallon. The weekend begins at 7 p.m. with special guest speaker Pastor Joseph Quiles. A former Chicago gang member, Pastor Quiles will share the miraculous story of being saved from the streets. Plan on joining in this special weekend. Free un-serviced campsites are available. For more information, call 780/366-2155 or 780/914-5330, or check the website, www.beauvallonadventist.ca. (6/16)

The Windsor Seventh-day Adventist Church (Windsor, Ont.) will be celebrating its 100th anniversary Aug. 12–14, 2016. If you are a former member, pastor, school teacher, or descendant of an early member and would like to attend this memorable event, we would like to hear from you. Kindly send your name and contact information to windsors@windsorsda.com. Your name will be added to our invitation list, and more detailed information will be sent out at a later date. If you

know the whereabouts of other former members, we would also appreciate hearing from you. Please consult our website, windsorsda.com, for further information.

63rd TJA/CAA Alumni Homecoming Weekend—Crawford Adventist Academy will be holding its 63rd Alumni Homecoming Weekend on May 27–29, 2016, honouring TJA classes of 1981 (Grade 11), 1976 (Grade 10), 1971 (Grade 10), 1966 and all classes prior; CAA Classes of 2006, 2001, 1996, 1991 and 1986. We welcome all our alumni and families, former and current administrators, board members, faculty and staff, parents, friends and supporters. Please contact the Office of Advancement, Derrick Hall, VP of Advancement, 416/633-0090/toll-free 866/960-2125 ext. 234 or dhall@tadsb.com; Judy Cardona Gamez, Advancement Assistant, ext. 248, or jgamez@tadsb.com. Visit our official website, www.tadsb.com; follow us on Twitter @TJACAAAlumni; like us on Facebook, "The Official TJA/CAA Alumni Group."(5/16)

■ Legal Notice

Burman University—Notice of Regular Meeting of the Corporation

Notice is hereby given that the regular meeting of the Burman University Corporation will convene in the Administration Building at Burman University, Lacombe, Alta., on Mar. 12, 2016, at 7 p.m. and continue on Mar. 13, 2016, at 8 a.m. for the following purposes: (1) to hear reports and projections from administration and academic divisions; (2) to appoint auditors for the ensuing quinquennium; (3) to appoint a Board of Trustees for the ensuing quinquennium; (4) to act on proposed changes to the Bylaws; and (5) to transact such other business as may properly come before the meeting.

*Mark Johnson, Chair
Mark Haynal, Secretary*

■ New Members

ALBERTA

Bert Frost was baptized in Sylvan Lake, Alta., on Nov. 7, 2015, by Bill Spangler. He is now a member of the Sylvan Lake church.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Siblings Jonathan and Megan Rogers were baptized in Kelowna, B.C., on Nov. 14, 2015, by Rob Folkenberg. They are now members of the Rutland church.

NEWFOUNDLAND

Kevin Hancock was baptized at Camp Woody Acres, Nfld., on July 25, 2015, by John Brushett. Kevin and his wife, Shirley, studied with friends Jim and Rosann Hunt. He says, "I learned so many things I had never known. I fell in love with Jesus and decided to follow Him with all my heart. I am so grateful to Shirley, Jim, and Rosann for helping me." He is now a member of the Corner Brook church.

■ Births

Ysa Carmela Aldovino Garzon was born March 29, 2015, to Marlon and Quennie Garzon of Halifax, N.S., formerly from Mindoro, Philippines.

Jamel Navedo Graham was born Sept. 8, 2015, to Clifford and Norma Graham of Halifax, N.S., formerly of Kingston, Jamaica.

■ Birthdays

Gladys Fern Kinney Banks of Toronto, Ont., celebrated her 100th birthday on Sept. 9, 2015, with family



and friends at the Kingsway Pioneer Apartments in Oshawa, Ont. Gladys worked at the Adventist Book Centre in Oshawa for 23 years and has been a member of College Park Church for 58 years. She has four children, four grandchildren, six great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandchild.

Nick Sidorko of Oliver, B.C., celebrated his 95th birthday on Nov.



27, 2015, with friends and family from Alberta, B.C., and Washington State

in a surprise party at Oliver church. He received many congratulatory letters from government officials, but his greatest joy was seeing those who came from afar to celebrate with him. Nick has two children and two grandchildren.

August Sperling of Kelowna, B.C., celebrated his 95th birthday on Oct. 30, 2015, with a special dinner with



family. August has five children, 10 grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.

■ Anniversaries

Art and Alice Cooper of Vernon, B.C., celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on June 12, 2015, with trips to Southern California, Vancouver



Island, and Christmas in Mexico. The Coopers have two children, Murray (Kathy) and Carole (Scott); and five grandchildren.

Quentin and Marguerite Covey of Williams Lake, B.C., celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary on



Aug. 9, 2015, with family and friends. They were married in Cole Harbour, N.S., and lived in Dartmouth, N.S.; Kelowna, B.C.; and Williams Lake. The Coveys have two daughters, Marion (Ray) Betz and Shirley (Cameron) Johnston; six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

evaluations or evidence of teaching effectiveness, and (6) the names and addresses of three referees to Dr. John McDowell at jmcowell@burmanu.ca or 6730 University Drive, Lacombe, AB T4L 2E5. Further information can be found at www.burmanu.ca/humanresources. (3/16)

Wanted: Looking for teachers for SDA elementary school

(English immersion school) in South Korea. Starting at CAD\$2,500. Free full furnished housing, free round-trip airfare, medical insurance, national pension, paid vacation, etc. Basic requirements: proof of university degree. Work start dates: Feb. 23, 2016, or Aug. 22, 2016. Due date for application: anytime (visa processing takes 3 months). For more details, call Peter Kim at 604/997-1970 (elder,

Vancouver Korean SDA Church, B.C.). Email: 311kim@gmail.com or kim76311@hanmail.net. (2/16)

6-day Natural Remedies and Hydrotherapy Workshop: July 31–August 5 at Andrews University. Details: Andrews.edu/go/nrhw, janinec@andrews.edu or 269/471-3541. (2/16)

Extra copies of Our Little Friend? Primary Treasure? Share your love of Jesus! Be a missionary! Send extra copies to an Adventist school in Uganda, Africa. Put magazines into large mailing envelope. *Mail direct:* Seventh-day Adventist Church Rwenzori Field, c/o Education Director WMM, P.O. Box 21 Kasese, Uganda, East Africa. Questions? 613/256-1153 Marta Roffey (5/16)



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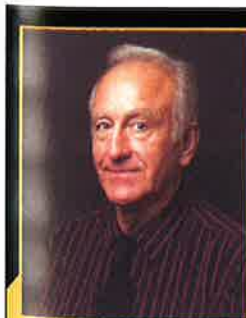
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www.FreeAfricanChildrenthruEducation.blogspot.com

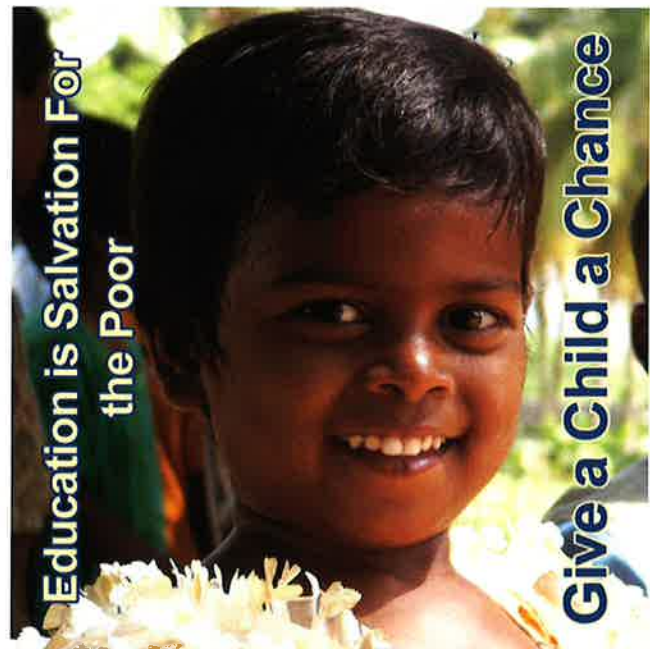


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from the editor

What's in a name?

THIS PAST DECEMBER, I, like many people, finished donating my tithes and offerings for the year and fulfilled my charitable obligations to various organizations. In doing so, I also made a decision as to how I select which organizations will receive my donations in the future.

I so appreciate my friend and colleague James Standish from the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Australia (South Pacific Division) about branding in our denomination (vimeo.com/103869289). This got me to thinking about more about our name and logos.

The Adventist Church has built some great schools, ministries, book stores, and hospitals. However, some of our most prominent institutions do not use Adventist in their names. To me, this seems like a wasted opportunity to proclaim who we are as a people. After all, schools, charities, and hospitals are our beliefs in action, aren't they? We need to build on the good name of others and tie into one another.

With Ben Carson running for president in the United States, the question has come up, "Who are these Seventh-day Adventists?" Whether or not you agree with his campaign, this presents a great opportunity to proclaim who we are and what we believe. It would also be great if we could point to our institutions who proudly bear Adventist in their name.

When I travel overseas, I rarely see a ministry of ours that does not use our logo—most have both our name and logo. Can you imagine an Adventist-funded school or hospital in Ethiopia not using our name and logo? If not, why are we ok with it in Canada? I, for one, believe it is only beneficial to use at least our logo here in Canada.

I once entered a bookstore called Christian Family Books... or something like that. Once inside, I realized it was Mormon. I would have been happy to go into a Mormon bookstore but was disappointed by the obviously intentional deception.

In my opinion, we need to proclaim who we are more effectively and not have so many isolated ministries that do not bank on what other ministries have done. If this makes sense, I would encourage you to contact the organizations you support financially to use our appointed name and logo to help identify who we are. We need to stop having independent denominational ministries that are eager to accept our money but not take our name and identity. ■



Stan Jensen, editor
Canadian Adventist Messenger

As always, if this or any other article has stimulated your thinking, email me at jensen.stan@adventist.ca.



Where Will Your Money Go?



On Sabbath, February 13 your offerings will help support It Is Written Canada

Here are some of the exciting ways It Is Written Canada will be reaching others in 2016

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Jesus said, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the labourers are few" (Matthew 9:37). We believe that now, more than ever before, it is urgent that people be equipped to share God's message of love and warning with a world on the brink of eternity. That is why we plan to offer an "AFCOE to Go" training program in spring 2016! You will not only be inspired in your personal walk with God, but also learn ways to easily share Jesus in light of the three angels' messages. Registration fees will be on a donation basis.

PASTOR JEAN ROSS serves as the VP of Evangelism for Amazing Facts. Along with Pastor Doug Batchelor, he co-hosts the popular radio program Bible Answers Live. After 18 years in pastoral and lay-evangelism training, and with his passion for spreading God's Word through public outreach, Pastor Ross created the Empowered Church Program, a dynamic resource that helps local churches prepare for public evangelism events. In addition to his Amazing Facts responsibilities, he is also the administrative pastor of a fast-growing church plant in the Sacramento area. His insightful and Spirit-filled presentations on church health, evangelism, Bible prophecy, and practical godliness are inspiring and engaging.



CHUCK HOLTRY is the director of AFCOE. His many years of experience as a classroom teacher and on the road as an Amazing Facts evangelist bring a wealth of inspiration and information to aspiring gospel workers seeking real-world training at AFCOE. Chuck thoroughly enjoys teaching and helping students prepare for, execute, and follow-up a successful evangelistic campaign.



CARISSA MCSHERRY serves as the assistant director of AFCOE. She has also served as a Bible worker, youth leader, and speaker for many evangelistic training seminars. As a former social worker with experience in family and troubled-teen counseling, she has developed keen insight into reaching the human heart. Carissa is especially passionate about sharing the gospel in every aspect of life and helping others experience the joy of soul winning.



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