

Canadian Adventist

april 2016

Messenger



*I'll Go Where
You Want
Me to Go*

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“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” —Matt. 6:33, ESV

Eternal decisions in real time

“So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31, ESV)

This is usually a “food” passage for us, because that’s what we notice first. In reality, this is more about my life as an act of faith.

Paul speaks first of hunger and thirst. These are very basic issues. We deal with them, for the most part, on the spur of the moment. We’re hungry. We don’t want to be hungry, so we eat. That’s pretty simple, isn’t it?

Then Paul moves further into the life of faith. Notice the words “or whatever you do.” That goes way beyond breakfast or lunch. What is this all about?

For my younger friends, it may be talking about what you choose to do with your life. Or it could be about who you spend your life with. These are areas where it is sometimes hard to take advice, especially if it comes from someone outside our peer group.

For others, it could be about how we treat people, who influences our choices, where we choose to invest our time and energy. Each of these are important because they are an outward expression of who we really are. “Whatever you do” demonstrates what we value most.

And now part three, “do all to the glory of God.” The first two parts of the passage are about our actions, either impulsive or those driven by surrounding influences. Part three presents the better measurement for decisions: God and His glory.

God is an enduring point of reference. Hunger comes and goes. Friendships sometimes break. God is always there. God and His Kingdom are that far horizon, that point we aim toward when it comes to lasting value.

So how is it with our decisions, my friend? Are we moved by the moment or does God have our attention? In the eternal perspective, He needs to be first (see Matt. 6:33). ■

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



Healthy Lifestyle Coaching Certification

The **iHeal School of Health & Outreach** provides training for Seventh-day Adventist members to become Healthy Lifestyle Coaches. iHeal students are taught to listen to health concerns, do lifestyle assessments and guide individuals to resources and services that help reach positive health goals. This training assists in creating outreach and income opportunities. Below are details for the upcoming LIVE training. For those who cannot attend the training, please contact us about the option of completing the full certification online at ones own pace.

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Burman University Health Fair



Volunteers wearing the Commit To Be Fit T-shirts.



Blood pressure testing.

University life is hectic. Late for morning classes equals no time for breakfast. Two tests and a paper tomorrow means no time for exercise. Choir rehearsal and practicum results in no time for devotions—peaceful moments. Carey McNorton Jr., a second-year business and religious studies major, is one of those university students who doesn't stop for anything. Always constantly involved—from athletics to academics to leading out in praise worship—he is constantly on the go. But even with all of that he recognized the importance of wholistic health and sought to create a health fair for the students and greater community of Burman University.

Carey took his idea for a health fair to the leadership at the Burman Student Success Centre. Wanda Johnson, Director of Counseling and Career Development, along with her team ran with the idea, and as a result the first Total Health Fair was born. "We wanted to do something positive on the Burman campus to contribute to the mental, spiritual, and physical health on the campus. We wanted to start reaching out in to the community of Lacombe with a positive message that we care about what is happening in their lives. There is so much heartache in the world, and we wanted to do something practical that would bring hope into people's lives. That's what being a follower of Jesus is all about," states Wanda.

In late January 2016 the PE Centre was full of individuals searching for the answers to "Total Health." Over 200 individuals browsed and studied the various booths all related to mental and physical health. It was a chance for community members to visit campus and see the importance of health for Burman University.

Booths lined the PE Centre floor. Categories ranged from free stress buster massages and health counselling to Get Fit Camp signups and blood pressure testing. Fitness and agility games were popular as well as the many health food booths with free samples. It was a family event, as children, parents, and grandparents were all in attendance. Students took breaks from their busy schedules to discover methods and mechanisms to help them succeed in their university life.

For Carey, seeing the health fair in full swing was exciting and the first step in bringing about health awareness. "I felt the calling to make people more aware of their health. January, it's a tough time of year for everyone, especially students who slip into forms of depression and develop unhealthy habits. So I wanted to be more proactive, intentional, and relevant for our students and surrounding community to help inform about 'Total Health,' states Carey.

He continues, "I think it's important for students to focus on health because it affects every aspect of our being. For [us as] students, this is the time in our lives where we are trying to figure our goals and create our future. All of our goals and future plans are directly affected by our health. This can hinder or can enhance a student's experience while at school at Burman." ■

JR Ferrer is the director of communication for Burman University.

Time Lapse

"How wonderful, how marvellous that God forgives and and 'edits out' the bad scenes in the video of our lives."

I love watching time-lapse nature photography; it speeds up movement that is normally too slow for our eyes to detect. It is awe-inspiring to watch a sunflower seed sprout, grow to maturity, and blossom in less two minutes.

Time-lapse photography makes the invisible visible, allowing nature to teach us important lessons the Creator has literally hidden there for us. I recently learned four lessons simply from watching two beans germinate and grow! (You can view the video at <http://goo.gl/n6nJrV>)

What impressed me initially was that the first seed to sprout and develop did not grow to be the biggest plant. After first appearing to do nothing, the second seed burst into life and grew to be the larger of the two plants! I need to remember this before I doubt the potential of a young person. Let's never give up on any of them. We should instead, like the gardener in Jesus' parable, not uproot an unpromising "fig tree" but instead "dig around it and fertilize it" (Luke 13:8, NIV).

I also noticed most of the growing took place when there was plenty of light. As a denomination, we're pretty reliable at telling our young people what's wrong and what they should *not* do. It is important to warn our children about the dark side of life that can be so harmful. But we must do much more than guard against the darkness. We need to fill their lives with the "light" of wholesome, fun things to do, positive programs to watch, and inspiring books to read. Ellen White advises us, "While sinful amusements are condemned, as they should be, let parents, teachers, and guardians of youth provide in their stead innocent pleasures, which will not taint or corrupt the morals."¹

The third lesson I learned was that if you look at only one or two seconds of a time-lapse video, you'll

probably get the wrong impression. You can't form an accurate opinion unless you watch the whole video.

Sometimes I get calls or emails from church members who have glimpsed only one or two "frames" of the time-lapse video of what a student is doing and immediately jumped to negative conclusions about that student, his parents, and the university he attends!

If God were to judge me on the basis of a handful of random events, I would be in big trouble. How encouraging it is that Hebrews 11 is full of people whose lives had numerous bad moments! How wonderful, how marvellous that God forgives and "edits out" the bad scenes in the video of our lives. Incredibly grateful that God does this for me, I must extend the same grace and forbearance to our young people when I witness or hear about a few bad "frames" in the time-lapse photography of their lives.

Finally, time-lapse photography puts the hard times we experience into proper perspective. The storms that occasionally shook the little bean sprout lasted only a few seconds in a video that compressed its entire life into three minutes. Those of us who are older understand that tough times will pass. But often young people, who have not had much time lapse in the video of their life, are nearly overwhelmed when troubles come. When this happens, I need to give them a *double dose* of 1 Thessalonians 5:11: "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up" (NIV). ■

Mark Haynal is president of Burman University.



teen talk

Q: I was baptized in Grade 10, but I can't say that I've always been 100 percent with God the whole time. If I slipped away from God and came back, do I need to get re-baptized?

A: This question has come up quite often in my ministry, especially during youth rallies and spiritual retreats. There are moments when the Holy Spirit impresses your heart in such a powerful way that you feel overwhelmed. You see how you have slowly wandered away from Jesus and decide to recommit your life to Him. There is an altar call, some of your friends stand up, and the idea of re-baptism comes to your mind. You can feel your heart beating. What to do?

Whatever you decide will be OK.

If you go ahead and get re-baptized, it is fine. It is a powerful push in your spiritual life. (It's like adding a shot of liquid nitrogen to a Honda Civic.) However, be aware that it will not last long—you'll still need a daily dose of encounters with Jesus. If you decide to not enter the baptismal tank, it is good as well. God knows that you were born with a sinful nature, and he understands your inconsistency. His sacrifice is valid for your entire life, so you're covered.

In all cases, remember this: Every single day, as you wake up, you have a new opportunity to commit yourself to Jesus. Choose wisely. ■



Do you have a question for Pastor Josué Sánchez? Email it to messenger@adventist.ca.

Creation Corner for Kids

Spotted Hyena

Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves benefactors. But you are not to be like that" (Luke 22:25, 26, NKJV).



The dominant female in a clan of spotted hyenas strolls over the grassland. Her lips curl back in a hideous hyena smile. The other hyenas bow as she passes, showing their respect for her high status. She tugs at a puppy's bone and plays "keep away" with it. Everything seems peaceful and friendly in the hyena family.

But on the outskirts, a crippled male hyena limps along. He's missing piece of an ear, and his leg is badly hurt. He was wounded by the queen and the dominant females in the group. He and other low-ranking hyenas often go hungry and live in danger all the time because the queen simply decided she doesn't want them in her group.

Think about it.

Hyenas are plain ugly, and their behaviours are ugly too. So it might be hard to believe that humans could be like hyenas in any way, but they are. Think of how the Pharisees treated Jesus. They killed Him out of jealousy. They were hyenas. And when we criticize others to make ourselves feel good, when we brag, or when we embarrass someone else, tease or call names, won't take turns, don't share or invite others to play with us, we're hyenas too. Just plain ugly.

Do it!

Cut a piece of masking tape 10 centimetres long and stick it on a table. Squeeze a line of toothpaste along the length of the tape. Then try to put the toothpaste back into the tube. Sometimes the hurt we cause others can be just as difficult to undo. Let's pray that God will give us new hearts.



Tammie Burak and her family enjoy studying and learning from God's creation. You can contact her at tammie.burak@gmail.com or follow her blog at www.creationcornerforkids.blogspot.ca.

The Shaking

Geeta and her husband were walking on the dirt road when the shaking started. This earthquake was much stronger than any they had felt before.

They ran frantically toward their house. They were afraid that their children were inside and would not be able to escape in time. When they reached the house, they found it had been destroyed, but thankfully their children had been able to run outside and were safe.

Saturday, April 25, 2015 is a day no Nepalese person will soon forget. The 7.8-magnitude earthquake shattered so many lives. Over 9,000 people died, and over half a million homes were damaged or destroyed.

Geeta's family are farmers. They have always lived in Nepal's Kavrepalanchok region. They grow potatoes, rice, and maize on two hectares of land. Their crops are usually enough to feed their family for six to seven months. To meet their needs for the other five to six months of the year, they work for others on their farms, especially at harvest time.

After the earthquake Geeta, her husband, along with their son and two daughters slept outside on the ground for two weeks as over 100 aftershocks



continued to shake the country. Their only shelter was a tarp that they had previously used for drying crops.

They were only able to salvage some potatoes, salt, and chilies from their house. Everything else was buried in the rubble.

The generous support of our donors allowed ADRA to reach Geeta's small mountainside village. Geeta's family was given a month's supply of rice and lentils, along with another temporary tarp shelter.

Fortunately, their land was not damaged and has continued to be their main food source.

Almost a year later, life is very different for this family. Their two-story, four-room house still lies crumbling. Her husband, a carpenter, has gone to Malaysia to look for work. They live in a one-room temporary aluminum shelter on a neighbour's property. They use firewood to cook outside, as they have no other kitchen facilities. When the rains come, the shelter floods and soaks the bed. There is little protection from the winter cold. They fear the monkeys and tigers that roam nearby.

Her family's health has deteriorated. Geeta now has chronic respiratory problems. Her eldest daughter has head and stomach aches. For a long time they were afraid of more aftershocks. Her youngest daughter still gets anxious when she feels the shaking from trucks passing on the nearby dirt road. The lack of proper sanitation causes fevers and diarrhea.

Geeta's family is too poor to have the rubble of her house removed or to rebuild. For now they wait and hope.

A few villages away, Bishnu is hard at work. He mixes cement, lays blocks, measures for straightness. He is one of the masons that ADRA has trained to build earthquake-resilient houses.

Bishnu is 46 and has been a builder for 25 years. In that time he has built approximately 120 houses. Most of them were damaged in the earthquake. His own house was completely destroyed. He was inside sleeping when the stones began to fall around him. They were throwing the children out of the house. He didn't know whether he would be able to get outside in time or whether he would be buried inside like so many others. He managed to escape, but with only a second to spare.



Geeta, a builder, says he will never go back to constructing houses the old way. He is grateful for the training he received from ADRA enabling him to build houses that will remain standing during earthquakes.

He was familiar with ADRA because ADRA had held some mobile health camps in his area, bringing doctors, nurses, lab technicians, and medical supplies to remote areas with little health care.

He was delighted when he heard that training was available to teach masons like himself how to build houses that would remain standing during earthquakes and very likely save lives—perhaps even the lives of his children and grandchildren.

Now instead of mud and rock, he uses bamboo, steel, and concrete blocks. The new houses are twice as expensive as the old ones but take the same amount of time to build. A two-room bungalow requires only two weeks if he and his four helpers all work on it.

Bishnu says he will never go back to building houses the old way. He only wants to use the new techniques. He is grateful to ADRA and our supporters for the ways in which we have supported his people.

April 25, 2015, is not a day ADRA will soon forget. The earthquake happened at 11:56 a.m. in Nepal (1:56 am EST). ADRA staff in Canada woke that Sabbath morning and immediately began reaching out to colleagues all over the world to determine the extent of the disaster. Within hours we knew that our colleagues in Nepal were all safe. Our office in Kathmandu was still standing, although

it would be weeks before the staff would feel safe enough to return inside. Instead, they set up their operations under a tent on the office lawn.

Emails were sent to the Seventh-day Adventist Church administrators and the ADRA Canada ambassadors asking that members be informed of the disaster.

ADRA offices from around the world sent specially trained staff to respond. Some waited for days in nearby countries until the airport in Kathmandu, the only international airport in Nepal, was able to re-open.

Emergency supplies held in warehouses in anticipation of such events were released and shipped immediately. Donations to aid the survivors poured in rapidly. This generous outpouring of support allowed us to provide food, water, hygiene items, shelter kits, and other needed supplies.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has a long history of aiding those in need. Your gifts to the Disaster and Famine Relief Offering enables ADRA to help those affected by earthquakes, famines, floods, conflicts, and other disasters whenever they happen.

Disasters can happen in a matter of moments. When they do, we need to be ready. Please give generously. ■

Sharmilla Reid is director of donor relations at ADRA Canada.



Where Are They Now



Dorothy Minchin-Comm

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

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

Messenger: *Tell me where you were born and about your childhood.*

Dorothy Minchin-Comm: I was born in Wichita, Kansas, on October 17, 1929, the week of the great stock market crash. The previous year, my Australian father (Gerald H. Minchin) and South-Dakota mother (Leona Belle Rhoads) had met and married at Union College, Nebraska. In 1936 they fled the Great Depression and entered mission service in Singapore. I started Grade 1 at the Malayan Seminary. A year later my sister Eileen arrived. In 1939, World War II hit, and Singapore fell to the Japanese. A chaotic world of change and travel suddenly opened up for the Minchin family. In seven consecutive years, I attended seven different schools in seven different countries.

M: *Where did you complete your high school and university education?*

D: I took my grade 11 at Canadian Union College High School and graduated from grade 12 by completion of the University of London Matriculation, Newbold College, UK. My BA was completed at Atlantic Union College, South Lancaster, MA; my MA at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI and my PhD from the University of Alberta.

M: *I met you at CUC in the fall of 1950 as my grade 11 English teacher. Why did*

you stay just one year and where did you go the following year?

D: Walter O. Comm was a senior theology student that year and the students, as I remember, were anxious for me to add Comm to my name. We were married July 22, 1951 and began our pastor-teacher ministry in Corner Brook, NF in 1951. Very intentionally I had trained for secondary teaching. Now (alone) I had 48 students in one room, crowded around the pot-bellied stove and representing all eight grades, plus two levels of kindergarten. At Christmas time, administrators let Walt spend mornings helping in the classroom. Both of the newly-weds survived. After one year we were transferred to Newfoundland Mission Academy in St. Johns where I taught grade 10 and 11 English.

M: *Where else did you serve?*

D: Cayman Islands Junior Academy, Principal and grades 7-10 English, 1955-1956; West Indies College, now North Caribbean University, 1956-1962; Public School, New Troy High School, MI, English grades 10 and 12 plus Librarian 1963-1964; Canadian Union College, 1965-1967; Lacombe Composite High school 1967-1968; Philippine Union College, now Adventist University of the Philippines, 1970-1978; La Sierra University, Riverside, CA 1978-2001. Walt served as a pastor and as a teacher

until his untimely death in 1984.

M: *You have been a very prolific writer. How many books have you written and do you have one you would consider the most significant of all your writing?*

D: Presently, I am working on my 39th book. That includes 21 "regular" books, and 9 academic syllabi and monographs. Uncounted: Film and multi-media scripts, travel writing, a variety of articles for church papers, and an occasional sermon. I think my devotional book "Glimpses of God" for the year 1999 is my most significant writing.

M: *Who was the most influential person in your life and why?*

D: I credit my dignified, but secretly sentimental father, with most of the influences that shaped my life. He inspired me to love music and the fine arts, to chase interesting ideas, and to prize literature. We shared a passion for communication and, above all, writing.

M: *Tell me about your family.*

D: Walt and I had two children by adoption. A daughter Lorna Comm and a son Larry (Kim). I also have two grandsons.

M: *Where are you now and what are you doing?*

D: I am retired and living in Loma Linda, CA. I continue to write. ■

Unicorns and Rainbows

Philanthropy is the “unicorn” of investing in the financial world, and charitable giving is the “rainbow.”



R

When I was flipping through the pages of the *Financial Post* and stopped in my tracks at the sight of a beautiful picture of a unicorn. Curious, I delved into the article, an insightful and inspiring discovery of alternative investment—philanthropy—more than just as charitable giving.

Today's low interest rates also mean low investment returns. However, charitable donations always yield positive returns.¹ Philanthropy is the “unicorn” of investing in the financial world, and charitable giving is the “rainbow.” *Financial Post* writer David Kaufman says, “Being philanthropic makes you feel good.

When was the last time you invested in a mutual fund and felt better about yourself the next day? Take that same money and give it to people and organizations who need it, and you will no doubt feel good about yourself.”²

Another *Post* writer explains that the Canadian government has “done its part to encourage charitable giving by expansion of tax credits to the elimination of capital gains on stocks given to charities Philanthropy is about wanting to be engaged, to get at root causes of problems and make lasting change.”³

And you don't need to give a lot to benefit: there are tax rate and credit benefits for donations of \$200 or less and extra perks for first-time donors.⁴ Another advantage of giving to charity is that “you are always helping someone.”⁵ In the current financial climate, life is hard for everyone, but particularly so for those who are less fortunate. Overall, when you approach investing philanthropically, everyone wins: funds are given to those who need it, and those who give will benefit from having made a worthwhile difference.

Perhaps, however, you are not in a position to give financially. This doesn't mean that philanthropy is beyond your grasp. There

are so many ways in which we can give, including through our “most valuable asset”: our time.⁶ When you donate your time and energy to a charity, pick one that you have a real passion for and care about. You can participate in mission trips, disaster relief projects (e.g., ADRA), or volunteer at a youth camp—or volunteer in your community, at your local church, or a school program. Tia Lawrence, from Victoria, B.C., organized the “Stuffie Drive,” in which she and several other students collected 1,000 hats, mittens, scarves, and stuffed animals to give to Syrian refugee children resettling in British Columbia.

My retired aunt and uncle donate their time at the local school for its breakfast and lunch program, which provides meals for students who come to school hungry or with no lunch. After I lost my job and house and struggled to get back on my feet, I volunteered with Habitat for Humanity in order to help families who had experienced losses similar to my own. The experience changed my career path, bolstered my confidence, and brought some happiness back into my life. When we see hardship through the eyes of those who are suffering and we do something about it, we engage in “social activism at its best.”⁷

No matter how we choose to donate, the benefits are always positive. True philanthropists have more than just money—they have ideas, which they follow through on with passion and persistence.⁸ Philanthropy is about unicorns and rainbows, and it is the only investment to which there are no drawbacks. In Kaufman's words, “We hear a lot about giving to others. It's a very good time to think about how giving can become a central part of your investment strategy. Many people will be better off for it—including you.”⁹ ■

Leah Keys writes from Newcastle, Ont.

¹ David Kaufman, “Why Philanthropy Is the Best Alternative Investment,” *Financial Post*, Jan 2, 2016, FP8.

² Kaufman, FP8.

³ Marv Richter, “Beyond Mere Giving,” *Financial Post*, Oct. 25, 2010, A18.

⁴ Josh McConnell, “Growing Trend in Canada Among Young Professionals,” *Financial Post*, Jan. 9, 2016, FP9.

⁵ Kaufman, FP8.

⁶ Kaufman, FP8.

⁷ Richter, A18.

⁸ Richter, A18.

⁹ FP8.

Generations of family members making a difference



(L to R.) Kelsey, Julie, Doug, and Kristin Will with Linda and Joe Skwarchuk pose for a photo at the Kenya-Tanzania border during a trip with A Better World Canada late last fall.

Three generations of an Alberta family experienced a life-changing trip together to Kenya—and now they want to give back in even greater ways.

Joe and Linda Skwarchuk, along with daughter Julie Will and son-in-law Doug and their children Kelsey and Kristin, were deeply affected by what they experienced during a trip with A Better World Canada. The Skwarchuks, of Lacombe, are sponsoring and raising money for Joe's Kitchen. The \$10,000-kitchen will be built at an A Better World Canada-sponsored school in rural Central Kenya.

In late October the group flew to Kenya, where unemployment is at an estimated 40 percent, despite boasting East Africa's largest economy.¹ They trekked into some of Kenya's poorest, remote areas—places where no other humanitarian groups work. The entire family was strongly affected by what they saw, right from the start.

The A Better World team of about 20 sponsors first ventured into Jerusalem, a community of 600 people in North Central Kenya.

"These people are living in lean-tos, they have no shoes, no water," said Kelsey, 19, of Red Deer.

On the way to one orphanage, they were told about Alice, whose mother had thrown her into the hole of an outhouse. Someone quickly rescued the baby after hearing her cries. She barely survived.

"Hearing this story had all of us in tears," said Julie. "When we arrived at the orphanage, it was so moving just to meet her and see what a little girl she has become." Alice, now eight years old, is thriving. The Wills, who live on an acreage south of Lacombe, are now sponsoring Alice's schooling.

The entire clan was also moved to see joy in the midst of extreme poverty. They attended the grand opening of a kindergarten school where some mothers flooded into the office to express their thankfulness. "They danced and sang like nothing we have ever seen before," said Julie.

It was moments like these where the family would later reflect on and feel they could do more to help the poor at home and abroad.

Joe and Linda had planned to do home renovations after returning in early November. But something had changed. "We decided that we don't really need to do that so much when the need is so great out there," said Linda.

The couple worked with A Better World co-founder Eric Rajah on the Joe's Kitchen project in the community of Tulwap. Joe's Kitchen will replace the leaky and poorly ventilated, wooden shack where staff cooked for nursery schoolchildren. The new brick building will have two stoves, a chimney, and a concrete floor. The project was expected to reach its fundraising goal early this year.

Rajah said the entire family has close ties with his, so it was "very special" to finally have them on a trip. "It's nice when people see the need, have compassion, and decide to act on it."

Seeing third-world poverty for the first time was eye-opening for Joe, who is in his late 60s. To go with family and especially his grandchildren, Kelsey and Kristin, now 15, was rewarding, too.

Kelsey praised Rajah and A Better World for all they do toward making Kenyans self-sustainable. Canadians and others sponsor projects, the locals build the schools and health clinics, and the community partners with project maintenance. Kelsey hopes to become a veterinary technician and return to Kenya to help.

The Wills plan to sponsor and raise money for an A Better World project, too. ■

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

¹ Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) World Factbook, Feb. 25, 2016, www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ke.html

Where are the young people?



I recently spoke at the Just Claim It youth convention in Ontario, Calif. There were over 800 young people in attendance from North America. It was such a positive feeling to be surrounded by the next generation of our church. I witnessed countless young people huddled together in the middle of the Ontario Convention Center as they prayed for one another. Many of these young people served as leaders, running the small groups and leading the worship program.

As I wandered around the convention centre and spoke to many of the youth, I was encouraged by their deep devotion to the Adventist Church. They felt that they were part of a greater movement, and they were very proud to be Seventh-day Adventists. As I sat around the lunch table each day and listened to the stories of how these young people were committed to Jesus, my heart dropped. There was sadness instead of hope.

Just Claim It is a biannual event that is sponsored by the North American Division. The denomination probably spent a couple hundred thousand dollars on the weekend. It was indeed a first-class event. Church leaders, including Dan Jackson, attended and gave inspiring and motivating talks to the young people. From what I have observed, the church leaders of the North American Division genuinely care about

the next several generations that are rising up in our denomination. However, does the local church?

My question stems from what I have personally observed in the local Adventist Church. Most of our churches no longer have young people or children. We've gone from asking *how* to keep our young people to asking *what happened* to all our young people. As the ministerial director of the British Columbia Conference, I travel extensively to the local churches and wonder the same question. If the local church genuinely cared about the next generation, wouldn't we make drastic changes in order to accommodate the needs of our youth and young adults? Here are three discussion questions for your church board and elders to discuss.

Do we have a "yes" culture?

In other words, are people allowed to experiment and try new things? A pastor recently told me that he was almost thrown out of the church for changing the order of the service. The "saints" were unhappy that he had moved the morning prayer to another part in the service. Instituting a "yes" culture provides an opportunity to try new things and see if they work.

Do we have a mentoring culture?

If your major church positions have been occupied by the same people for the last

15 years, I would dare to say that no, there isn't a mentoring culture. This culture shift requires intentionality and long-term planning. At my church, we have two-year term limits for the major church officers. There is a spirit of working yourself out of a job. After the first year, it is imperative to begin working with another leader to whom you will pass the baton. You are always in a position of sharing your knowledge so others can serve.

Do you have a culture of learning?

People who are committed to learning make changes in their lives based on what they have discovered. We change our hairstyles, vehicles, computers, and appliances because often there is a newer or better model. In the same light, is your church changing based on the evolving needs of the community?

I highly recommend that you make a list of the young people in your church. Invite them to participate in the top levels of leadership so they are exposed to church service. ■

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.



He did it again!



Words by God —Matthew 7:7, 8, NIV

One of my favourite stories is found in the Gospels, when Jesus was talking to a group of five thousand who had followed Him into the countryside. They were out in the hot sun all day, and dusk was drawing near when the disciples came to Jesus and said, "It's getting late; we need to send these people home to find food." Jesus responded, "Give them food to eat," and I'm sure the disciples were thinking, *How exactly are we supposed to feed all these people? It would take more than half a year's wages!*

A boy in the crowd offered his five loaves and two fishes. How could they manage to feed everyone from his lunch? Jesus took the food and blessed it. As they distributed the food among the crowd, it multiplied. Each person was fed until they were satisfied. The disciples were amazed to see 12 baskets overflowing with leftovers from the picnic that had begun as five loaves and two fishes. This story reminds us that God hears our prayer and that He still provides for you and me today.

Recently, on a Stuffle Drive trip, we experienced God's incredible provision and care for His children. We busily sorted, counted, and packed all the donations, realizing there were not enough hats, mittens, and scarves for every refugee child. There were more children than expected because of the larger family groups. We counted 219 hats with even less mittens and scarves available. While I was praying, God reminded me of Matthew 7:7, 8, which says, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be

opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened" (NIV). What once seemed impossible was possible because God would provide.

The first three deliveries of the trip all the children chose what they needed. By the fourth location, our bags of winter gear held very little for our last—and biggest—delivery. When we placed the bags of donations on the floor market-style, to our surprise they were overflowing! The children streamed in to choose their things; each child received a stuffed animal, hat, mittens, and scarf. After the last person gathered their things, our bags were not empty! That day God provided a miracle. We had left on the trip with 219 hats, mittens, and scarves and delivered to over 380 children—and no one went without.

God cares about the needs of His children. He knows them each by name and promises to be their Provider. God still performs miracles today. He gives us life, breath, food, and strength to face each day. There is nothing too big or too insignificant for God; He cares about you. Ask our heavenly Father, who gives generously to all. "My God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19, NIV). ■

Be Blessed.

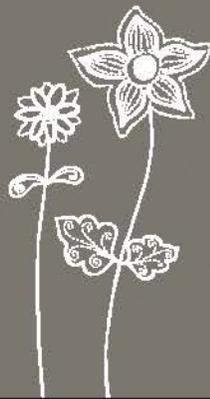
Tia Lawrence is 20 years old. She is a member of the Comox Adventist Church on Vancouver Island. Tia's blog—refreshwithtia.com



refresh with Tia



Watch "Nothing Is Impossible" by Planetshakers:
<https://goo.gl/L7WLq7>



Approaching God: Prayer an Act of Worship

During the dedication of the Temple, it was revealed to Solomon that God's attention to the prayers of His people was conditional on the sincere humility of the heart (2 Chron. 7:14, 15; 12:6, 7). Where, then, do we get this idea that God pays attention to all our prayers? Today, formality and political correctness have influenced social values and the Christian's view of worship.

In the 12th century, Tertullian denounced the chivalric code of conduct associated with medieval knighthood as incompatible with the tenets of the gospel and condemned it as heretical because of its unfavourable military origins.¹ At the same time that chivalry was being adopted by the medieval church and the rest of society, courtly and polite manners were compiled in courtesy books that covered etiquette and decorum for daily social interaction, sophisticated guidelines for proper conversation, engaging in critical thinking in academia, and reflection about social issues.²

Remnants of chivalry remain everywhere at various levels of society and in surviving monarchies. One cannot approach the Royal Family or the Pope and their high-ranking officials without following proper protocol. Even though the modern British monarchy does not require obligatory codes of behaviour, their noble titles remind us that proper chivalry is owed to them.³

It is true that the Scriptures encourage us to approach God with boldness and confidence that we may be the recipients of His mercy and grace (Heb. 4:16). This injunction, however, gives no one license to relax in our duty to give honour and glory to God.

The book of Revelation gives us a picture of the awe and reverence God's subjects display when approaching the heavenly throne of grace—the recognition that only our Lord is worthy to receive glory and honour and power, because He is Creator and Redeemer (4:11; 14:3). Crowns of any claim to nobility are cast and surrendered before the Lamb of God (4:10; 5:12).

This tension between the invitation of God to approach Him without any fear of destruction is to be held in healthy balance. From the biblical perspective, God's people on earth live before the holy presence of God, and all that we do is done to His glory, even in trivial matters such as eating and drinking (1 Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:17).

Jesus' prayers were heard because He understood that acceptable worship is conducted with "reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 5:7; 12:28). Pharisaical formality did not influence His duty to His Father. Why should today's political correctness conform our prayers to meaningless social norms of reverence? Our Lord taught us to pray like Him by first acknowledging our Creator for who He is and praise Him for His divine attributes before presenting our temporal needs and cares (Matt. 6:5–14).

Prayer is not a social formality but an integral spiritual component of daily worship. The first angel invites us in this time of judgment to approach God in worship (Rev. 14:7) as Jesus approached His Father when He faced judgment on the cross. Therefore, pray boldly with biblical reverence and awe during corporate worship as well as in the privacy of your homes. Review John 17 and "watch out that no one deceives you." ■

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

¹Tertullian, *De Idolatria*, ca 198-203; De Corona Militis, ca 211.

²David Crouch, *The Birth of Nobility: Constructing Aristocracy in England and France* (Pearson, UK: Harlow, 2005).

³"Greeting a Member of The Royal Family," *The Official Website of The British Monarchy*, www.royal.gov.uk/TheCurrentRoyalFamily/GreetingamemberofTheRoyalFamily/Overview.aspx, accessed Feb. 4, 2016.



barry's blog

"Religion matters in maintaining peace in international affairs."

The Case for the Office of Religious Freedom

This article was first published in the National Post on Feb. 16, 2016 (and updated on Feb. 17), at <http://news.nationalpost.com/full-comment/barry-w-bussey-the-case-for-the-office-of-religious-freedom>. Reprinted with permission.

It's puzzling that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Liberal government would be considering the elimination of the Office of Religious Freedom. The office has been led by Ambassador Andrew Bennett, who has travelled the world extensively, fulfilling his mandate to "protect, and advocate on behalf of, religious minorities under threat; oppose religious hatred and intolerance; and promote Canadian values of pluralism and tolerance abroad."¹

Though Ambassador Bennett has provided exceptional service on behalf of this country in carrying out this mandate, it would appear the fate

of his office has been all but sealed. Foreign Affairs Minister Stéphane Dion recently opined that the issue of religious freedom should only be emphasized within the broader framework of human rights.

"Human rights are interdependent, universal, and indivisible," Dion said. "How can you enjoy freedom of religion if you don't have freedom of conscience? Freedom of speech? Freedom of mobility?"²

Dion appears to suggest that having an Office of Religious Freedom necessarily means that concerns for all other rights are diminished, if not ignored. This is simply untrue, as there is no reason we cannot have an office specifically focused on religious freedom while

giving other departments the authority to promote other human rights around the world.

Indeed, there are good reasons for having an office dedicated to religious freedom, as religion is an often-overlooked dimension of statecraft—particularly among Western diplomats dealing with their colleagues in other countries. Ambassador Bennett's work has made a significant contribution to making Canada and its diplomatic staff more acutely aware of how religious issues impact international affairs.

Former U.S. president Jimmy Carter understood what other politicians either fail to see or ignore: Religion matters in maintaining peace in international affairs. Carter's 1978 mediation of talks between former Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin and former Egyptian president Anwar el-Sadat gave the world a major victory for peace—a treaty between the two warring countries. Each of these men understood that peace is "both a gift from God and a pre-eminent human obligation."

"As the mediator of the talks," Carter said, "I am convinced that to have overlooked the importance of religion for both Sadat and Begin would have resulted in a failure to understand these two men. Such a failure could have had a pervasive and incalculable impact."³

Understanding religion and the commitment to religion by state actors allows diplomats to properly address the underlying issues that often lie just below the surface of international squabbles. Whether it is the religious conciliation between the Sandinistas and the East Coast Indians of Nicaragua, or the Philippine Catholic Church and the 1986 Revolution, or the ongoing struggles in Syria between the different religious factions, the fact is that a fuller understanding of religious differences is crucial to knowing the dynamics that can assist in reaching compromises for peace. If, however, we are coming up with our own plans without respecting

the religious sensibilities on the ground, we are on a fool's errand.

As U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said, "If I went back to college today, I think I would probably major in comparative religion because that's how integrated (religion) is in everything that we are working on and deciding and thinking about in life today."⁴

Furthermore, religious persecution is increasing, which has a profound impact on international relations, as well as the global economy. Brian J. Grim, a religious freedom scholar based in Maryland, notes that religious freedom sustains development by fostering respect, reducing corruption, engendering peace, encouraging broader freedoms, developing the economy, and increasing trust.⁵

Grim was at the recent World Economic Forum in Davos, where he met with Prime Minister Trudeau and discussed the future of Canada's Office of Religious Freedom. About the same time that Minister Dion was musing in Ottawa about closing the office down, the prime minister was expressing "great respect for Ambassador Bennett," to Grim and stating that "he's looking forward to exploring how to move the work of the office forward."⁶

If "moving the work of the office forward" simply means closing the office and putting the emphasis of religious freedom back into the nebulous cauldron of Global Affairs, along with all of its other concerns, then we have lost a tremendous opportunity to be a world leader in recognizing the importance of religious freedom to the peace and economic wellbeing of the world. ■

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.

1 Government of Canada, Global Affairs Canada, "Canada's Office of Religious Freedom," Feb. 7, 2016, www.international.gc.ca/religious_freedom-liberte_de_religion/index.aspx?lang=eng.

2 Quoted in Lee Berthiaume, "Dion Suggests End Is Nigh for Office of Religious Freedom," *Ottawa Citizen*, Jan. 28, 2016, <http://ottawacitizen.com/news/national/dion-suggests-end-is-nigh-for-office-of-religious-freedom>.

3 Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson, eds., *Religion: The Missing Dimension of Statecraft* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. vii.

4 "Faith-Based Community Initiatives: Secretary John Kerry announced that Shaun Casey would lead the launch of the State Department's Office of Faith-Based Community Initiatives," C-SPAN video, 31:25, Aug. 7, 2013, www.c-span.org/video/?314438-1/sec-state-kerry-launches-faithbased-community-initiative.

5 Brian J. Grim, "Religious Freedom and Sustainable Development," RFBF: Religious Freedom and Business Foundation, <http://religiousfreedomandbusiness.org/religious-freedom-sustainable-development>.

6 "Brian Grim Briefs Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau on Religious Freedom at Davos," Jan. 28, 2016, <http://religiousfreedomandbusiness.org/press>.



Almost vegan

Cream is often used to give foods a creamy and rich flavour, something that is not always easy to achieve when cooking vegan. There are different ways to accomplish this; using nuts and oils are the most common methods, but our favourite has become coconut milk. Not the coconut milk you buy in a carton to add to your cereal; we are talking about the canned coconut milk that is at least 60 percent coconut. Added to a recipe in place of cream, the coconut milk adds a rich flavour, with a hint of coconut.

Curries are often made with cream to give them extra richness of flavour; however, in parts of the world, coconut milk is used in place of cream, making the curry healthier and—if no meat is used—vegan. This month we are sharing one of our favourite curry recipes, which we enjoy served over rice with toasted naan bread or even with pasta. ■

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

Curried Ground Burger

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 tablespoons (30 ml) coconut oil
- 1½ cups (375 ml) chopped onion
- 1 cup (250 ml) green pepper, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 package Yves Meatless Ground Round
- 3 tablespoons (45 ml) curry powder
- 1 large can (796 ml) diced tomatoes
- 1 can (400 ml) coconut milk
- salt, black pepper, garlic powder, and Tabasco sauce, to taste

INSTRUCTIONS:

- In a large sauté pan, over medium high heat, sauté onions in oil.
- When onion has started to brown, add green pepper and garlic; continue until pepper starts to become tender.
- Add Yves Ground Round and curry powder, and heat until the “meat” is heated through.
- Add tomatoes, salt, black pepper, garlic powder, and Tabasco sauce. Stir thoroughly, and once it has started to bubble, reduce heat, cover, and simmer for 10 minutes.
- Add coconut milk and continue simmering for an additional 10 minutes uncovered.



A "Cone of Peace"

What can 11 members, most of them elderly and a few working adults, do to share the gospel? Port Alberni Seventh-day Adventist Church, located on Vancouver Island, B.C., shares their pastor with three other churches—and their faith with thousands through Voice of Adventist Radio (VOAR)!

Sacrificial giving and serious prayer raised VOAR towers in Tofino and in Port Alberni. Tofino's challenge was distance, lack of building skills, and tower location, but God *does* answer prayers. A retired builder offered not only his hilltop home location but also equipment shed and labour.

Broadcast range is limited to two kilometres, but listeners report receiving VOAR up to 40 kilometres away (due to signals skipping over water). The broadcast is reaching Island-bound First Nations reserves, fishing boats at sea, and golf courses 20 kilometres distant. People are listening, and during seasonal power outages, strangers phone to tell us VOAR is silent. Shirley Gong, the Port Alberni church clerk, says the church's local offerings will help buy a three-hour battery backup to maintain broadcasts through blackouts.

VOAR brings many blessings. Shut-ins are comforted by God's "cone of peace" and stay connected to Jesus. With shows airing in B.C. time, children enjoy kids' programming at a more



suitable time. Some of the church's prayer warriors joyfully saw the two towers operational before they fell asleep in Christ. Membership is now 22 strong, celebrating over five years of VOAR in Port Alberni and Tofino. A third location in Ucluelet was their prayer, and ours. Join us in praising God as He blesses their efforts in this West Coast outreach.

Please share your story with us at voar.org or on the official VOAR Facebook page. ■

Christine Bergen is the secretary/treasurer of the Newfoundland Conference, and Shirley Gong and Tehani Burnett write from Port Alberni, B.C.



Rebecque Johnson

ON THE
ROAD WITH

Becky AT THE MADOC CHURCH IN ONTARIO.

Why do you pray?

Carol Van Dusen: "For God to be real and for me to live His words because I know that He is real, for faith to believe."

Lynda Ronco: "Praying for my family who are Catholic."

Gabrielle McNeil: "For heavenly wisdom for all decisions great and small, to be led on the narrow path heavenbound."

Jim McNeil: "To have a deeper relationship with Jesus."

Coming home



Julie and Ed Schulze

"We hope to continue our studies so that we may grow in faith and knowledge, passing it on to others around us."

When Edward (Ed) and Julie Schulze joined their lives in marriage on Dec. 28, 2006, they promised each other that they would be baptized into the Adventist faith together when they were both ready. As newlyweds they studied, learned, and developed a closer relationship with God. After a few years, Ed and Julie were ready: they got baptized. Through baptism, Ed recommitted his life to God, while Julie committed her life for the first time. A longing for truth and a desire for Christ, as well as support and love

from the members of the church, fuelled this couple's journey of faith.

Julie Schulze was first introduced to the Adventist faith in 1997 when she was invited by a friend to attend his church, Airdrie Seventh-day Adventist Church. She was aware that her friend was a Christian who attended a Seventh-day Adventist church. When he reached out to invite her, she agreed to join him with her children. In 1997, Julie was a single mother raising two children on her own. "I don't recall what my first

impression of the faith was, but I know that [my children and I] felt very welcome in the church," Julie explains. She enjoyed the warm fellowship extended to her by the members, while her children enjoyed the children's Sabbath school class. The welcoming reception that Julie and her children received left an impression on her, enticing her to occasionally attend church again.

"I attended [church] here and there throughout the years, never really making any commitments," Julie shares. "My excuse was that I was too busy working full-time raising two young children to keep the Sabbath." Despite her lack of commitment, Julie was still eager to learn about Jesus and the Bible. Her home was full of Adventist pamphlets and booklets, answering a wide range of questions. Whenever she had a question, she would refer to Adventist literature for the answer.

Throughout the years, Julie continued to learn more about the Adventist faith, and she continued to interact with members of the church. As she studied, aspects of the Adventist faith left an impression on her. "I was particularly impressed with the lifestyle of healthy eating and the eagerness to do Bible studies, not only on the Sabbath, but every day," she recalls. Despite her lack of formal commitment to the faith, Julie studied the Sabbath School Bible study guides and read Bible stories to her children. "I felt deep down inside that I would make a commitment to the Seventh-day Adventist faith," she reveals. "It was just a matter of time. The more I learned about the faith, the more things made sense!"

Ed Schulze first encountered the Adventist faith and the church through his parents. Both of his parents identified as Seventh-day Adventists. He grew up in the Adventist church in the Peace River area in Northern Alberta, then moved south into the Acme area of Alberta. "My journey of faith in God and the Seventh-day Adventist Church began with my parents and has carried me through life to this day," Ed expresses. "However, it has not always been a smooth journey."

In 1998, Ed's first wife passed away after battling ovarian cancer. The loss of his first wife affected his spiritual life, challenging his faith and trust in God. He then remarried, hoping to start a new life with a new partner. But in 2006, Ed's second wife passed away as a result of heart failure. "My spiritual journey was affected by the loss of my first wife and then again by the loss of my second wife—both of them only in their 50s," he admits. "I was asking the Lord, 'Why?' I was struggling to understand why they had to be taken so early in life." He continued to attend church, but he struggled to understand why God had allowed him to feel such loss. "I prayed that I would find peace," Ed remembers. "It was through prayer that I found peace and the ability to carry on."

After the death of Ed's second wife, Ed and Julie crossed paths at Airdrie Seventh-day Adventist Church—the church Julie had been attending on and off since 1997 and the church Ed had been a member of since 1970. For almost a decade, Ed and Julie maintained parallel paths that never really crossed until 2006. On Dec. 28, 2006, Ed and Julie joined their lives together in marriage, creating a support system for each other that would eventually lead them to complete trust and faith in God. "We made a commitment that one day, when we were ready, we would be baptized together," the couple recollects.

In 2014, the family moved to Creston, B.C. They joined the local church there, Creston Seventh-day Adventist Church. Pastor Josue Molina, the local church's pastor, introduced the couple to the Amazing Facts study guides. He studied with Ed and Julie, guiding them through their learning about God. In addition to the support from their church pastor, their church family also provided love and encouragement in their journey. "Our new church family are wonderful, welcoming people who played a big part in our recommitment to our faith by simply being themselves: good Christian people," the couple muses. After fervent prayer and genuine support, Ed and Julie felt the call to recommit and commit their lives to God and the Adventist faith.

"I just knew I was ready to make a commitment to Christ, because I was eager to learn more about Him, about how He came to this earth and walked amongst us, and about how He died to forgive our sins!" Julie exclaims. "In these trying times, with war and crime so rampant, I needed Someone to turn to in prayer! It was through prayer that I knew I was ready to commit my life to Christ."

Ed echoes this readiness to walk a life with Christ: "My faith has been renewed with a new church family, and I feel blessed to have received study and instruction by Pastor Josue Molina. The Holy Spirit has led me in my decision to pronounce my profession of faith once more through baptism with my life."

On Dec. 12, 2015, Ed and Julie Schulze were baptized, honouring their commitment to go on the journey towards Christ together. "We pray that we set a good Christian example to our family, friends, and community," Ed says. "We hope to continue our studies so that we may grow in faith and knowledge, passing it on to others around us." Through a love for each other, a love from their church family, and a love for Christ, Ed and Julie Schulze found their way home in the arms of God and in the company of their church family. ■

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.

You'll go where I want me to go

"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come."

—Matthew 24:14, NIV

"You might as well forget it, sweetheart; you're never going to fly," I heard my wife Nancy say as we discussed, for the 100th time, my desire to reactivate my pilot's license. "It's just too expensive, and we can't afford it."

As a teenager, I had learned to fly in the back seat of my father's Piper Super Cub on our farm in Alberta. But now, many years later, and married with the responsibility of raising three teenagers on a church salary, flying really wasn't a luxury we could afford, and I knew Nancy was right. Even so, for some strange reason, flying was almost the only thing I had been thinking about recently.

It wasn't that our lives had been average or boring—in fact, it had been just the opposite. After graduating from Walla Walla University with a degree in engineering, I had spent 13 amazing years working with Adventist World Radio. During that time I had met and married the girl of my dreams and we had enjoyed living in Costa Rica and on the beautiful island of Guam. Our family had expanded to include two wonderful boys and a beautiful girl. Life was good.

We decided to leave Adventist World Radio and move to Canada, where I had grown up. I wanted to be closer to family and for my kids to experience some of the things I had enjoyed while growing up. The move was harder than we expected, and it took a few years for us to get established, but God was faithful and I found work at Burman University.

Once again, life was good ... at least it was for a while ... but deep inside we felt that something was missing. Even though I was working at a Christian university, we had become trapped into a routine of life that seemed to exclude God more and more. We were only thinking about how we could make our lives more comfortable on this earth. We felt that we had fallen asleep just like the story of the 10 virgins, and there seemed to be no way to wake ourselves up.



BY NORMAN AND NANCY HANSEN



Norman, Nancy, Steven, Melanie, and Andrew Hansen



Curious Mishita children gather around the photographer.

Together we decided that we would pray and ask God to show us the plans He had for us. At the same time, we began reading Roger Morneau's books on answered prayer. He showed how a connection with Christ could make everyday life an exciting journey and that this experience is available to all Christians. We longed to have a similar relationship with God and see His hand directing in our lives in a practical way.

While we were attending the Alberta Campmeeting during the summer of 2014, an invitation was given to an anointing service for anyone who would like to request spiritual or physical healing. Nancy and I were both anointed and we left the service feeling renewed, knowing that we could trust God to lead in our lives.

Along with the desire to serve God in a more meaningful way, the desire to fly again was never far from my thoughts. Then came the phone call from my father: "Norman, I just heard that Adventist World Aviation is looking for pilots! You should give them a call."

We had never heard of Adventist World Aviation (AWA) before, but to make a long story short, we applied and were invited to join AWA as "Missionaries in Training" in October of 2014. We were so thrilled and excited. The next question

was, Where we would be most useful? AWA was in the process of taking over an aviation mission outreach in Nicaragua, which just happened to be the country where Nancy had been born. But even though it seemed like a perfect fit, there was one problem. Nancy had never imagined that she would return to Nicaragua because of a traumatic experience her family went through when she was a young child.

In 1978 Nancy was only six years old and was living in Nicaragua with her seven-year-old brother and parents when the Nicaraguan Revolution began. Because of the unrest and instability in the country, her father decided to move the family to Costa Rica, where they would be safe and be able to attend school. After taking his wife and children to Costa Rica, he returned to Nicaragua where he had been working in the publishing department of the Seventh-day Adventist Mission. He was asked to assist several colporteurs in delivering books and collecting the funds for orders that had been previously placed. Over several days they delivered the books and collected a large sum of money. That night while in his hotel, fighting broke out between government forces and rebels who were attacking. The next morning the military had arrived in great numbers to reinforce the local police.

Very early in the morning Nancy's father packed his bags and money and left the hotel but was soon arrested and taken to the police station. He was accused of being one of the rebels and was blindfolded, beaten, and interrogated for several hours. He was eventually placed in a dirty cell with a mouldy mattress on the floor.

He had suffered broken ribs and was bleeding from his head and mouth. Three days later he was finally able to eat, and the man responsible for feeding the prisoners recognized him as an Adventist missionary. He contacted the Adventist hospital and arranged for a visit from some of the staff. It took a week before his family learned what had happened to him. His wife travelled from Costa Rica to see him, and he spent another week in prison while church, government, and military officials sent petitions on his behalf. News of his incarceration travelled throughout Central America, and many prayers were offered on his behalf.

He was eventually released and told to go to the airport immediately and leave the country. For some reason they decided to stop at the mission guest house before arriving at the airport. While checking his luggage, he found that all the money and his personal items had been stolen, and in their place were several grenades and a stash of ammunition. After quickly burying them in the backyard, they continued on to the airport afraid of what other traps might be waiting for them. Thankfully, they were able to leave the country without any further incidents, but they had to abandon all their personal belongings including a house, furniture, and a two-year-old car. In spite of this, they were so grateful that God had preserved his life and that he had been able to find the armaments, which would have certainly resulted in his permanent incarceration and death.

Even though Nancy was very young, this experience was very traumatizing, and she determined to never return. As the possibility of working with AWA in Nicaragua became more of a reality, a fierce struggle took place in her mind. The last place on earth where she wanted to go was Nicaragua. Yet it seemed to her

that every Sabbath the sermon was directed specifically to her and that God was asking her to surrender everything to Him, especially her fears. One Sabbath the closing hymn was entitled "I'll Go Where You Want Me to Go."

As Nancy sang, she made the verses of this song her prayer and decided she must be willing to go if God would open the doors. Two of the verses especially spoke to her:

*It may not be on the mountain's height,
Or over the stormy sea;
It may not be at the battle's front
My Lord will have need of me;
But if by a still, small voice He calls
To paths I do not know,
I'll answer, dear Lord,
with my hand in Thine,
I'll go where You want me to go.*

Chorus

*I'll go where You want me to go, dear Lord,
O'er mountain, or plain, or sea;
I'll say what You want me to say, dear Lord,
I'll be what You want me to be.*

*There's surely somewhere a lowly place
In earth's harvest fields so wide,
Where I may labor thro' life's short day
For Jesus, the Crucified.*

*So, trusting my all unto Thy care,
I know Thou lovest me!*

*I'll do Thy will with a heart sincere,
I'll be what You want me to be.*

After surrendering her will to God, Nancy experienced peace and knew that God would be with us as we accepted this call. Later when we talked with our three children, Andrew (16), Steven (14), and Melanie (12), we were impressed by their willingness to go even though it would mean big changes for them as well.

For the past year we have been very busy with flight training and fundraising. We were also able to visit Nicaragua and see the mission airbase firsthand and visit with the Hanleys, the missionary family who started this project before they permanently returned to the United States. We also met many beautiful Miskito people who live in this region and found them to be very friendly and eager for us to come. Even though we are able to speak Spanish, we plan to learn the Miskito dialect as

quickly as possible once we arrive.

The mission airbase is located near La Tronquera, a village of about 300 people in the Northeast Caribbean Coast Autonomous Region of Nicaragua. The main city and hospital is a five-hour drive from La Tronquera. The roads are very poor, and that's why the aviation medical evacuations are so effective at saving lives.

A five-hour ambulance ride over rough roads can be replaced by a 40-minute flight, and this often makes the difference between life and death. This free service is welcomed in the region and opens the doors for us as missionaries to share the love of Christ.

There is no electricity in the small town of La Tronquera where we will live, so we'll rely on solar power to supply our basic needs. There will be two other missionary families as part of this outreach, so we won't be on our own.

Homeschooling in the higher grades will be a challenge, since Internet access is very limited. Nancy will be at home with the children, and together as a family we will be reaching out to the community. I will be providing emergency flights and involved in all the other details to keep this mission project going. One of the most difficult things is to leave aging parents here in Canada, but we trust that God will watch over our loved ones while we go and serve Him overseas.

As we look back, we can see clearly

that God has called us to work with Adventist World Aviation in Nicaragua. We are so excited to be a part of this project. So many people have already partnered with us to make this dream a reality, and we trust that God will help us complete our fundraising and the many details that remain.

We would also encourage you to ask God to "wake you up." He has a special place where you can work for Him. Perhaps it's right where you are or in some faraway place. God's work will be finished, with or without us, and He invites us to have a part in it. It is time for us all to go home. Let's "work, for the night is coming when man's work is done." Thank you for praying for us as we continue to prepare to serve God. ■

Norman and Nancy Hansen, along with their children, are Missionaries in Training with Adventist World Aviation. They currently live in Lacombe, Alberta with plans to begin their missionary service this summer. You can follow their story at mission.NormHansen.com.



Accident victims being transported to the hospital via AWA airplane.

The AWA airplane at the La Tronquera airbase.



The Key

*God is able to
transform the ordinary
into the extraordinary.*

I glanced up at the clock and noticed it was a few minutes after 8 p.m. All afternoon I had been visiting with friends in their home and catching up on old times. Now it was getting late, so I gathered my things, gave hugs all around, and said my final goodbyes.

I sat in the driver's seat of my car, stuck the key in the ignition, and turned it. Nothing happened. I turned it again. Nothing. Bewildered, I pulled out the key and saw, to my horror, that the entire top half of the key had broken off. I stared at the key, stunned. This couldn't be happening. I motioned to my friends, and when they came out, I explained what had happened. They went off to get a wire, and for some time they worked the wire up and down in the ignition, trying to extract the piece. If we could just get the broken piece out, I could use the spare key I always carried with me. But it was in vain. No broken key came up.

My friends called a professional locksmith to help us, and when he came, he looked into the ignition, fiddled around with it, then asked me for my spare. I handed it to him and went to sit with my friends on the porch while he worked. Minutes later, to my astonishment, I heard my car start. He had used the spare.

The locksmith, looking very puzzled, wondered if maybe the broken piece had fallen more deeply into the ignition, allowing the spare to work. So he took the ignition apart and carefully examined it. When he finished, he came up to me and said, "There is no key in the ignition."

I stared at him, floored. How could that be? Where could the broken piece have gone? But there was no broken piece to be found, and as the locksmith spoke, it occurred to me that I would soon be paying him a rather hefty fee for nothing. *If only I had just tried inserting the spare key*, I thought. But how could I have known?

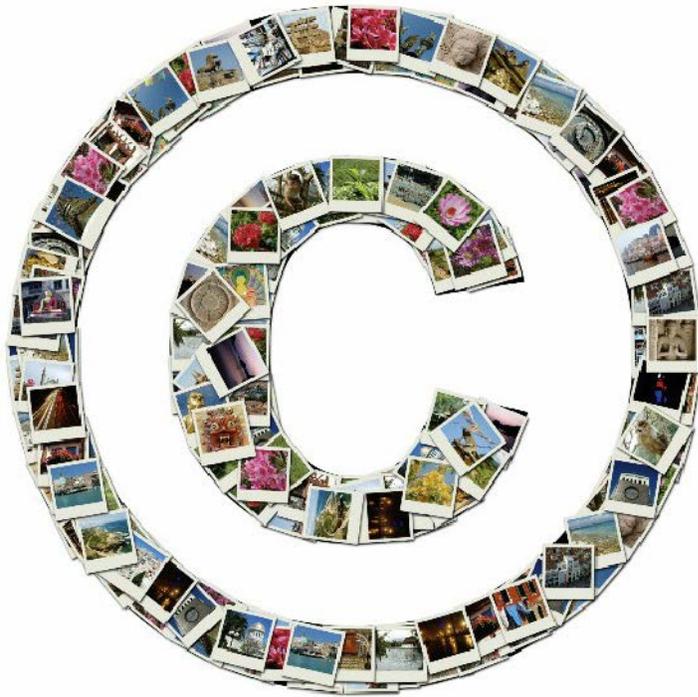
I got out the cash and paid the locksmith. Then, something else came to my mind. Rushing to the glove compartment of my car I pulled out four different GLOW tracts. I handed them to him and said, "Sir, after all this, for my sake you *have* to read these!"

He took them, flipped through them, and, looking happy, said, "Thank you! I'm actually going on a trip tomorrow, so this is something I can read on the train!"

We said goodbye, and as I watched him drive away, I was left wondering if God had constructed this bizarre saga just so I could meet that man and give him those tracts. As for the money I had to pay, that, amazingly, had been taken care of. A few days earlier, a woman had given me an envelope full of money. When I protested, she simply said, "You may find you will need it."

God is a master storyteller. With Him, everyday occurrences are blank canvases on which He writes His salvation story. When our eyes are open to sharing Him with others, He is able to transform the ordinary into the extraordinary. He is able to put us in the right place at the right time so we can share Him with those who need Him most. The question is, are we willing to be used? If so, God will make us His lights to a world in darkness and will put us at the centre of His incredible stories. ■

*Afa Donkor is a writer and GLOW
Outreach Volunteer for Lifestyle Canada.*



If I find a good picture on the Internet, then I can use it for our church's or my own website, right?

As a few individuals, as well as churches, have found out, the answer is a clear **NO**. If you use a licensed photo or graphic without purchasing it, be prepared to receive legal notices demanding compensation up to \$150,000 or more.

How can you avoid that? Either by taking your own photos or by purchasing them from companies such as iStock (iStockPhoto.com), Adobe Stock (stock.adobe.com/ca/), or Deposit Photos (depositphotos.com), who sell you rights to use their products on your flyers, website, posters, etc. Contact your local conference's communication department if you have any questions.

You've Got Answers and we want to hear them! For the June 2016 issue of the Messenger, the editor asks, "What church ministry are you most active in?" Send your answer, in 18 words or less, to messenger@adventist.ca.

You've Got Answers

Who is your favourite Bible character?

Peter. A prime example that repentance followed by change is always an option.



Eldon Jamieson Saskatoon, Sask.

Moses. Even though he was "slow of speech and of a slow tongue," God used him to fulfill His promise.



Christalle Agbeke Toronto, Ont.

Jonathan. He was a warrior, and a prince, yet allowed God to set him aside to choose instead a humble shepherd lad.



Bernice Lauritt Lacombe, Alta.

Paul. He was headstrong, temperamental, unflinching, aggressive, unbending, in your face, and still used by God.



Steven Courte Woodbridge, Ont.

Job. No matter what, he stayed true to God. I hope I can be just like that.



Becky Johnson Courtice, Ont.

Barnabas. He consistently saw people through grace-filled eyes and supported their growth in ministry and community.



Adia Lavo Abbotsford, B.C.

David. He loved, searched for, and relied on God. He'd been through crazy battles and deep valleys but always, always returned to God.



Jelena Decona Oshawa, Ont.

Abraham. He followed God when he could not see the end from the beginning.



Ian Mrambila Edmonton, Alta.

Joseph. He wrestled with God and came out a new man. This gives me hope when I wrestle.



Martin Perez Oshawa, Ont.



Finding God

The assignment in religion class was simply this: Interview someone who has a different religion than you. Here is the story from one international student attending Kingsway College and what happened, in his own words. Most of the ESL has been retained because the testimony speaks louder than words.

"I TAKE A PHONE CALL TO CHINA TO ASK ONE OF MY FAVOURITE FRIENDS; he don't have any religion. In fact, I also did not have any religion before I came to Canada. When I came to Kingsway, it was my first time to touch religion, touch God.

After I touched God, Bible, I started to think this is an amazing thing. I started to think there is someone to protect me, help me, love me every day. So I started to pray. When I met some difficult things, I would try to pray. I believe God will help me.

And when my friend knew what I was asking, he felt confused. He can't understand why I got a religion.

So I asked him why he don't have religion. Then he

told me, when he was young, his mum let him try to join Buddhism, and he said yes. But after he joined, he feel there were so many things join in his life too [that he had to follow many requirements as part of his religion]. He have to read sutra with his mum every day. It takes much time from his life. But it's not the most important thing. He have to ate vegetable one or two days in a month. In Buddhism, they think if you eat meat it means you have to kill animals. And killing is not allow in sutra. Although he was not a Buddhist monk, he still needed to do this.

One or two years later, he start to feel bored, and he don't think praying to Buddha is useful. He complained to his mother that Buddha always can't help him when he is in trouble. When he made some mistake, he pray someone can forgive him but he still get punishment. This makes him unhappy. So he drop his religion, and don't believe anything. He is a senior school student, he is good at physics and math, he believe that science is more useful than religion. He think religion is fake; only science is truth.

I ask him what's different after he drop his religion. He said not so much, but his life is more and more easy: he don't need to waste time to read sutra. Don't need to be a vegetarian. Don't need to worried about everything he did. He think this is a better life than when he have religion. When he was a Buddhist, after he said some bad word to others he always worried about that he will get punished. After he ate meat, he won't feel guilt, he don't need to worried about Buddha will not happy.

He told me our life is already decided. No one can change it no matter who you believe, whoever you pray to, however many times you pray.

If I was still in China, I may think he is right, but now, I start think this is a wasted life. Now I think God is a kind of goal in our life. He is someone I can live for. He is the guy who will always forgive me. He makes feel safe.

I was a novelist in China. I was very famous. But half a year ago, I gave up, I gave up all my honour, because I couldn't write new story anymore. There was a time I felt very sad. I even couldn't walk out from my room.

But after I started to pray, I feel I can get inspiration every day. I can write new story every day. This is all because God. I was so thankful for God. He give me a new life. It makes my life more and more interesting. He is so great.

Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Matt. 19:26). ■

MANS in Adventist Media

The Back Story on *Adventist Review's* February Feature and Hope Channel's Upcoming Broadcast

"felt like we were famous," said one of the students selected to perform at the North American Division meetings in Washington, D.C., this past fall as part of Total Praise, the signing group of Mamawi Atosketan Native School (MANS). Her words were "prophetic": Adventist media has turned the spotlight on MANS and its mission of hope and wholeness for First Nations children and families.

"Mamawi Atosketan Native School: A True Adventist Mission," *Adventist Review*, February 2016 issue

The school's journey from obscurity in rural Alberta to a five-page "Connect" feature is a miracle story in its own right, according to *Review* feature editor Sandra Blackmer. Sandra wrote the story based on interviews collected by the NAD vice-president for Education, Larry Blackmer. Upon returning from MANS, Larry Blackmer discovered that the interviews he collected had vanished from the recorder. Sandra was crushed: she was depending on the recordings to write what she believed was a very important story. The cost of getting new interviews seemed prohibitive—and then a miracle happened.

"It seems unbelievable," Sandra wrote to Lynn McDowell, the director of planned giving/philanthropy for the Alberta Conference, "but I just now was able to access Larry's interviews at MANS! I'm so excited—and so grateful to the Lord! The files didn't show up when I connected my recorder to my laptop to transfer them to my computer, nor on the recorder itself. They truly weren't there. I checked every folder on the recorder. Then I did another interview for a different story, and that didn't show up this morning either. So I started playing around with the recorder, hitting various buttons, and all of a sudden a higher total number of interviews popped up—and there [the MANS interviews] were!"

True Christian professional that she is, Sandra was able to meet her press deadline with praise and credit to God for the miracle He had performed on behalf of His children.

Hope Channel Broadcast

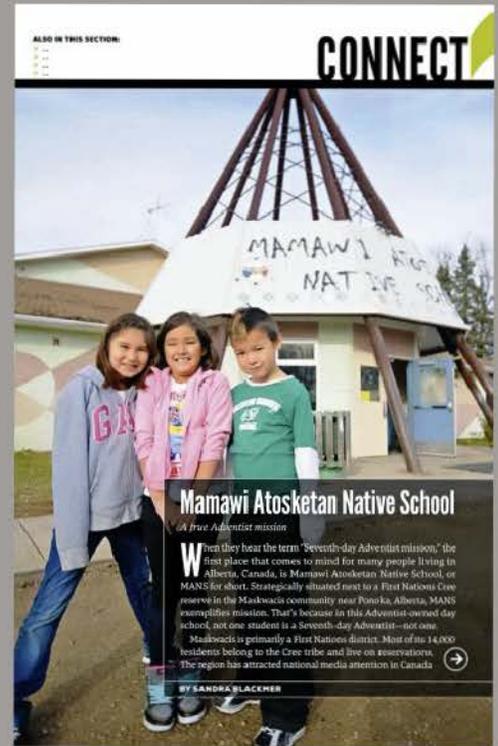
The anchor of Hope Channel, Canadian pastor Brad Thorp, was mesmerized by scenes from the video on the landing page of www.mans1.ca, the website that aims to share what's happening at Canada's mission school and raise funds to build a much-needed high school. Footage of a student in traditional regalia was selected as the perfect opening for a 28-minute TV program to be aired this spring on Hope Channel.

"We have a special program featuring Native Ministry and bringing hope to literally millions of people across North America who have never really heard the gospel in the clear, beautiful way that the Bible presents," said Thorp in his on-camera introduction to interviews with Principal Gail Wilton; Total Praise director and Grade 6 teacher, Cheri Notice; and a host of others, including the SDACC president, Mark Johnson; SDACC vice-president Dennis Marshall; and Alberta Conference president, Ken Wiebe.

Having visited the school some years earlier and seen footage his son took of the difficult circumstances in which MANS students live, Thorp understands the importance of expanding the mission school and the critical hope it offers to teens on what's reputed to be the toughest reserve in Canada.

"I hope [this broadcast] arouses lots of interest in building the high school," said Thorp. ■

Lynn McDowell is director of planned giving/philanthropy for the Alberta Conference.



See for Yourself!

The *Review* and *Hope Channel* have graciously permitted their material to be reproduced and shared.

- "Mamawi Atosketan Native School: A True Adventist Mission"—The *Adventist Review* story by features editor Sandra Blackmer with photography by Larry Blackmer takes readers inside the largest mission school in North America. Read the complete story on the *Review* website, at www.adventistreview.org/1602-31 or on the Alberta Conference website, at www.alberta.adventist.ca/mans-AR.
- "Mamawi Atosketan Bridge Project with Hope Channel"—This Hope Channel broadcast can be viewed at www.albertaadventist.ca/mans-video or ordered as a DVD by emailing a request to TheBridge@mans1.ca.



Parkview Profiles

by Katelyn Ruiz

"I guess there's a purpose for me here at PAA."

Conner McLeod arrived at Parkview Adventist Academy (PAA) for the start of his Grade 10 year in the fall of 2015, and he hasn't stopped smiling since. Something about the place and the people on campus connects him to the joy that comes from serving God.

"Everything at PAA creates such a fun atmosphere, which is something that I, myself, really enjoy," he says. "I've never experienced anything like this before."

Less than three months after enrolment, Conner volunteered to share his testimony, and his humble courage led him to become a peer mentor through his involvement in PAA's Campus Ministries.

Conner shares, "I'd never done speeches before, and then I was preparing to give a sermon! You have to study and look at things objectively, but it's also personal. It really got me thinking about what attracts me to this community of Adventists."

Conner's parents both graduated from PAA, and, according to him, "they really loved this place and thought it would be good for me to go too." The McLeod family had spent all of Conner's life in Idaho, and yet God began working to bring them back to Alberta in time for him to study at PAA.

"After we moved up here, I attended CHCS for one year, and I really liked my classmates. I also met some of the PAA students and thought it would be a really good place to go." So far, Conner has not been disappointed.

"One of the highlights of being at PAA for me is meeting all the teachers. If you're looking for academics, the teachers know what they are talking about! They each have a unique personality to them, and that's something I really enjoy. Math, especially, was definitely a fun class, partly because I got to sit in the back and laugh, but also because the teacher was really relaxed and it was just a really good atmosphere to be in."

For Conner, and many other students at PAA, the inclusive learning environment created by dedicated, educated teaching professionals is a crucial foundation for personal, spiritual, and social development. "I feel that I'm friends with pretty much everyone in my grade," says Conner. "You end up meeting



Conner McLeod

everybody eventually, and with the environment we're in, we're all friends immediately." Friends who learn, work, serve, and pray together are those who last a lifetime and then, through relationship with Jesus, an eternity beyond.

As an Adventist learning community, PAA strives to be more like Jesus, and Conner is adamant that "PAA is a place where you can be accepted." He says, "You can be yourself here, and not a lot of schools have that. You have friends here, and everyone's different, but you're accepted, because that's just the environment that an Adventist school creates. Daily life here is so good. It doesn't matter who you are—you can be yourself. You can do almost anything you really wanted to here."

The opportunities for student leadership and service at PAA are available to anyone who is willing. Conner admits, "If anyone asks for volunteers, I raise my hand immediately, because it's just fun to do, and it's a lot more fun being part of a campus school. With more people, there are more opportunities to interact and get involved, and I've learned what it means to never sell myself short."

Conner's experience at PAA celebrates the fulfilled potential of students who eagerly face each challenge and look for ways to see God's love in their lives. His testimony concludes with the words: "Take a deep breath. You're not done yet. God is still working on you." ■

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

Online Learning A Parent's Perspective

OUR JOURNEY WITH PRAIRIE ADVENTIST CHRISTIAN ESCHOOL (PACES) began about the same time that the Alberta Conference opened this online distance learning program. During the summer of 2008, a presentation was given at our church about this new K-12 virtual homeschool available to Albertans. We do not have access to a brick-and-mortar Adventist school, so this seemed like a great option. Our son was ready for kindergarten.

I knew, as a mom, that I didn't have it in me to do traditional homeschool where I was responsible for developing the subject plans. The main drawing card for the type of education offered by PACeS was that teachers would be responsible for the content and instruction of the learning materials. That first year, our son Russell was the first and only student in the kindergarten class with Mrs. Hall as his teacher. From then on, we were hooked.

With PACeS I've had the opportunity to be the parent without having to also be the teacher. The assignment schedule set out by the teachers is clear and easy to follow. It's like being in a classroom, at home. Our children are accountable to their teacher. As parents, we are there to help them with assignments as needed.

Both our son, Russell, and our daughter, Chloe, have developed relationships with their classmates. They enjoy logging on to see who's there and chatting with friends before class begins. PACeS has given us the opportunity to farm, travel, and visit family, all while doing school. The year my mom had surgery and treatment for cancer, our life was in turmoil. At that time, the kids had the same teacher. She came up with a plan for their education that worked for us during this time. I consider that as having the best of both worlds.

There is no such thing in our house as missingschool. We schedule our other events around the online classes, and we ensure that homework gets done. But the program offers greater flexibility than a brick-and-mortar school is able to. For example, when my husband had a week-long training course to attend out of town, the kids and I were able to go with him because all that was required to continue school work was an Internet connection and their computer. The kids loved having the hotel swimming pool to themselves for the week because other kids were in "real" school.

As a family, we have appreciated the quality and flexibility of the PACeS program. We are grateful for this option that allows us to provide an Adventist education for our children even though there is no school nearby. ■

*Karla Whitmore, mother of Russell and
Chloe Whitmore, writes from Sexsmith, Alta.*



"I like PACeS because I get to spend time with my grandma and grandpa. I love spending time with my brother, mom, and dad, and playing outside. My family loves going on trips, and with PACeS, we go on trips a lot. I love the teachers, too. We get to do fun stuff like fun days, crazy hair day, and videos. I like the assemblies; sometimes we get to do fun stuff."

—Chloe Whitmore, Grade 5.



"I like PACeS because it gives us the freedom to do stuff when other kids are in school. It also gives us the freedom to travel and still keep up with the work. The teachers are amazing. PACeS does service trips, mission trips, ski days, and more so we can socialize with our school mates."

—Russell Whitmore, Grade 7



SCHOOLS OF EXCELLENCE

What kind of school would you like for your child? Would it be a high-performing school or a low-performing school? Would it be a school where teachers hold high expectations for their students, or one where teachers are indifferent? Would it be a school that emphasizes spiritual values and moral behaviour, or a school where spiritual values and moral behaviour are immaterial? Would it be a school that is staffed with Adventist teachers who are concerned about the spiritual well-being of your child, or one that is not?

"Surely," you'll say, "I want the best school for my child: it must be a high-performing school, where all the teachers are professionally trained and where the teachers set high expectations for students.

I want my child to develop her potential to the highest possible level, so that when she graduates she'll be well-prepared to assume her rightful place in this world. I want a school where my child can grow and develop a relationship with the Lord."

Seventh-day Adventist schools were established on the premise of excellence: they would provide students with a wholistic education that focuses on "the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers"; that is "as high as the heavens and as broad as the universe"; an education that inspires students to "advance as fast and as far as possible in every branch of true knowledge"; and that develops our students to become "thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thought."¹ Teachers would embrace

their work as a "high and noble calling," as they prepare their students "for the joy of service in this world, and the higher joy of service in the world to come."²

In order to strengthen Adventist education in Canada so that our teachers can deliver excellent education to our children within the context of the above statements, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada (SDACC) held an education summit in the fall of 2014. Professionals from a broad spectrum of the Adventist community representing various disciplines were in attendance. These delegates met for three days to listen to presentations on how best to improve our schools. After much discussion, the delegates developed a list of recommendations to be considered.

¹Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1903), pp. 13-19.

² *Ibid.*

ENCE

School Improvement Plan

The SDACC Education Council, which consists of school superintendents and principals, reviewed the recommendations and, after making some adjustments, organized them into a list of 18 recommendations, six of which are core recommendations to be implemented at the school level; the other 12, classified as ancillary recommendations and to be implemented by the local conferences and the SDACC.

Commencing in the 2016/2017 school year, every school will focus on building or revising a School Improvement Plan, with action steps that outline how the recommendations will be implemented. School principals and teachers will partner with their local conference office and their stakeholders to ensure these recom-

mendations are properly implemented. Following are the six core recommendations for schools to incorporate in their School Improvement Plan.

Spirituality: That every school renew their focus on spiritual growth as the primary goal for students and staff.

Program Quality: That effective measures be taken to improve the school's academic program and its delivery.

Promotion and Relationship Building: That schools develop and implement strategies to build positive relationships with churches, parents, and the local communities.

Inclusive Education: That schools develop a Canada-wide vision for head, heart, and hands education to reach special needs and gifted students

Marketing: That schools develop and implement a strong marketing plan that includes good customer service and highlights program quality.

School Plant and Environment: That schools create a positive school environment that encourages learning and is a safe place for students, teachers, and parents.

Ancillary Recommendations

These will give support and leverage to the core recommendations for schools.

It is recommended that the local conference do the following:

- adopt a spiritual qualification component as part of their hiring policy and ongoing performance assessment of all school employees
- invest in, maintain, and advance the development of robust and necessary infrastructures and personnel in order to deliver high-quality Adventist education
- ensure that superintendents and principals evaluate classroom teachers in accordance with the prescribed evaluation schedule
- develop a resource manual for administrators that includes an intake screening tool/assessment, list of local resource contacts, and suggest parent interview questions
- include the superintendent of schools on the pastoral placement committee

- conduct regular facility audits to ensure that facility upgrades/improvement are planned and executed as needed
- develop and implement strategies to reach and recruit non-attending Adventist students
- work with schools to assign a chaplain/pastor to each school to nurture the spiritual development of staff and student
- develop a professional growth plan to provide continuous learning opportunities for school administrators and teachers to meet the needs of the 21st century learners

It is recommended that the SDACC Board of Directors:

- establish a task force to study (a) the feasibility of delivering a Canada-wide Distributed Learning (DL) program, (b) develop a Canada-wide "brand" and marketing plan with symbols and resources for the promotion of Adventist education, and (c) explore alternate revenue streams or funding models with the aim of making Adventist education more accessible and affordable.

The SDACC Board of Directors approved these recommendations at their November 2015 board meeting. Schools, conferences, and the SDACC will be required to develop action plans to show how these recommendations will be implemented in a timely fashion. An evaluation strategy will also be developed to assess how successfully the recommendations are being implemented.

If these recommendations are taken seriously and are faithfully implemented, our schools would be recognized as schools of excellence by our stakeholders and the public at large. But even more important than ensuring that our schools are perceived by stakeholders and the general public as schools of excellence is the certainty of knowing that we are preparing our children for "the joy of service in this world, and the higher joy of service in the world to come." ■

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

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

In Discipleship Revival Weekend



Don MacLafferty and his daughter, Julie, along with local church member Luke Heimann, led an enthusiastic group throughout the weekend in small-group discussion, interactive studies, music, and personal reflection time. About 75 people attended most meetings; approximately 180 were present on Sabbath morning. "In Discipleship recognizes the need for disciples of all ages and is dedicated to equipping children, youth, and adults with the tools they need to nurture a personal, meaningful, and fruitful relationship with Jesus Christ."¹

Friday night's meeting focused on building a personal, alive relationship with Jesus by daily spending time alone with God (TAG). Participants learned the importance of being "in the Word" because the Word is Jesus. TAG empowers us to grow in Him.

On Sabbath morning, small groups discussed and studied True Discipleship, based on relationship. Jesus bade us to follow Him, know Him, and spend time with Him (TAG). A "disciple maker" must

be a disciple, to disciple someone else.

The church service, "Living Acts 2:17," challenged us to intentionally disciple the children in our lives: our own, our grandchildren, or children in our church. God wants to pour out His Spirit on us. He promises to "turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers" (Mal. 4:5, 6). God wants a "side by side," not "back to back," relationship with us. He wants us to have this same type of relationship with one another in our homes and in our churches between adults and children.

The afternoon included an indoor Mount Carmel prayer walk and a study on spiritual mentoring. "You have to go deeper with God yourself before you can lead someone else deeper." Don shared how to mentor people God places in our lives. This high Sabbath concluded with an interactive example of family worship that connects us with God in meaningful ways.

Sunday we anxiously studied "The

Help of the Holy Spirit," praying for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Two specific reasons for the gift of the Holy Spirit: He works inside of me to create a new heart with the fruits of the spirit, and boldness to witness. God wants to humble and heal us, change us "from the inside out," and ask Him for daily baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Our spiritual retreat concluded with prayer for boldness to follow God and the Holy Spirit's leading, boldness to be a disciple and disciple maker, and boldness to change from the inside out and move forward from this day with power!

We would like to acknowledge and thank the Alberta Conference for live streaming the Friday night, Sabbath morning meeting, and church service. We praise and glorify God for all who attended and for the mighty evidence of His presence and power available when we ask. ■

—Carol Morton,
Communication Secretary,
Panoka church

British Columbia

Men's Retreat



The weather was sunny and cool, and the fall scenery ... well, it was just plain beautiful for the annual Men of Hope Men's Retreat Weekend held at Camp Hope. Almost 100 fathers, sons, and grandfathers came out for a power-packed, spiritual few days

The theme for the weekend was "Struggles."

It is no secret that each human being undergoes struggles, and many of these struggles are common to all individuals. Men also have their unique challenges and struggles.

Karl Haffner, senior pastor from the Kettering Seventh-day Adventist Church, was the main speaker. Todd Schafer and I attended Walla Walla (Wash.) with Karl. Sven Tornlov was a student at Walla Walla University when Karl was senior pastor at the university church. Karl gave the men four great talks. One of his talks was about how we are "Never Beyond the Reach of Grace" and we are "Never Beyond the Need for Grace." Another of Karl's talks was "Don't Fight Sin; Find Jesus. The Battle is the Lord's."

Luke Heimann was also a speaker for the men this weekend. Luke is a businessman /lay speaker from Lacombe, Alta. Luke,

too, had some wonderful talks for the group. One of the presentations, "The Father's Heart," will be remembered by every man who was present. Luke used a personal story that was obviously very close to his heart and used it as an illustration in this emotion-filled meeting.

We sang. We prayed. We listened. We ate. We visited. We talked. We walked. And then, we did it all over again.

The music was great. There is something special about listening to 100 men's voices all singing and praising God. It is powerful. It is moving. We enjoyed Keith Corbett's song services, with Peter Luchak and Sam Colp accompanying on trumpet and soprano sax. Our pianist, Grant Steinweg from Portland, Ore., via Fountainview Academy brought a young energy to our music as well.

Men from all over British Columbia participated. Quesnel, Williams Lake, Vancouver Island, the Fraser Valley, Kelowna, and more. We also had a guests from Alberta, Washington, and one from Oregon too. We had the Shipowick men there with three generations from one family attending. The Vancouver Filipino church sent a strong contingent with many young men as well. The Quesnel

church also sent down a large group of men. We had special prayer while there for Cameron H., who was due for open heart surgery a few days later.

We were blessed to have Big George in attendance with us. He first attended a men's weekend a few years back, and we got to know him then. This year he was back, and he shared some of his testimony with all the guys. George had been the town drunk up in Lytton, B.C. He knew the inside of a jail cell and the contours of the ditch very well. Peter Luchak and Markku Toijjanen got to know him at the town dump, where George hung out because he was embarrassed of his life. Through the perseverance, prayers, and kindness of Peter, Markku, and the Holy Spirit, Big George found Jesus and his life was turned around. He had some amazing experiences and close calls, but as he looks back, he sees the hand of Providence. He left the old rags of his old life at the dump and today is praising God for being given the clean robes of a new and meaningful life and existence. We praised God for this wonderful man and his powerful testimony. ■

—Bill Gerber,
Camp Hope Director

BC Conference Elects New VP for Administration



Ern Brake

On March 20, 2016, the Board of Directors of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (British Columbia Conference) unanimously elected Dr. Ern Brake to be their next Vice President for Administration and Executive Secretary, effective immediately.

“Dr. Ern Brake has served the BC Conference members faithfully for over 19 years,” explains Wesley Torres, President of the BC conference. “He is skilled, friendly, creative, and passionate about leading people to Christ.”

For the last two years, Brake has served as the Assistant to the President in strategic planning for REACH, an acronym for the five core ministry values of the British Columbia (BC) Conference. He has presented training seminars to pastors and congregations across the BC conference in order to help them successfully fulfill the conference’s mission. Prior to his work with REACH, Brake served as a pastor in Newfoundland after graduating from Canadian Union College (now Burman University) in 1985 and as the Ministerial Director for the BC conference in 2010.

“Ern Brake’s years of dedicated labour have prepared him for this important role,” says Mark Johnson, President of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada (SDACC). “Ern loves Jesus and I am confident that he will be an effective leader in the British Columbia Conference.” ■

Manitoba-Saskatchewan

Ron Nelson Steps Down



Ron and Sandra Nelson

Pastor Ron Nelson has announced the withdrawal of his name as a presidential candidate for the upcoming Quadrennial Session in April 2016. Ron Nelson and his wife, Sandra, have faithfully served the Manitoba-Saskatchewan Conference in many ways since their arrival from the Maritimes in January 2011. He will continue to serve until April 30, 2016, after which he will allocate more time to focus on his health and family with many grandchildren in Alberta. Sandra Nelson has also served alongside her husband, supporting him, as well as working as administrative assistant to the executive secretary in the conference office from 2013.

We praise God for the many advances the conference has made during his tenure and solicit prayers for decisions regarding the incoming president of this conference!

You can keep in touch with Ron Nelson’s heart-touching music ministry at ronnelsononline.com. ■



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Health Summit Comes to Canada

For the first time the Health Ministries Department, North American Division (NAD), will be hosting its health summit in Canada. As in past summits, leaders from several divisions around the world are expected to join their American and Canadian colleagues from September 28 to October 2, 2016, at the idyllic Camp Hope in British Columbia. The summit—Equipping Health Leaders to Reach Out—is designed for health leaders and others who want to be trained in evidenced-based wholistic programs that will enable them to minister effectively to their church families and the communities they serve.

We are living in a time of change when health leaders must embrace creative community approaches to prepare congregations to interact with and serve individuals with ideologies and lifestyles that are different from those of Seventh-day Adventists. This training will enable participants to develop and deliver initiatives that are relevant in the 21st century.

Daniel Jackson, NAD President, has consented to be the keynote speaker. Training will be facilitated primarily by individuals from NAD and General Conference Health Ministry Departments

as well as local Canadian experts. Registration details will be available soon at www.nadhealthsummit.com.

Pastors, leaders, and ministry teams, plan to take advantage of this tremendous training opportunity. Save the date! ■

— Maria McClean, Director for Health and Children's Ministries, The Seventh-day Adventist Church, Ontario Conference, and Health Coordinator for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada.

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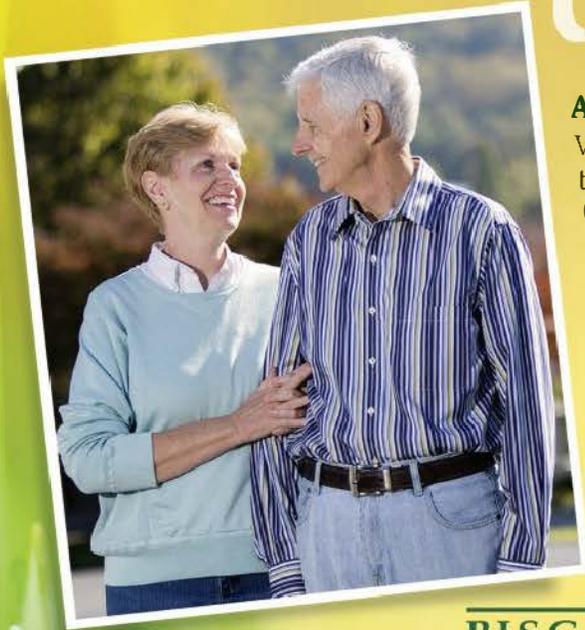


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>> **SDACC REVOLVING FUND REPORT:** As of Feb. 29, 2016, there were 428 depositors with a total deposit of \$29,064,892. There were 90 loans with a value of \$25,728,694.
For more information or to make a deposit, contact Gilly Qulambao—qulambao.gilly@adventist.ca; 905/433-0011.



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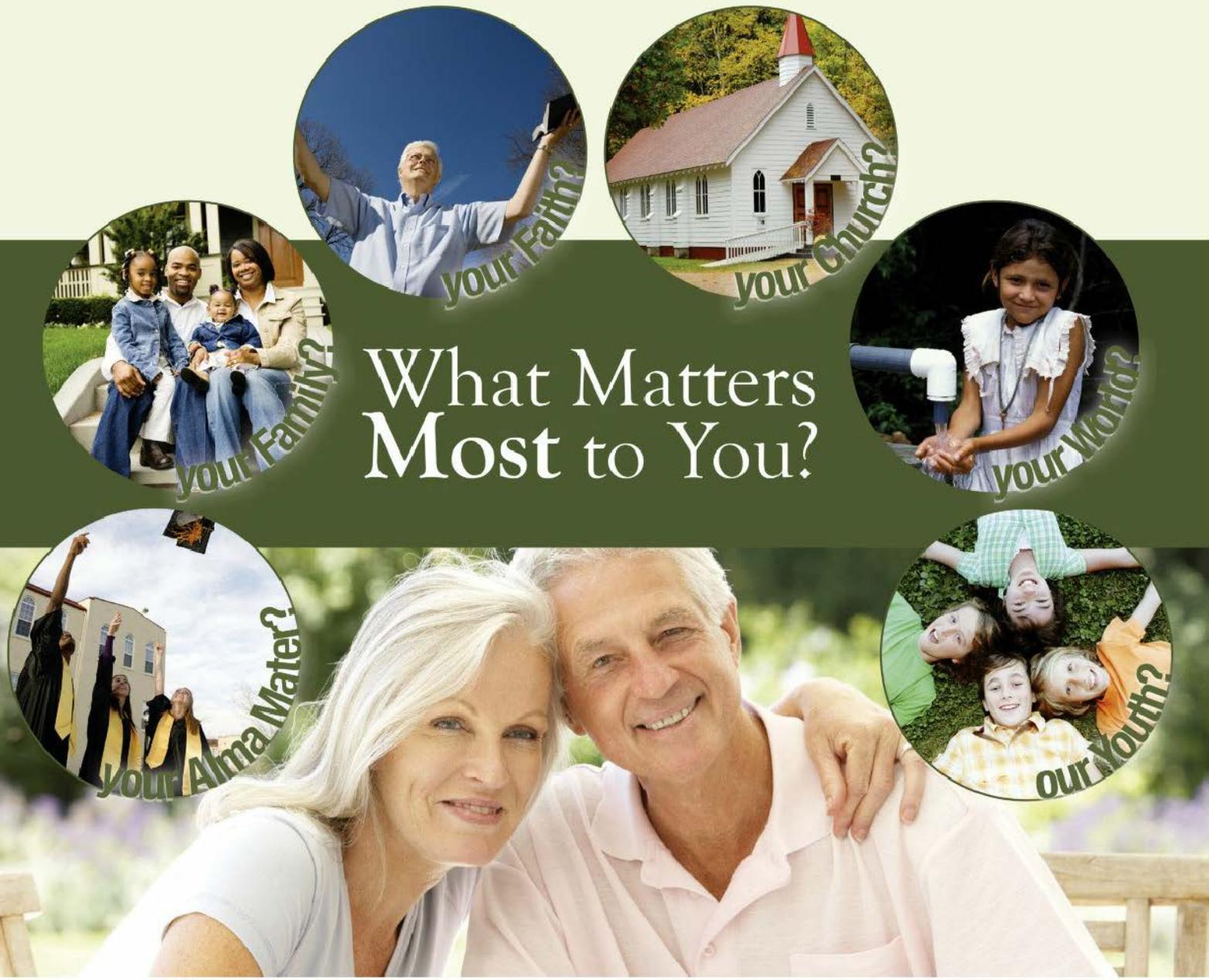


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Announcements

PROCESS:

- All announcements (non-profit events, new member notices, birth announcements, weddings, anniversaries, obituaries, and tributes) should be emailed to Almee Perez (perez.almee@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."

leading over the past 40 years. Come praise Him with us!

The Paris Seventh-day Adventist Church is celebrating its 110th anniversary on April 23 at 9:30. The invitation to attend is extended to all former pastors, members, and teachers and students from the Paris Adventist School. Church address: 63 Broadway St. W., Paris ON, N3S 2L7. Contact: Pastor Levterov, levterov@adventistontario.org.

Kingsway College Class of 1966 50th Anniversary Homecoming. Please join us in Niagara Falls and Oshawa. We look forward to seeing you May 25–29, 2016. We invite all classmates; even if you did not graduate here, you are still alumni. We would love to see you. Contact carlDokimi@gmail.com. (4/16)

Kingsway College 1960–1970 students: Please join the Class of 1966 in Niagara Falls & Oshawa, dining high on the SkyLON Tower, touring sites of Niagara, laughing @ Oh Canada Eh!, Riding the Hornblower, catching up on news, and having a great time together. For discount rates, see ad above. (4/16)

Kingsway College Choir Reunion: Dr. Ralph Coupland is joining us in Niagara Falls & Oshawa for a memorable choir reunion. This may be a last chance in this lifetime to relive old and create new memories, so do not miss this opportunity. More details in ad above. Email marilyn.jerome@sympatico.ca. (4/16)

The Bylaws of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Newfoundland and Labrador provide that each Seventh-day Adventist church in the Mission is entitled to one delegate without regard to numbers and one additional delegate for every 20 members or major portion thereof. Regular delegates to the session are appointed by the local churches.

Delegates for the Organizing Committee

Each church is entitled to one representative to attend the Organizing Committee and one additional member for every 200 members or major portion thereof. The Organizing Committee is scheduled to meet at the Woody Acres Campgrounds, off Hwy 1/ West of Salmonier Line at 5:30 p.m. on Friday, June 17. (The primary work of this committee is to recommend to the session members of the Nominating Committee and members of the Standing Bylaws Committee.)

*Ken Corkum, president
Christine Bergen, secretary*

Missing Members

The Smiths Falls church is looking for the following missing members: Lalone Aydan, Laura Hunter, Evan Kirkby. If you have a current phone number and address for any of these people, please contact Didier Fourny at 613/937-3124 or dfourny@adventistontario.org.

New Members

ALBERTA

Nathan Cromble was baptized in Sylvan Lake, Alta., on Dec. 26, 2015, by Bill Spangler. He is now a member of the Sylvan Lake church.

Births

Ethan Arden Kay was born Dec. 30, 2015, to Arden and Cindy Kay, of Ponoka, Alta.

Obituaries

Elsie Bell was born on Dec. 20, 1931, in Parkinson Township, Ont., and died on Dec. 22, 2015, in Toronto, Ont. She served the Lord and human kind through her many years of dedicated service of nursing and volunteering at Branson Hospital in North York, Ont. Elsie is predeceased by her parents, David and Ella Bell; brothers Gerald Bell, Merton Bell; sister, Leona Newcombe.

Surviving: brother, Earle (Nora) Bell of Blind River, Ont.

Margaret (née Bochon) Dudar was born on Sept. 29, 1917, in Myram, Alta., and died on July 6, 2015, in Leduc, Alta. She is predeceased by her parents, Wasyl and Anna Bochon; husband, John Dudar; nine brothers and sisters. Surviving: son, Ken (Corinae) Dudar of Lacombe, Alta.; daughter, Darlene (Fred) Bisgaard of Dayton, Ohio; five grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

Lorraine (née Ryan) Glover was born on Feb. 25, 1925, in Vancouver, B.C., and died on Jan. 6, 2016, in Swift Current, Sask. She married Jack Glover in 1943 before he was deployed overseas in the Second World War, and after the war they made their home in Victoria, B.C. She was active in the Rest Haven, B.C., church and had the gift of hospitality. Lorraine is predeceased by her husband, Jack Glover; parents, James and Gladys (née Walton) Ryan; brothers, Allan Ryan, Graham Ryan; sisters, Gen Dyck, Jessie Ryan. Surviving: sons, Graham (Sharron) Glover of Stewart Valley, Sask., James (Mary) Glover of Swift Current, Richard (Cheryl) Glover of Kitwanga, B.C.; daughter, Geraldine (Howard) Homenchuk of Medicine Hat, Alta.; seven grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren.

Lindsay Rose Just was born on April 4, 2001, and died on Dec. 22, 2015, in Portland, Ore. She endured much in her short life, including two open-heart surgeries, but she always had a smile to give or a silly face to share. Lindsay is survived by her parents, Mark and Cindy Just of Eagle River, Alaska; brother, Lucas; maternal grandparents, Bob and Madene Holdal of Lacombe, Alta.; paternal grandparents, Gerald and Wilma Just of Kelowna, B.C.; aunt, Kelly Just of Seattle, Wash.; aunt and uncle, Corinne and Joseph Huedepohl of Stony Plain, Alta.; cousins Pierce and Miles Huedepohl.

Maria (née Heldrich) Kunze was born Feb. 3, 1927, in Berlin, Germany, and died on Jan. 30, 2016, in Salmon Arm, B.C. She was a member of the Bridgeland, Calgary Central, and Pinridge churches in Calgary, where she served many years as a deaconess. Maria is predeceased by her husband, Karl-heinz Kunze, and son, Dietmar Kunze. Surviving: sons, Reinhard Kunze and John Kunze of Salmon Arm; and 12 grandchildren.

Calab Rauben Daniel Lorenson was born on Oct. 23, 1988, and died on Sept. 1, 2014, in Maple Ridge, B.C. He will be missed by his church

Announcements

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@tadab.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)

The Bowmanville Seventh-day Adventist Church family (Bowmanville, Ont.) will celebrate their 40th anniversary on June 11, 2016. Former members and friends are invited to join in this Sabbath celebration to commemorate this milestone. We praise God for His

Legal Notice

Seventh-day Adventist Church in Newfoundland and Labrador

Notice is hereby given that the Twelfth (12) Constituency Meeting (Quinquennial) of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Newfoundland and Labrador will convene at the Woody Acres Campgrounds, off Hwy 1/ West of Salmonier Line between Friday, June 17, at 7 p.m. and Sunday, June 19, at 4 p.m., 2016.

The session is called for the purpose of receiving reports covering the past five years of Mission operations, electing directors of departments (Mission Officers are elected by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada-scheduled for the next SDACC Session August 2016), electing members of the Board of Directors for the next five years, considering any proposed changes to the bylaws, and considering any other business that may properly come before the session.

Representation from the Newfoundland Churches

family, who will miss his happy laughter whenever he heard music. Caleb is predeceased by his grandparents, Marilyn Lorensen, Ruby Egolf, and Fred Egolf. Surviving: parents, Lester and Lyla (née Egolf) Lorensen of Maple Ridge; uncles, Ronald Lorensen, David Lorensen, Donald Lorensen; aunts, Dianne, Shirley, Kathy, Jacee; grandfather, Ruben (Cathy) Lorensen.

Donna Reid was born on July 3, 1930, in Winnipeg, Man., and died on May 14, 2015, in Vernon, B.C. She played the organ and piano, participated in cooking schools, and served as a Sabbath school teacher in her church. She drove a school bus and was a strong supporter of Christian education. Donna is predeceased by her husband, Keith Reid. Surviving: son, Doug (Mary) Reid of Sparza, Wis.; daughters, Karen (David) Landry of Rosheim, Sask., Gayle (Gary) Moore of Chertanonga, Tenn., Cathy (Michael) Astleford of Chertwynd, B.C., Romaine (Roy) Tiller of Vernon, B.C., Heather (Greg) Reid of Angwin, Calif., and Melody Reid of Lacombe, Alta.; 24 grandchildren, 25 great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandchild.

Steven Sankey was born on June 12, 1924, in Hemaruka, Alta., and died on Oct. 31, 2015, in Consort, Alta. He was a founding and lifelong member of the Loyalist church. He was a passionate believer in friendship evangelism, which included raising countless funds for the yearly ingathering appeal. His singing, smile, and positive attitude are dearly missed. Steven is predeceased by his wife, Margaret "Peggy" Sankey; brother, William Sankey; sisters Dotis Peterson, Annie Tym, Jessie

Lindstrom. Surviving: son, Murray (Elaine) Sankey of Veteran, Alta.; daughter, Carol (Neil) Garner of Lacombe, Alta.; sisters Catherine (Clarence) Chion of College Place, Wash., Pauline White of Woodland, Wash., Muriel Kline of Welches, Ore.; four grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

Rose (née Reimche) Stickle was born on June 14, 1939, in Kelowna, B.C., and died on Nov. 23, 2015, in Errington, B.C. She served with her husband in Canada, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, United States, Malawi, Zimbabwe, and Botswana from 1962 to 2006. Her service was in children's ministry, music, secretarial, and teaching at the church, conference, union, and division levels. After retirement, she volunteered in Canada, Cambodia, and Mozambique. Rose is predeceased by her parents, Albert and Emma Reimche; sisters Zella Clark, Edna Burr; grandchildren, Rachelle and Connor. Surviving: husband, Herbert Stickle; son, Edwin (Brit) Stickle of Buzington, Wash.; daughters, Susan (David) Woods of Forest Hill, Calif., Barbara (Eric) Hall of Portland, Ore., Ann Stickle of Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Jane (Hennie) Maritz of Idlewild Park, Ore.; brothers, Edward (Marion) Reimche of Lacombe, Alta., Leo (Lisette) Reimche of Clive, Alta.; sisters Sue (Raleigh) Flint of Savannah, Tenn., Alberta (John) Blake of Clive, Darlene Reimche of Clive; and 14 grandchildren.

Henry Welch was born on Mar. 28, 1934, in Duchess, Alta., and died on May 21, 2015, in Eckville, Alta. He graduated from Canadian Union College, Union College, and La Sierra University. As a sea chef, he shared his

love of learning with students in Manitoba, Ontario, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and New Hampshire, USA. He also enjoyed writing poetry and putting it to music. Henry is predeceased by his parents, Richard and Janet (née Brown) Welch; brothers, Robert Welch, Martin Welch, George Welch. Surviving: wife, May (née Janzen) Welch; sons, Detrick (Rosemarie) Welch of Lacombe, Alta., Nathan (Shannon) Welch of Eckville; daughters, Dawn (Ted) Barnes of Kelowna, B.C., Wanda (Roland) Pelletier of Eckville, Wendy (Edsen) Donoso of Grand Pass, Ore.; sisters, Deborah (Don) Rose of Calgary, Alta., Margaret Peterson of Calgary; nine grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Monica Grace (née Loader) Wright was born on Dec. 4, 1922, in Taunggyi, Burma, and died on Dec. 21, 2015, in Penticton, B.C. She was a loving prayer warrior and served her church faithfully and compassionately in Willowdale, Ont., Victoria, B.C., and Penticton, B.C. From 1975 to 1981 she returned to the Isle of Man as a colporteur and helped establish the Adventist church there. Monica is predeceased by her husband, Alexander Wright; parents, Walter and Grace Loader; brother Harley Loader. Surviving: son, John (Marjorie) Wright of Kelowna; stepson, Alexander Phillip Wright; daughter, Monica Faith (William) Houghton of West Kelowna, B.C.; brother Clive (Carmel) Loader of Victoria; sister, Pamela Coult of Ballagh, Isle of Man, UK; stepmother, Laurel Downward of Douglas, Isle of Man, UK; seven grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

Tributes



Happy Birthday to Patricia Tataryn (nee Hirschhorn) 80 years young!

With much love from: John; Debbie, Marlon, and Jessica; Holly, Ned, Kai and Kalani.

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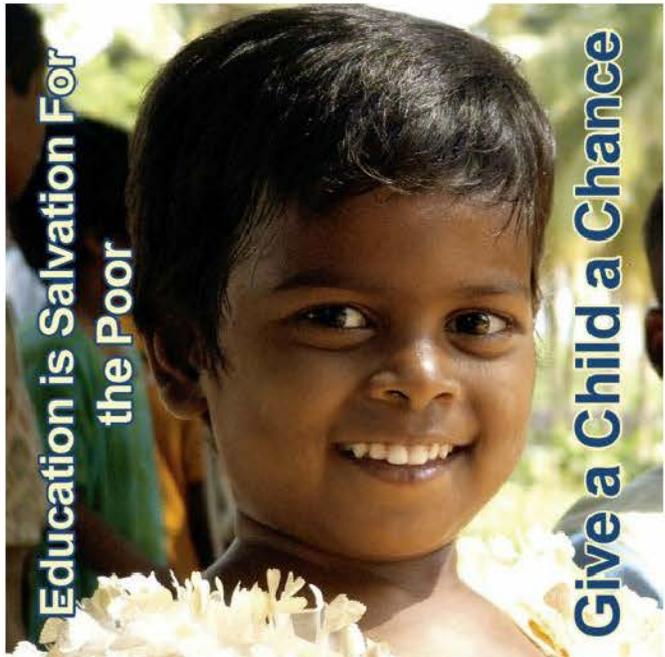
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Home for sale in Lacombe, Alta., built in 2014. 5-minute walk to Burman University. Backing onto a park. Walkout finished basement with heated floors, 6 bedrooms, 3.5 baths, 24 x 26 heated garage, main floor and basement laundry, Rental potential/ boarding students. For further information, please call 403/786-1066. (6/16)

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Union College seeks Vice-President for Student Services beginning in July 2016. The VPSS leads out in the vision, strategy, and execution of the college's student services goals. Qualified SDA candidate will be student-centred and an experienced leader in higher education. See www.ucollege.edu/staff-opening. Send resumé to Dr. Vinina Sauder, visauder@ucollege.edu. (4/16)

Desire more impact from your short-term mission efforts? Southern Adventist University's Global Community Development Program is hosting a *Transforming & Educating Ambassadors for Mission and Service Forum*, July 14-16, 2016. Congregations across North America will discuss improvements on short-term mission impacts for sustainable difference making. For registration and information, contact: mged@southern.edu or 423/236-2070. (5/16)



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www.FreeAfricanChildrenthruEducation.blogspot.com



from the editor

where content is not king

“CONTENT IS KING” is a phrase sounded out by journalists, editors, magazines, and most others trying to convince people that their material is worthy of visitor attention. Sounds simple, right?

Except I do not think it is entirely true. Content *is* important, but the thing that makes people connect and reconnect is encompassed by another word.

Experience.

You can have great content. But if your user, customer, or visitor does not have a great *experience* using your product or service, then the content gets lost. Great businesses fail and churches decrease in membership because they failed to provide a great experience. Mega-corporations may not even have the best product, but what they do have is the greatest experience for the user, client, customer, or member. It is why Apple product launches see people line up—sometimes for days—to be among the first to buy their newest gadget. Case in point: The highly anticipated Apple Watch sold millions of units (the exact number is shrouded in mystery), even though it is known to have a measly 18-hour battery life and in all likelihood will be improved in a year’s time. Apple is not alone. Nike, Starbucks, and a host of other companies have an almost cultlike following.

So how does this relate to our church?

Pastors spend over 10 hours on average to prepare a sermon. They powerfully deliver a great, well-researched message. But if a person visiting that church does not have a warm *experience*, he or she is not likely to come back. This responsibility does not belong to the greeter alone. *Every member*—not just the greeter—is responsible for ensuring that guests are truly welcomed, informed, and included.

One Adventist church in Texas remains about 25 percent of all visitors as members. How? They ensure that visitors have a great *experience* from the moment they walk through the front door until they leave. Another Adventist church* I visited near the General Conference topped that by switching out all of the “Pastor’s Parking” signs for “Visitor’s Parking” signs. When I walked in, I was greeted both formally and informally by members and non-members. Never had I been treated so well.

As we plan for our church programs, let us not forget those who may be entering for the first time—and make sure it’s not their last. ■

P.S. Do you have a great experience of visiting a church? Email me at jensen.stan@adventist.ca

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Stan Jensen'.

Stan Jensen, editor
Canadian Adventist Messenger

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