

Canadian Adventist

Messenger

April 2017

This Little Bike of Mine

Plus

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Messenger

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

Art Director Joan Tanasychuk
tanasychuk.joan@adventist.ca

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

Copy Editor Vesna Mirkovich
messenger@adventist.ca

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Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada

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

President Mark Johnson
johnson.mark@adventist.ca

VP Administration Daniel Stojanovic
stojanovic.daniel@adventist.ca

VP Finance Ulysses Guarin
guarin.ulysses@adventist.ca

Conferences

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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heart to heart

“But the fruit of the
Spirit is ... gentleness.”

—Galatians 5:22, 23

Gentle

If we were to make up a list of qualities most desired in C-Suite executives, I don't think *gentleness* would make the cut. *Strong, resilient, decisive*, yes—but *gentleness* isn't there. (I just checked several sites online.)

Even among people of faith, all too often we are more impressed with the individual possessing the apparently strong and forceful personality traits.

And yet, again and again in Scripture, God recognizes and affirms gentleness as the work of the Holy Spirit in the individual and lists it as a precious gift. Why, then, don't we see more of it in God's church?

Have you ever thought that it would be wonderful to be gentle but that it doesn't seem to be quite who you are? Do you identify more with the “Sons of Thunder” (see Mark 3:17)? What to do, then? Perhaps together we can relate to a story.

I was blessed to have one of the best grandfathers a child could have. Grandpa was patient, a person I loved to follow around as he worked on projects, someone with whom I enjoyed going for walks. In a word, he was gentle.

Then one day I met one of his contemporaries, an individual who had known him all his life. As we visited, Grandpa's friend said, “He's a different man than he was. Years ago his profanity and temperament were legendary.”

What? My grandfather with a temper and language issues? It was unthinkable! But there it was. Through the work of God on my grandfather, he became a different man with different characteristics, a gentle man, a man of incredible spiritual influence.

What God did for Grandpa, God can do with me and He can do it with you. Will we allow the Holy Spirit to do His sacred work in us?

“For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: ‘I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite.’”—Isaiah 57:15, ESV ■

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





School of Health & Outreach



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Mind



Spirit

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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. Participants can complete the full certification online at their own pace. Intensive 1-week trainings are also held twice per year and are open to all iHeal students as complementary training.

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MH201



Lifestyle Diseases & Treatments
LDT501



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BLE301



Fundamentals of Diet & Nutrition
FDN502



Principles of Lifestyle Coaching I
PLC401



Principles of Soul-Winning
SW601



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PLC402



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**For more information, contact the Lifestyle Canada office
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P: (905) 576-6631 ♦ **Email:** mail@lifestylecanada.org ♦ **Web:** iHealSchool.org

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TIME LOST EQUALS LIVES LOST

Severe droughts in Africa have caused food prices to skyrocket to record levels, doubling the price of staple foods in some areas. These droughts coupled with conflict, have led to a food crisis across Africa and the Middle East.

FAMINE

Daily death rate of **2 persons per 10,000** **20%** of households face extreme food shortages



Acute Malnutrition Rates exceed **30%**

Large-scale displacement, widespread destitution, disease outbreaks and social collapse



A declaration of famine by the United Nations (UN) does not make emergency funds available. It is only used to bring global attention to the problem.

KENYA has declared a **national food emergency**

23 of 47 counties affected

Acute Malnutrition Rates in three subcounties above **30%**

The number of hungry people has doubled from 1.3 million to **2.7 MILLION**

357,285 children and pregnant and lactating mothers are acutely malnourished

ADRA CANADA IS RESPONDING TO THIS CRISIS.

Read Halima's story in this issue of the Canadian Adventist Messenger. Help by returning a gift in the enclosed envelope or by visiting www.adra.ca/donate.



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God's Outrageous Forgiveness

"Even in our fallen state, God still loves and values us. He hates sin, but He loves the sinner."

Some years ago while still a student at Canadian University College (now Burman University), I would spend my summers in the literature ministry. I would prefer to work in the rural areas of Newfoundland, as people were not accustomed to seeing many sales people.

On one occasion I met an older gentleman who had served in the Canadian military. As we visited, I shared the book *Desire of Ages* with him. After listening for a while, in rather sombre tones he told me that he had turned his back on God and Christianity. He felt God could not forgive him because of the things he had participated in as a soldier. He wanted to be forgiven but felt he was undeserving and that his was a hopeless situation. I assured him that God would forgive him and prayed for him before I left.

Through the years I have often wondered if he ever accepted the forgiveness he so desperately sought. His desire was not unique, however. I have met and spoken to many people in the intervening years who have also felt that their particular case was too big for God's forgiveness. They include people who have gone through divorce, women who have had abortions, children who were estranged from their parents, people who regretted what they had said or done, and people who regretted what they had neglected to say or do.

As I reflect on God's forgiveness, I wonder how big God's forgiveness is. Is there a limit to what He can forgive? Are there conditions to be met? How thorough is God's forgiveness? If I were to answer that man's question today, which Bible example would I refer him to as the best example of how outrageous God is in His forgiveness of a repentant sinner? Perhaps I would refer to the example of King David and Bathsheba, or I could also refer to the story of the woman caught in adultery. Yet among these are not the example I would choose.

I would choose the example of Manasseh. Of all the kings of Judah, I cannot think of a more wicked, perverse, and evil king. His story is found in 2 Chronicles 33.

The following are some of the evil things he did: He erected altars for the Baals and made Asherim, and worshipped all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the Lord; made his sons pass through the fire in the valley of Ben-hinnom; practised witchcraft, used divination, practised sorcery, and consulted mediums and spiritists; misled Judah to do more evil than the nations whom the Lord destroyed.

Most people looking on would expect this man to be beyond restoration, a man too evil for even God to forgive. Surely, the damage and destruction he brought about would warrant his utter end.

How God chose to deal with Manasseh is beyond human comprehension. God sent him a message of warning. When he refused to repent, God sent the Assyrian army against him, and he was taken into captivity. Verse 11 says, "Therefore the Lord brought the commanders of the army of the King of Assyria against them, and they captured Manasseh with hooks, bound him with bronze chains, and took him to Babylon." During this time of torture and humiliation, Manasseh had a heart conversion and repented. Most people would have no sympathy but would say he was getting what he deserved. God is different in His response. Verse 13 states, "When he prayed to Him, He was moved by his entreaty and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord was God."

The final chapter of Manasseh finds him a much different man. He becomes a true worshipper of God and works at reversing all the evil things he had done before. I find that God's forgiveness is truly outrageous. Who would have thought God would accept and restore such an evil man? God is demonstrating His desire to restore each person to fellowship with Himself. ■

Gary Hodder is president of the Alberta Conference.



teen talk

Q: Does the gift of tongues come from God?

A: Let's ask Paul.

"I thank God that I speak in tongues more than any of you"
(1 Cor. 14:18, NLT)

There you go.

Now, consider this. There is the gift of teaching, but there are bad teachers. While some have the gift of prophecy, there are false prophets among them. Quite a few have the gift of music, yet their lyrics can be misleading at times. A number of Christians have the gift of tongues but seldom follow Paul's clear instructions on how to use it.

In the same book, Paul reminds us that even cool gifts like the one of prophecy and speaking in unknown languages and special knowledge will become useless at some point. But love will last forever!

THer, fôr/, no matter how the Holy Spirit manifests His gifts through you, be it teaching, leadership, wisdom, etc., pray that Jesus' loving attitude wraps them all. ■



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

Bonobos

Bonobos, small relatives of chimpanzees, live in the rainforest of the Congo. Chimpanzees and bonobos look similar, but they behave differently from each other. Unlike chimpanzees, in bonobo colonies the larger males are not in charge; the smaller females are. Bonobos are more peaceful than chimps. Both chimpanzees and bonobos give gifts to others in their group, but unlike chimpanzees, bonobos don't seem to expect anything in return.

In one study, a bonobo was given a pile of sliced bananas. The banana-rich bonobo could eat all the bananas himself if he wanted to. But instead, he opened two doors, one to let a friend come into the room and another door to let a stranger come in and share.

Think about it.

The generous bonobo made a gift of his food to a stranger he'd never met. The stranger had nothing to pay for the food. He just had to walk through the open door and accept the gift. Salvation, like the banana gift, is free, but 500 years ago, people had forgotten that. They believed they had to pay for or earn salvation. The Reformers taught that salvation is a gift that comes to us by God's grace alone (*sola gratia*). We can't pay for it. We can only accept it by faith in Christ.

Do it!

God's free gift of salvation is the best news in the world! Ask God to help you share the wonderful news that His gift is for everyone. And then just do it!



Tammie Burak and her family
enjoy studying and learning from
God's creation. You can contact
her at tammie.burak@gmail.com.

Canada's Only Adventist University



Burman University serves the City of Lacombe at our annual Service Day.



FREE, a group of Burman University students, leads in praise and worship.

BURMAN UNIVERSITY, located in Central Alberta, is the only Seventh-day Adventist university in Canada. With a small community of students, the institution is committed to providing quality education to each of its students in all aspects. Students are able to grow academically, mentally, physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually with the guidance and support of administration, faculty, and staff.

“I have learned to greatly appreciate the small population of students at Burman University because it has given me the opportunity to explore and grow,” says Ivah Lumalang, Student Association president. “In a small university, you experience a sense of connectedness that you can’t experience anywhere else. Here your opinion matters—you count.”

Since its inception in 1907, Burman University has transitioned from being a secondary school to a junior college to a degree-granting university. The university currently offers more than 20 undergraduate degree programs in a wide variety of subjects. Students can take classes from the Division of Arts, the Division of Science, the School of Business, or the School of Education. Faculty aim to equip students with the tools and knowledge to make significant contributions to their respective communities.

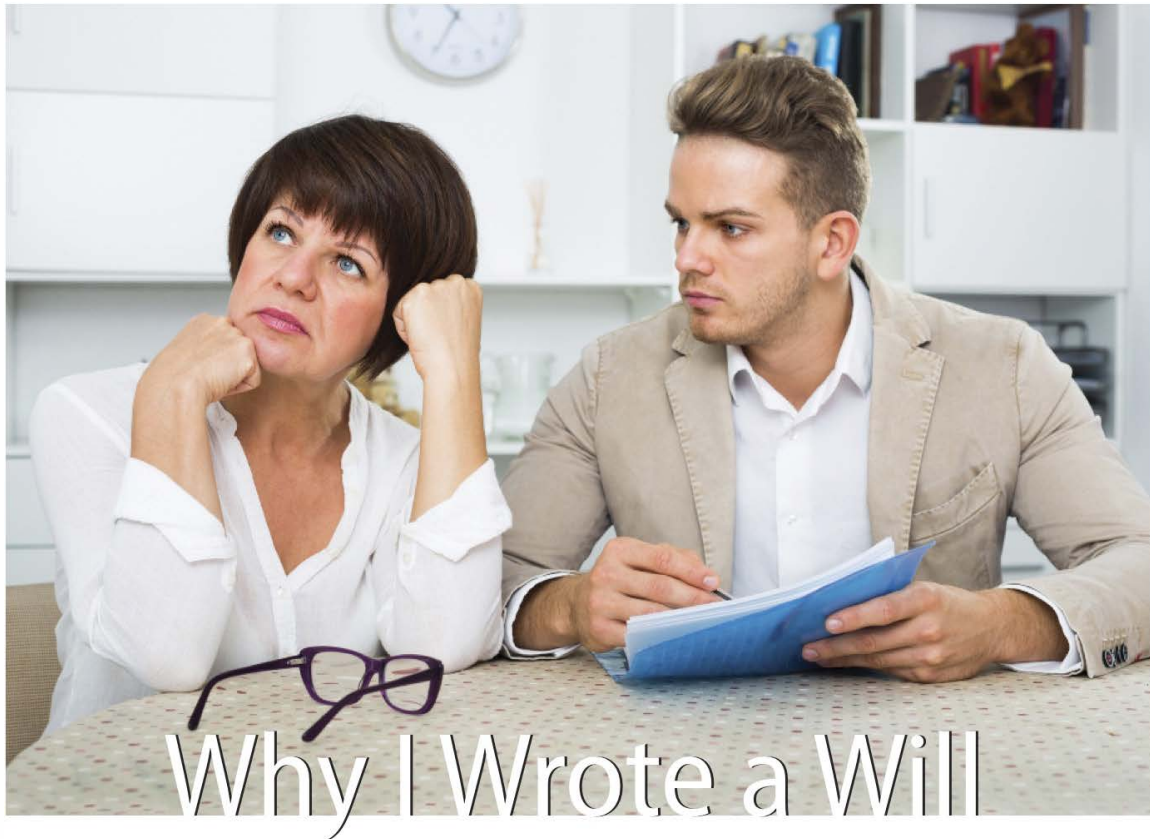
“Burman is an institution that has created an effective, relatable, and inviting quilt of academics,” says Gloria Osei, Student Association executive vice-president. “But what places Burman’s academics on a higher level are its threads of Adventist-based spirituality. Burman proves that spirituality and academics can mix, creating a beautiful, unique, and effective quilt called academics.”

In addition to its undergraduate degree programs, the university also offers students the opportunity to join athletic teams, musical groups, and student clubs or organizations on campus. Students interested in athletics can join team in a number of sports: basketball, volleyball, soccer, and hockey. Students who are musically inclined can join our very own Burman University Orchestra, the Burman University and Parkview Adventist Academy Choral Union, and the Burman University Gospel Choir. Students can also join a number of clubs and organizations on campus catering to different interests and hobbies.

“The plethora of different activities on campus has been of great benefit in preparing students for a realistic future of many responsibilities demanding my time and attention,” says Irhis Salehi Parast, Student Association social vice-president. “It teaches us to manage our time and to prioritize, while also teaching us to slow down every once in awhile, be in the present, and enjoy life in the midst of many responsibilities.”

The most important thing that Burman University offers students, in addition to a strong academic program and a robust social life, is the space to grow spiritually. Students are introduced to worships in class, local ministries, and mission trips around the world. There are also a variety of spiritual and religious programming that students have the opportunity to engage with. “Being Canada’s only Adventist university, Burman can be the hub of spirituality,” says Benjamin Amoah, Student Association religious affairs vice-president. “I walk this campus and see so much talent and so many God-given gifts, ready to be given back for the glory of God.” ■

Kryzia Abacan is the communications coordinator for Burman University.



Why I Wrote a Will

SEVERAL YEARS AGO I DECIDED IT WAS TIME TO WRITE MY WILL.

By outward appearances I was not the usual candidate. At the time, I was barely in my 30s, single, and had no children. I had, however, just purchased a house. The lawyer handling the sale offered to draft a simple will at a very reasonable price.

It's a simple will. It outlines what to do with my assets and specifies bequests to my family, my local Seventh-day Adventist church, and the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) Canada.

While the purchase of my house spurred my decision, it wasn't my main motivation. My main motivation was love.

I wrote my will so that if the worst happened to me, my parents will have a little less to worry about. I have also made sure that all my relevant papers are stored together so that my family would not have to search for anything. My mother thinks I'm being morbid; she doesn't want to know the details and refuses to discuss this issue. I still did it for her.

I know that life doesn't proceed as planned. Several years before I drafted my will, I was involved in an accident. As an out-of-control car careened towards me on the highway, I had just enough time to think, *OK, this is how my life ends*, before I was hit. Thankfully, my injuries were minor.

This experience made me consider, more deeply, the stressful experience it must be to lose a loved one. Not knowing his or her final wishes intensifies that stress.

Having a will in place eases some of that stress.

I have seen families ripped apart after a loved one died. Family members who got along well before the death disagree about how best to handle the remaining estate. Often the issue is minor, but emotions become heated and relationships are lost. I doubt that would happen in my family, but I'm sure many people have felt the same way before their passing—I doubt any planned or expected to be the cause of decades of hurt and estrangement.

Making my will didn't take a lot of time. I spent half an hour explaining my wishes to the lawyer and then returned for 10 minutes to sign the document. I recently added a codicil,¹ as my personal circumstances have changed, and that took less than an hour to complete.

There are many reasons we put off making a will: We hope that we will still be alive at the Second Coming, but we have no such guarantee. We don't think we have anything that anyone would fight over. We don't want to think about death.

People write wills to ensure that their last wishes are known and honoured, that appropriate guardians are chosen for their children, and that a trustworthy executor is in place to help make that final process a little easier for loved ones.

I'm glad that I've taken this step to give myself and my family peace of mind. ■

Author prefers to remain anonymous.

¹ An addition or appendix to a will that clarifies, explains, modifies, or revokes all or part of that will.

Where Are They Now



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

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



John and Barbara Janes

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

John Janes: The oldest city in North America is St. John's, Newfoundland. I am proud to claim this beautiful city as my hometown. My mother, Hazel (Avery) Janes, dedicated her life to Christian education, teaching at the St. John's Seventh-day Adventist Academy. In the early years there were times the Newfoundland Mission was unable to make payroll, so she worked without a salary, feeling that her students should not be deprived of a

Christian education. My father, John, was employed by the Reid Newfoundland Railroad. I have two older siblings, Ralph and Ilah, and a younger brother, Heber.

M: *Where did you take your schooling, and what college degrees did you earn?*

J: My mother taught school right up until my birth in December of 1947, and she returned to the classroom after Christmas vacation. She had my crib placed at the back of her classroom to keep an eye on me, so you might say I spent my entire existence in school. The highlight of elementary school was having her as my homeroom teacher for Grade 8.

I also remember this year for another reason: It was when Barbara Brown began attending the academy. She had first seen me at Vacation Bible School the previous summer and, upon returning home for supper, made the announcement that she had just seen the boy she was going to marry. We have jokingly said that when a woman makes up her mind about anything, you don't stand a chance. We remained friends throughout high school, and following graduation, I went on to Atlantic Union College in Massachusetts, and she attended Abbott's Secretarial School in St John's.

By the way, Barbara and I were married in a beautiful double wedding ceremony with her sister, Sharon, and Wayne Taylor (another Adventist educator) following my third year of college. We are blessed to have been married now for 48 years. In 1969 I graduated with a BA degree in history from Atlantic Union College and later obtained a B.Ed. (Secondary Education) and a M.Ed. (Educational Administration) from Memorial University of Newfoundland.

M: *What influenced you to take Adventist Education as a career and where and what was your first school?*

J: There have always been strong influences in my life to guide me into education as a career. The foremost being my mother, who strongly believed in and supported Christian education in any way she could. My eldest brother, Ralph, was a lifelong educator in the Adventist system. In high school, my mentor and favourite teacher was Alex Garland, who instilled a love in me for history. His influence carried over into my first college degree, and the beginning of a long and cherished career in teaching. My first teaching position was in my hometown of St. John's, when, after 36 years of teaching, my mother retired, and I replaced her.

M: *Where and in what capacity did you serve during your career?*

J: After spending 11 years teaching in Newfoundland we moved to Calgary, Alta., where I served as principal of Chinook Winds Adventist Academy. After two years we relocated to Edmonton, where I taught history at Coralwood Academy for two years. Parkview Adventist Academy, on the campus of Canadian Union College (now Burman University), was our next move where I taught high school social studies for a couple of years before taking on the role of principal. We were in Alberta for a total 19 years. The remainder of my career was spent as principal of Fraser Valley Adventist Academy in British Columbia and, finally, as president of Kingsway College in Oshawa, Ont., until my health deteriorated, forcing me to go on long-term disability.

M: *In what positions did your wife, Barbara, serve?*

J: Barbara began her career as a legal secretary in Newfoundland for a couple of years before we were married. After marriage we returned to AUC, where she worked at ITT in Clinton, Mass., as secretary to the director of personnel. When we moved back to Newfoundland, she spent 11 years as office secretary for the Newfoundland Conference. Upon our relocation to Calgary she was part-time secretary at Chinook Winds and was a great help to me in my first administrative position.

In Edmonton she served as a floating secretary for various government offices. At Canadian Union College she was first hired as secretary to Warren Trenchard in Religious Studies, then moved on to work with James Campbell in College Development and Alumni. She then served as secretary to four college presidents: Reo Ganson, Victor Fitch, Ken Fox (interim president), and Randal Wisbey. In British Columbia she enjoyed serving as secretary to Ken Wiebe and then Harry Sackett, vice-presidents for administration. Her career ended at the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada as secretary in the health benefits department. Barbara is now enjoying retirement and has fond memories of each of her positions.

M: *From your experience, what counsel would you give to young people considering Adventist education as a career?*

J: When I first began teaching, an experienced Adventist teacher shared these words of wisdom with me: "Don't expect old heads on young shoulders." Sometimes your most promising students will disappoint you, and the students you have the most struggles with or seem to be the most challenging, can make the best adults. Always look for the best in your students and encourage them. When they make mistakes, help them to learn that there are consequences, but then, encourage them to learn from that experience and move on.

Make your classroom a place where students can feel free to discuss questions regarding challenges they face as they struggle to find their own spiritual identity. Remember, they are growing Christians and are searching for answers. Some of these questions will cause you to spend more time in prayer and study as you daily seek guidance from the greatest Teacher of all. Remember, Jesus is your partner, and you can do all things through Him, who will give you the strength and wisdom you need. Don't forget the importance of recharging your own batteries by making special memories for you and your family, away from the pressures of the classroom.

M: *When did you retire?*

J: In 2006 we faced a new and life-altering challenge. I was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease and all that entails. I was on long-term disability until I retired. My struggle is a daily one, but God has truly blessed me. He has given me more good days than bad. I thank Him daily for our family, who help to make my everyday living better, and especially for Barbara; she is there for me every step of the way. I look forward to the day when Jesus returns and I can trade this body for a new one.

M: *Tell me about your family.*

J: Our son, Alan, is married to Kirsten (Nilson) from Williams Lake, B.C. They are happily married and living in Strathmore, Alta. Their home is blessed with a son, Braiden, now aged 14, and an honour student in Grade 9. He is the sunshine of our lives. We were thrilled to have Braiden spend a couple of weeks with us last summer. He was totally in awe of Newfoundland's beauty and is already looking forward to a return visit.

M: *Where are you now?*

J: We have come "full circle" and are living back in St. John's, Nfld. I am thankfully working with a good neurologist here in the city. We purchased Barbara's mother's home and have settled in for the remainder of our retirement years. ■

Canadians invited to make a better world during Canada's 150th birthday



Curtis and Kim Harrington of Lacombe, Alta., and their two daughters, Jessica (left) and Joanne, gave a box of chocolates to desk staff and housecleaning staff during a trip to Edmonton in January. They recorded their compassionate act with A Better World Canada's Community Compassion 12 project.



Photo credit: Kalisha Mendonca

L to R: Brian Cruz, Kaitlynn Symonds, Dena Hindley, and Jacqui McCarty teamed up to shovel a section of trail around a pond behind Beardsley Avenue in Lacombe, Alta., on January 8.

Eric Rajah remembers when he learned he was moving to Canada. As a 13-year-old from Sri Lanka, an island southeast of India, he already had a positive perception of what Canadians were like.

"The only thing that I remember was that it was a kind, caring, and compassionate country," said Rajah. "That was the world image of Canada and still is." In 1990, Rajah went on to co-found A Better World Canada, which has made a difference in the lives of countless individuals in places like Kenya, Afghanistan, Thailand, and Bolivia. Now he hopes caring acts will rise across Canada as a result of the organization's Community Compassion 12 project.

The "movement," as organizers hope it will become, was launched in January to mark Canada's 150th birthday this year. "The best thing we can give [during this birthday] is to go back to the roots of what Canada means to so many people," said Rajah.

The idea is simple: Do one act of compassion each month as an individual, family, business, church, or organization. Ideas include visiting the elderly, joining the bone marrow registry, and writing thank-you notes. Other suggestions are available through www.abwcanada.ca/portfolio/community-compassion-12.

Participants are invited to submit their acts of compassion (with photos, if possible) for publication through the website, emailing compassion@abwcanada, or calling 403-782-0325. As well, the hashtag #compassion12 can be used to post acts of compassion on social media.

Individuals are reporting their acts of compassion, including offering free car rides to the store and helping neighbours move. One

person recorded paying the rest of a single mother's grocery bill.

Curtis Harrington and his wife, Kim; and children, Joanne, 15, and Jessica, 13, presented chocolates to desk staff and housekeepers after staying at an Edmonton hotel. The family from Lacombe, Alta., were glad to make the staff's day.

"I think it's nice to appreciate people," said Jessica. "It will make them happy."

Kim first thought of the idea to give chocolates, and now the family intends to do a compassionate act each month in honour of Canada's 150th birthday.

Curtis applauds ABW's Community Compassion 12 because it makes people realize they must "be more compassionate to our fellow human." "We should be doing it at all times," he added. "It would be nice to see it continue for another 150 years."

Ronald Orr, Wildrose MLA for Lacombe-Ponoka, said the project is a great way to honour what it means to be Canadian. He plans to promote Community Compassion 12 through his Facebook profile page and by telling other provincial MLAs. Orr plans to volunteer at Habitat for Humanity and at local food banks.

"I often tell people it's about having your eyes open and then seizing opportunities when you get them, because all too often, people think there's something they can do and then they don't do it," said Orr. "And then they think, 'I should have done it.' When you see something, just act on it." ■

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

3 Myths About



Church Growth

I've had the privilege of pastoring two churches that have grown significantly. The first church grew in attendance from 240 to 700 in a 10-year span. The second church grew in attendance from 130 to 250 in three years. Both churches had record baptisms.

Church leaders have consumed countless books and seminars on church growth. They are searching for the magic church growth pill that will turn their congregations into mega-church empires. While I don't have a recipe for church growth to share, I can tell you some things I have experienced that may help your congregation.

For example, here are three myths about church growth.

1 Praise music will attract people.
This was very true about 20 years ago. All you had to do was put up a set of drums and an electric guitar, and you were guaranteed a new crowd in your church. Today, given that praise and worship music has proliferated on the airways and in many churches, the "newness" has worn off. What people are looking for is an authentic worship experience. Rather than singing the number one worship song on the charts, they want to be led to God's throne and experience His holy splendour. What matters more than anything is that the music you lead in your church is played with excellence.

2 Change your church name to hide your denominational affiliation.
About 15 years ago, some research showed that people were not happy with denominations or corporate church structures. Many churches replaced their denominational title with the words "Community Church." While this sentiment still holds true, we need to examine the essence of it more closely.

For one, it was the institutionalism that people were resisting. The Seventh-day Adventist faith holds beliefs, values, an ideology—and, most importantly, a picture of God—that actually resonate among secular individuals, especially in a society where "anything goes." People are searching for a framework or paradigm that fosters connection and will help them make sense of the world.

3 You must hold evangelistic meetings every year.
In my 22 years of pastoral ministry, I have never held a traditional public evangelistic series. However, I have held evangelistic-friendly meetings on Sabbath mornings. The days of holding 24 day-long meetings have come and gone. People live too far away from the church and are overscheduled and overcommitted to carve out time to attend several meetings a week for three weeks. How can your church adapt to the changing culture?

I hold my evangelistic meetings on Saturday mornings during the divine service. Consider that on Sabbath, your members are more likely to participate, volunteer, and invite their friends to something they are already going to.

I've had pastors tell me that they've spent hours in prayer every week asking that their church grow. My response has always been the same: Your job is to disciple. It's God's job to grow the church. Church growth is an important gauge of church health, because if the conditions are right, it will take place naturally. However, it should not be a focus or an end in itself for the church. ■

Kumar Dixit is the WGTS 91.9 chaplain. You can receive his weekly devotional at OneMinuteDevotional.com.



Sunrise view of the city with Lake Victoria from my bedroom.

First Impressions

Here's what I knew about the African continent before I arrived in Uganda: I pictured a harsh, barren land (as depicted in some documentaries) and my family having to fetch water several kilometres away in some dry riverbed.

But when I looked out from the window of Qatar Airways as we approached Entebbe Airport, I saw so much fertile land, some breathtaking treelines, and rivers snaking out of Lake Victoria!

Now imagine this with me.

You step out of the plane and feel the gust of humid air. As you step down the runway, you hear loud calls of birds you've never heard before—as Uganda is home to more than half of all bird species in Africa.

You see the grey-crowned crane, hadada ibis, marabou stork, horses, bunnies, and, to your surprise, a camel. It's as if you just entered a country-sized zoo! Believe me, that was just your first step into Uganda; you're still only at the airport.

From the Entebbe Airport, you drive toward Kampala. You pass by hundreds of roadside vendors and stores with colourful stone-and-dirt storefronts and homes painted with advertisements. The merchandise sold at these stores are quite varied—from fruits to dry goods to fresh meat.

At the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) compound, the view is spectacular! See, the ADRA

compound is on a hill facing the city and the beautiful Victoria lake. And every day, you get to see the beautiful sunrise from your bedroom window.

In the compound, there are a number of fruit-bearing trees: five jackfruit trees, four avocado trees, four guava trees (with two colourful parrots feeding off the juicy guava fruits), four banana trees, and four mango trees.

You will also love the weather and temperature. It is neither too hot (26°C) nor too cold (22°C). The distance between the ADRA compound and the equator is less than 35 kilometres.

As much as I love the weather and the fantastic view from my "home," I think my best first impression of Uganda is the people who work for ADRA.

When my family first walked down the stairs of Qatar Airways, we were greeted by the airport personnel, who then ushered us to a VIP lounge inside the airport. This felt special! We bypassed the Visa and passes and immigration line and were ushered to the VIP lounge!

Once we entered the lounge, there was another welcoming group from ADRA who made us feel like honoured guests and VIPs. One of the staff took so



My brother, Onyx, with some of the mangoes he harvested from the mango tree at the ADRA compound.

many pictures of my family that I felt like I was on the "red carpet," with camera shutters clicking every single second.

When my family left the lounge to head toward the building exit, we were surprised to see five ADRA vehicles lined up to receive us! Five ADRA vehicles! We didn't need that many vehicles for all our luggage, and yet, there they were—five ADRA vehicles. The ADRA people were so warm and happy to meet us and greet us. I have never before experienced such a warm airport welcome.

I still can't believe I'm here in Uganda with my family. At times, I think it is just a dream. But the reality is, Uganda is my "mission" field for the next couple of years, and I pray that God will continue to bless me as I bless others in this beautiful country. ■

Jewel Aguilar is the eldest child of Charles and Betty Aguilar.

Struggling to Pray?

"If our prayers are not focused on God, we are guilty of idolatry..."

I was wrong in my assumption. For quite some time I assumed that everyone who attended a prayer conference was a "master in praying." Consequently, my first few times organizing and participating in such conferences, I never thought of including a presentation on the matter of *how to pray*. It was not until a few years into my involvement with this ministry that I came to realize that among the people who attend such conferences are those who really struggle learning how to pray. That is, many of these individuals have never really been taught the basics of prayer. As such, either they didn't pray or if they did, they prayed without much confidence. Since that moment of realization, I have felt compelled to include this topic in our prayer conferences, and without exception, individuals have expressed how helpful this has been to them.

But what approach does one use in teaching such a vital and subjective matter? I believe that the best approach is to examine and study the prayers of the real masters of prayer—the biblical models of true prayer warriors. I think of such people as Daniel (see Dan. 9) as well as Nehemiah (see Neh. 1). Is there a pattern in the way these men of God prayed, and if so, would it not be a good basis for us to begin learning to pray?

Let's take a quick look at Nehemiah's prayer. Firstly, he acknowledges God's greatness (Neh. 1:5). Despite the adversities that Nehemiah and his people in Jerusalem face, he begins his prayer by acknowledging God's greatness. In doing so, he declares the sovereignty of God—"Lord God of heaven." Then he speaks of His holiness: "O great and awesome God," followed by a description of His faithfulness: "You who keep your covenant and mercy ..."

Secondly, there is a confession of sins (verses 6, 7); thirdly, a remembrance of God's promises (verses 8, 9). Finally, he petitions God's help (verse 11). How significant it is that only after declaring the sovereignty, holiness, and faithfulness of God does Nehemiah lay a petition before the throne of God. Is there a pattern in this for us? How does this compare with the way we often pray?

My observation of how we generally approach praying is that we seem to spend an inordinate amount of our prayer time asking for things for our personal convenience and comfort, when Jesus has instructed us that our heavenly Father already knows all the things we need and is prepared to provide those things for us (Matt. 6:32).

In contrast to this request-based approach to praying, Daniel Henderson, in his book *Transforming Prayer* advocates "worship-based" praying.¹ In this approach, Scripture is paramount in directing the way we pray. As the Word is read and the characteristics of God are revealed, the individual develops a sense of who God is and, in prayer, adores Him for being that God.

A worship-based approach, he writes, "fixes our heart first on the majesty of God, the person of Christ, the purity of His Word, and excites within us an appetite for Him."²

Derek Thomas says that "this focus calls for us to think about God and in particular His Name." He continues, "Our prayers are to be suffused with large thoughts about God. We are to take the attributes of God, which are suggested by His various names." He asserts that "if our prayers are not focused on God, we are guilty of idolatry, as we are putting someone or something else in God's place."³

Lord, teach us to pray! ■

Eustace Williams is the personal ministries director for the Ontario Conference.

¹Daniel Henderson, *Transforming Prayer* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany House, 2011), 26, 27.

²Henderson, 89.

³Derek Thomas, *Praying the Savior's Way* (Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2002), 43.



barry's blog

"Across this country there are millions of people of faith. People of faith who desire nothing more than to serve their God and their fellow citizens in a spirit of peace."

The Loss of Innocence and The Political Use of Religion

An innocence is lost when a gunman targets a group of worshippers.

During the evening prayers on Jan. 29, 2017, the Islamic community of Quebec City gathered at the Centre Culturel Islamique de Québec (Islamic cultural centre of Quebec) to pray. Doing what they have always done. Theirs is a community of faith that goes back over a millennium. They are immigrants to Canada, as most of us are, and have enjoyed, along with the rest of us, the religious freedom that abounds on these shores. A freedom that did not come easy. A freedom that had to mature with the nation. A freedom that we must still cherish and be diligent in maintaining.

As the men gathered to pray, the innocence of that moment—the moment of prayer—was grotesquely mutilated by the violence of gunfire. A man, whose motives we have yet to discover but whose motives are

irrelevant in any event, shot his gun at innocent praying men, killing six and wounding many more. The gravity of the scene should not be lost on us. The barbarism of this act must be seen for what it is.

Places of worship are places where we contemplate the divine and the universe. They are our safe places of refuge from the winds of violence and chaos. It is a place of order, tradition, and reflection on life's mysteries. Across this country there are millions of people of faith. People of faith who desire nothing more than to serve their God and their fellow citizens in a spirit of peace.

People who attend their places of worship are following the dictates of their innermost soul and conscience. For them it is not simply a matter of choice but a matter of duty to their divinity, in this case, Allah, and to their fellow believers. Not once have I had to fear that when I fell on my knees during a church service I would hear

that holy moment obliterated by the sound of gunfire. Nor should I or anyone else.

Our safe places of worship must not now be shattered. What the lasting impact of this event will be is yet to be seen. Will we have to be looking over our shoulder when we fall to our knees—just in case? Will we have to have security at the doors of our houses of worship?

While this massacre was meant to target the Islamic community, it was, in reality or by implication, more than that. It was a targeted attack against all people of faith in this country. But it was more than that. It was an attack on all Canadians and our cherished freedom as a plural society. It was an attack on who we are, a people of generosity, of openness, of peace-loving concern for the other. Canadians define themselves not in terms of an “us” and a “them” but a “we.”

Over the coming days, we will mourn the terrible loss of the fathers, the brothers, the sons, the husbands, the friends, who died as they prayed. We also mourn the loss of innocence as a country that has long prided itself as a beacon of hope for the religiously afflicted. We are mourning the depravity that would lead one of our own to commit such a crime against us. In the midst of the carnage, we must reaffirm our commitment to one another, as fellow sojourners, that we respect and love one another as brothers and sisters.

Supreme Justice Ivan Rand, speaking in a 1953 decision, wrote, “A religious incident reverberates from one end of this country to the other, and there is nothing to which the ‘body politic of the Dominion’ is more sensitive.” Indeed, no truer words have been spoken. Religious freedom, the ability to worship without hindrance, fear, or reprisal, forms the very bedrock of our society. Seeing that bedrock shake as it has so brutally at the hands of extreme hatred should give us pause as to where we are as a society and what we ought to do to maintain this country as one of hope and not fear. In the end, it begins in our own hearts to winnow back the seeds of prejudice against those who live differently than we do. Ours is a country that remains open to all people, and so it should remain.

Unfortunately, the story in Quebec took a nasty turn when Neil Macdonald’s recent article on the Quebec mosque massacre used religion for political purposes. The title of his article, when first posted, read, “Inconvenient truth is that white, Christian men are Canada’s mass shooters: Neil Macdonald.” This

blistering attack against “white, Christian men” does not even hold up in his own analysis. Consider that of the 10 mass murderers he cites, he has no record of religious affiliation for four of them. One (Denis Lortie) claimed to be a Christian “for political purposes”; one was of a Sikh family; one, a convert to Islam; one believed in vampires and werewolves; one was raised in a Christian home, but there is no mention of the shooter’s own faith; and the 10th shooter, being Alexandre Bissonnette of the mosque massacre, according to Macdonald, is “probably Christian” based on his name! How, then, can Macdonald get, “Just about every single one in our modern history has been a Canadian-born, Canadian citizen, and usually white and Christian”? It makes no sense unless he is making a political point.

Macdonald did not tell us what it means to be a “Christian,” but it has, at least in the Christian communities I know of, a lot more to it than simply a “name.” In fact, the founder of Christianity made it very clear that it is not one who claims to be a Christian but one “who does the will of My Father in heaven” who is a follower of Christ. That includes loving your neighbour as yourself and turning the other cheek. In other words, by definition, a “Christian” does not do mass murders. Any attempt to suggest otherwise, as Mr. Macdonald does, is simply wrong and unbecoming of a journalist worthy of the name. Put another way—it is fake news.

It is noteworthy that CBC reworded the title of Mr. Macdonald’s article from “Inconvenient truth is that white, Christian men are Canada’s mass shooters” to “Simple truth is Canada’s mass shooters are usually white and Canadian-born.” However, this is not the first time Mr. Macdonald sought to malign Christians with his sarcasm. His article on the Orlando massacre, back in June 2016, was a similar attempt to assign blame on religion where none exists.

I think it is time Mr. Macdonald not use religion in the same way he accuses politicians of doing. In any event, we have to get beyond the politics, and though we may have lost our innocence, may we never lose our resolve to be a people who reject all forms of prejudice and hate. ■

Barry W. Bussey is director of Legal Affairs at Canadian Council of Christian Charities. His opinions are his own and do not necessarily reflect those of his employer. He blogs at lawandreligion.org.



Almost vegan

When our bananas get overripe, we often peel and then freeze them, and when we have collected enough, we like to make banana bread, sometimes a double or triple batch.

We also like this banana bread recipe with a couple of variations. The first variation is Banana Chip Bread: We fold in a $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of dairy-free, semisweet chocolate chips before putting the batter into the pan. The other variation we do is Double Chocolate Banana Bread: We reduce the flour by $\frac{1}{2}$ cup and, in place of it, add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of cocoa powder, then fold in $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of dairy-free, semisweet chocolate chips. ■

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

Banana Bread

INGREDIENTS:

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (125 ml) coconut oil
- 1 cup (250 ml) sugar
- 2 flax eggs*
- 3 ripe bananas, mashed
- 1 tsp (5 ml) vanilla
- 1 cup (250 ml) whole wheat flour
- 1 cup (250 ml) white flour
- 1 tsp (5 ml) baking soda
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp (2.5 ml) baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp (2.5 ml) salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp nutmeg

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Cream the oil and sugar together.
- Add vanilla and flax eggs, beating until smooth.
- Blend in the mashed bananas.
- In a second bowl, mix the dry ingredients and add to banana mixture, stirring only to moisten.
- Transfer to a greased 9" x 5" x 3" loaf pan.
- Bake at 350°F for 50 to 60 minutes until inserted toothpick comes out clean.
- Let cool for 10 minutes before removing from pan.

Note: This recipe works nicely when made into mini-loaves, in which case bake for 25 to 30 minutes.

The Drive Home

"She looked like she'd had a rough go of life and she was hitching a ride," Peter, a Pentecostal listener from Castlegar, B.C., said as he shared this story with me. We were talking about his relationship with Voice of Adventist Radio (VOAR). He found VOAR at 105.9 on his car radio four years ago and keeps his dial tuned to the station. So when he stopped to give this young lady a lift, she got a spiritual lift on her drive home as well!

For 20 minutes the sounds of Gospel music filling the car seemed to soothe away some of her cares. Then a gentleman's voice came on the radio and offered a prayer that, as it turns out, helped to touch the young lady's heart.

Peter's relationship with God has been strengthened over the years by the variety of music and messages on VOAR. The station brings a smile to his face; for many years he listened to *The Drive Home Show With Mark Worden* as his day was just getting started. Recently added new equipment allows British Columbia listeners to listen in Pacific time; therefore, the *Drive Home* show has shifted to its rightful place from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. Peter now gets to enjoy the humour of *Lighten Up and Live!* with Ken Davis.



VOAR helps keep Peter connected to God and gave him a chance to witness to this young lady. "Thank you for the ride! You're a decent guy. God bless you!" the lady said. May God bless Peter and this young lady as they both continue on their Drive Home. ■

Christine Bergen is the secretary/treasurer for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Newfoundland and Labrador.



Rebecque Johnson

ON THE
ROAD WITH

Becky

What does the cross mean to you?

AT THE VANCOUVER FIL-CAN, VICTORIA FIL-CAN,
FRASER VALLEY, AND PORT HARDY CHURCHES
IN BRITISH COLUMBIA.


Ella Estores: God's love for the human race.

Shermine Babatid: [The] cross for me is a symbol and a reminder that Christ died and sacrificed for us. I'm grateful for His love and mercy.

Rubie Levasseur: To me [it] is the salvation of my soul. Jesus died for me and bought me from sin.

Nerlita Rose "Rosie" Oabel: Forgiveness. Love. Every time I see a cross, I am reminded that all I need to do is simply lay my burdens down and be covered with God's grace, love, and forgiveness. It also gives me hope and strength when I face challenges in life; and that I can get through it with God's help.





THE HONOURABLE PEOPLE

**Not every disaster is unexpected.
Sometimes the warning signs can be seen months in advance.**

Insufficient amounts of rainfall. Political uncertainty. Skyrocketing food prices. Crop failure. Poverty. Any one or a combination of these factors can cause a disaster.

Famine

The United Nations officially declares a famine when the crisis has the following three markers:

- At least 20 percent of households in an area face extreme food shortages with a limited ability to cope.
- Acute malnutrition rates exceed 30 percent.
- The death rate exceeds two persons per day per 10,000 persons.

Long before a famine is officially identified, animals and people are already slowly dying. Children and the elderly are the most vulnerable, but hunger is no respecter of persons.

The warning signs are evident in many places across Africa and the Middle East. If we heed them, we will be able to save lives.

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) saw the warning signs in northern Kenya several years

ago. ADRA Canada, in partnership with the Canadian Foodgrains Bank and ADRA Kenya, responded to the 2011 famine by providing emergency food rations to the people of Didkuro and other areas of Mandera West county.

To help the communities become more resilient in the face of drought and famine, the three agencies began the Food for Today and Tomorrow (FTTM) project.

Halima's story

Halima is a single mother with six children. Her family depends on the livestock they rear. They were devastated when they lost 15 heads of cattle, 20 goats, and 12 sheep to the 2011 drought. Only a few goats managed to survive. Halima was distraught at not being able to feed her family when the drought caused a famine.

Halima knew that in the arid, desert conditions of Didkuro in northern Kenya, she could not rely only on her herd to support her family. She decided to join the ADRA project and supplement her income by starting a farm.

Halima learned farming skills and water-saving gardening techniques that have enabled her to grow



Halima receiving a distribution of food.



Herders trying to keep their animals alive.

kale, spinach, and tomatoes to feed her family. Halima shares:

"I am very grateful to ADRA Kenya for supporting me with skills to produce kale, spinach, and tomatoes via the shared water-saving gardening technologies. Since then I have been harvesting tomatoes, kale, and spinach for our domestic consumption. ADRA Kenya has been of great help to us as a family and as a community.... Our livestock have not died as we experienced in the 2011 drought."

The project has brought hope to many people in Mandera West, but life continues to be difficult.

The warning signs of famine appeared again last year. The rains that normally fall between October and December failed to appear in 2016, causing another severe drought. Families have been forced to walk hundreds of miles in search of pasture for their animals and water for themselves.

Halima's family has been forced to skip meals. Halima has walked for miles each day to fetch firewood, hoping to sell it to earn money to buy food or to repay her neighbours for lending her food.

"I prayed to Allah to remember my family with food," she says.

Halima's prayers were answered when the ADRA Kenya staff informed her that there would be another emergency distribution of food to alleviate the hunger caused by the drought.

"I could not hide my joy," she says. "I shouted 'Allah bless ADRA, the honourable people.'... ADRA is honourable because of honesty, trustworthiness, and openness in their food distribution."

Five hundred families have been given enough rice, beans, oil, and salt to last for three months.

"Now my family will not sell more goats or skip meals," says Halima. ADRA was able to assist Halima's family because of the generous Disaster and Famine

Relief offerings that Canadians gave in May 2016. Those gifts are helping families like Halima's to survive.

Famine in the Bible

Chapters 41 and 42 of the book of Genesis in the Bible tell the story of a severe famine. Seven years of plenty were followed by seven years of want. We are told that the famine affected all lands, but because of the warning God gave (and Joseph interpreted) to Pharaoh, the people of Egypt were able to prepare for and survive the disaster.

No one is surprised that there are disasters in this fallen world or that they are happening with increasing frequency and severity. Just as Joseph was given special insight into the meaning of Pharaoh's dream and was thereby blessed with the responsibility to act on his knowledge, so Adventists, too, have special insight and responsibility. The Disaster and Famine Relief Offering enables ADRA to be ready before a disaster strikes, just as Joseph was ready before the famine.

Thank you

ADRA strives not only to save lives in the immediate aftermath of a disaster but also to equip those we help with the resources to rebuild their lives and to lessen the effects of future disasters. Working with communities through the emergency, transition, and development phases allows us to help people to thrive.

ADRA's work to intervene in disasters and alleviate hunger is possible only because of the generosity of our supporters. Thank you for your prayers and your donations. You are truly saving lives! ■

Sharmilla Reid is the supporter relations director for ADRA Canada. Halima's story was gathered by members of the FTTM team in Kenya. Credit to Mohamaed Abdullahi Hilloo (project volunteer), Patrick Kangangi, David Ndwiga, and David Kitheka

Sean Bernardo is like many other 10-year-old boys. He enjoys playing video games, he is sometimes annoyed by his two younger sisters, and he loves sports: basketball, soccer, tennis, swimming, and pretty much any activity that lets him burn off his energy. In fact, Sean used to have so much restless energy that he sometimes had trouble sitting still.

A few years ago, in an effort to channel his son's energy and also bond over a shared interest, Sean's father, Ardison began taking him on bike rides. Together, they would ride for long periods of time without tiring, and Ardison began to wonder just how long his son could last. At one point he asked Sean, "Why do you have so much energy?" to which the boy replied, "God gives it to me."

An idea was soon hatched to use Sean's energy and new passion for a greater good.

This Little Bike of Mine

Ardison, pastor of Bramalea Filipino-Canadian church in Brampton, Ont., and his wife, Cindy, had always endeavoured to teach their children about being engaged in ministry and their community. Ardison planned Sean's first bike ride fundraiser as an event to help send the youth of their church to a Generation of Youth for Christ (GYC) convention being held in Orlando, Fla.

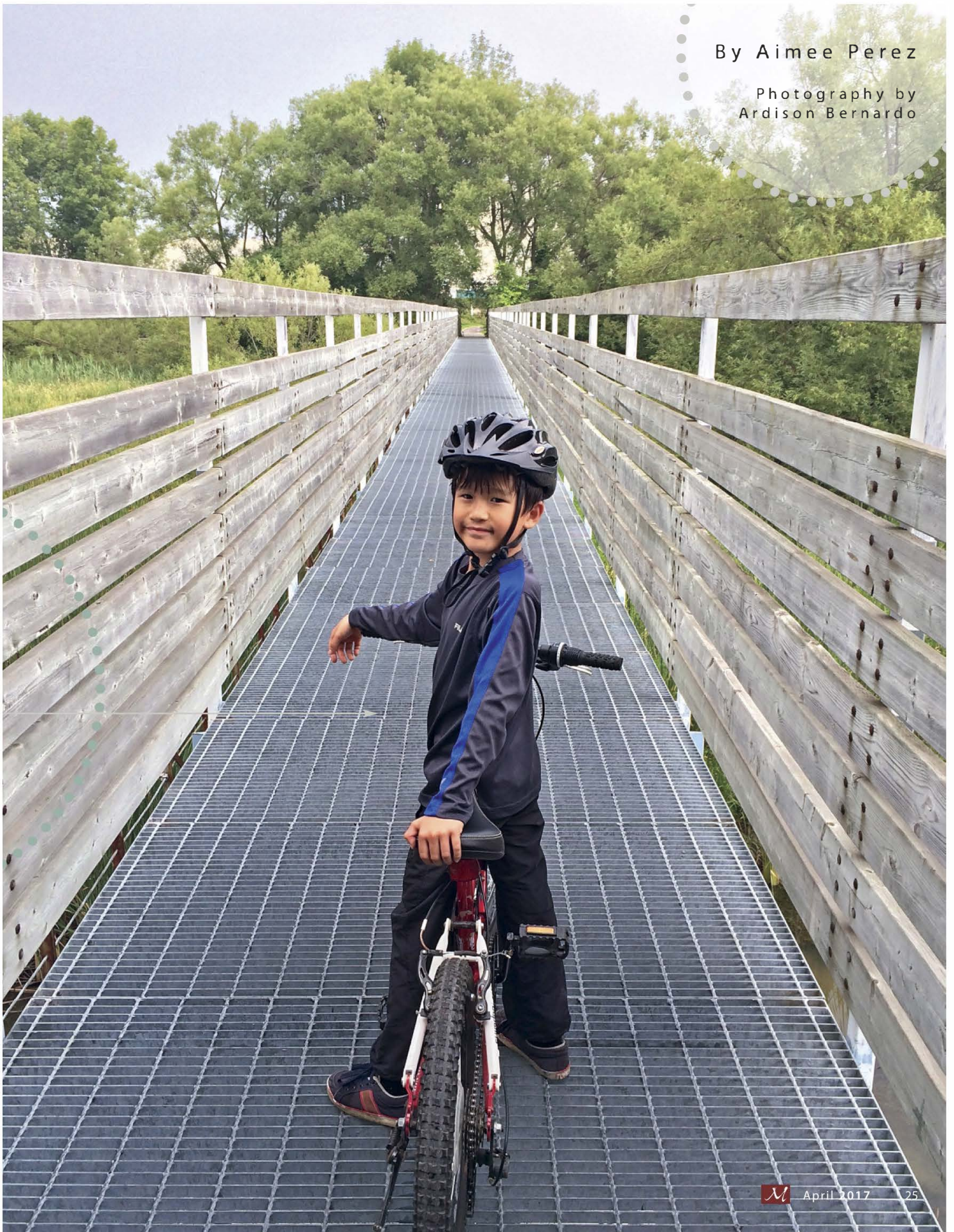
A goal of 40 kilometres was set, and on May 26, 2013, Ardison and Sean rode together on an unpaved trail from the Tottenham Conservation Area to Brampton. Despite the challenge of using a single-gear bicycle on rough terrain, Sean persevered, and the father-and-son pair completed the ride in just under eight hours surpassing their goal by 13 kilometres. Approximately \$1,000 was raised for

GYC, and a spark was ignited in Sean.

While Sean enjoyed being surrounded by nature, the rough terrain proved difficult, so the next year, Ardison decided to switch to a paved trail. On Aug. 4, 2014, the pair embarked on a new challenge—a 100-kilometre round-trip jaunt along the Toronto waterfront. Sean's passion for Pathfinders led him to fundraise for the "Bible and a Buck" project at the 2014

By Aimee Perez

Photography by
Ardison Bernardo





Photos this page: Sean displays the 100 Bibles he donated to the Bible and a Buck project.

Sean takes a short break to enjoy the beautiful Tottenham Conservation Area, New Tecumseth, Ont.

Photos next page: Sean with his parents, Ardison and Cindy, and one of his sisters, Fiona (Iya not in photo), at the Southern Asia-Pacific Division office in Silang, Cavite, Philippines.

Sean on his first ride on a trail in Brampton, Ont.

Sean and his father take a short break at Scarborough Bluffs Park, Scarborough, Ont., on their 2016 ride.

International Pathfinder Camporee, which aimed to collect 25,000 Bibles for distribution to countries with little or no access to the Bible.

Armed with a larger multigear bike (in fire-engine red!), Sean and Ardison began their journey in Scarborough, Ont. This time, instead of riding straight through, the pair enjoyed the scenery along the waterfront, stopping for photos and breaks along the way. Unfortunately, Mother Nature did not fully cooperate, and halfway through the ride, it began to rain.

At first, Sean was not bothered by the drizzling rain—he actually found it refreshing after the restrictive heat earlier in the day. However, as the rain continued, their clothes became more soaked, and fears of slipping on slick trails forced the pair to seek safety under a picnic shelter until the rain abated. Sean’s mother, Cindy, began to worry about her husband and son as the day wore on and temperatures began to drop. God watched over them, however, and though they had to cut the route short, they managed to complete 86.6 kilometres that day.

Despite the setbacks, Sean found the bike ride peaceful, and he raised enough money to buy 100 brand-new Bibles for the Bible and a Buck project and delivered them personally to the camporee in Oshkosh, Wis.

In 2016, Sean prepared for his biggest challenge yet. Doubling his previous goal, he planned a 200-kilometre round-trip from Oshawa to Mississauga, Ont., over two days. He also set his fundraising sights higher, casting his net beyond the membership of the Bramalea church for the first time and reaching out to the Filipino Adventist Ministries Coordinating Council (FAMCC) churches in Ontario. FAMCC is a committee made up of all of the Filipino-Canadian Adventist churches in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Together, FAMCC’s executive team planned a multispeaker, multisite evangelistic series in Laguna, Philippines, with a culminating

series led by conference president, Mansfield Edwards. With an endeavour of this magnitude, Sean’s fundraising goals increased accordingly.

Sean agreed to speak at several churches in the GTA leading up to his bike ride. Sharing his naturally shy disposition, Cindy expressed her admiration of Sean stepping outside of his comfort zone in order to raise funds for evangelism.

“Most people thought that [riding for 200 kilometres] was really inspiring. But ... what was really inspiring for me is when his dad told him that he should speak in the Filipino churches. You see, he’s shy. He’s not a confident speaker. ... He had to master that fear. He had to overcome his shyness.”

Sean readily admits the nervousness he felt each time he stepped into a new church, facing people he had never met before. Cindy recalls, “Every time we would go to a church, I could feel that he was nervous and shy, ... but every time I saw him in front I thought, My son is doing this, and I know what it takes to go [up] there because I am that [shy] person.”

Despite his fears, Sean continued to visit churches and step up to the pulpit. He recalls the relief he felt as soon as he was finished speaking. He also appreciates the effort every church put into making him feel welcome.

And thus, for two months in the summer of 2016, Sean visited a different church every week, not just speaking about his bike ride, but preaching for church services. Displaying maturity beyond his years, Sean regularly gave up his free time to practice his sermons and sacrificed seeing his friends at church while he travelled each Sabbath.

Finally, bright and early on the morning of Sunday, Sept. 11, 2016, Ardison and Sean departed from Courtyce, Ont., to begin the first leg of their journey. Fortunately, the weather cooperated, and they enjoyed a beautiful sunny day while riding their bikes across the GTA. After completing the first leg, Ardison and Sean spent the night in a hotel to rest and recover. Sean kept his spirits up by video chatting with his mom and sisters back home, and then settled in for a good night’s rest to prepare for another full day of cycling.

The second leg of the journey began much as the first. With a bright shining sun, Sean took off toward home. Ardison had begun to feel the strain of cycling, but pushing his own discomfort aside, he allowed Sean to continue to set the pace for their ride. And together, father and son rode side by side for eight hours toward their final destination: home. Sean was so excited to see his mom again that he was actually faster on the return trip than during the first leg.

Fortunately, Sean's hard work and dedication, both in the churches and out on the trails, paid off. After two months of fundraising, he raised a staggering \$8,000 for the evangelistic series in the Philippines, more than half of the total fundraising earned for the mission trip. Every single penny went to the fundraising effort, but there were a few kind souls who felt especially impressed to give Sean a separate donation for himself. Those funds were put directly into a savings account by his parents and will go toward a new road bike for future rides.

So what lessons have they learned so far? Ardison learned the finer details of planning—matching the terrain to the right kinds of equipment, preparing for rain and other inclement weather, and remaining mindful of the time. He will take this into account as he plans their next route for their fourth fundraising bike ride this summer.

While Sean always enjoyed these long bike rides, he has learned over the years to focus on his goal. By the third fundraising bike ride, he no longer complained, instead choosing to concentrate on the task at hand and enjoying the peacefulness of nature around them. Luckily, his boundless energy and love for cycling propelled him forward, so the only preparation required was extra rest and early bed times. For future rides, however, he will start training to increase his overall pace. As for the preaching, introverted Sean is unsure that he would choose to go through that experience again.

He does, however, have sage advice for other children who may consider undertaking their own projects. "Never give up." He is adamant in insisting that whatever your goal may be, don't quit, or you'll never achieve it.

Plans are still tentative for this summer, but they are looking at increasing the goal distance once again, this time to 250 kilometres. Ardison is also in the process of narrowing down a list of potential recipients for the fundraising component. He has been prayerfully seeking God's guidance in each aspect of the preparations, waiting for the Lord to direct his plans. For his part, Sean trusts his dad to handle the details, knowing that when he sets off on his bike once again, his father will be right by his side the entire time.

When Sean began his first fundraising bike ride at seven years old, he could not have conceived what it would become. Sean has now cycled almost 350 kilometres, raised nearly \$10,000 for various projects, and preached at seven different churches. It's quite an accomplishment for anyone, much less a shy 10-year-old boy. And yet, the goal was never about the money; it was about parents teaching their child about helping others. A simple joy for bike riding was transformed into his own ministry.

To ask him about it, Sean's quiet exterior belies his enthusiasm. He may protest at the attention, but Sean Bernardo is a shining example of what can be accomplished with a passion and a goal, whether you are 7 or 70, 10 or 100. He didn't aim for greatness or have visions of grandeur, but he did learn that anyone can make a difference in the world around them. Sean may have started small, but along the way the words of Theodore Roosevelt rang true, "Do what you can, with what you have, where you are," and that makes all the difference in the world. ■

Aimee Perez is the secretary and a staff writer for the Canadian Adventist Messenger.





Second Chance

*A summer of going from door to door
and talking with strangers in the heat
was just not my idea of a good time.*

I did not want to do Canada Youth Challenge (CYC). A summer of going from door to door and talking with strangers in the heat was just not my idea of a good time. But it seems that God had other plans, and through a series of circumstances, I found myself joining the team of CYC student missionaries working out of Kitchener, Ont. Soon, without question, I knew it was God who had brought me there.

One evening as I was going from door to door, I came to a home and knocked. When the door opened, I saw a woman standing there, phone to her ear. She was talking to a relative about something. “Hold on,” she said to the person on the phone; then, turning to me, she shared her sad news. Her sister had just died, her nephew had committed suicide, and another family member had also passed away. And all this had happened in the same week.

I felt bad for her situation and decided to show her the book *Peace Above the Storm*. She looked at it and said she was interested but didn’t have any money to pay for it. As I stood there, trying to decide what to do, I suddenly remembered something that had happened to me earlier.

I had met a girl around my age, but when I had seen her, something didn’t look quite right. She had listened as I shared with her the books, but something in her manner and in her look made me think something was wrong. Since she wasn’t interested, I decided to move on. But as I walked away, I felt uneasy. I felt something was wrong and that I should have left her with something. But I also thought it would look weird to go back to her, so I decided to shrug off my uneasiness and keep going. Later, as I thought about that young girl, I said to myself, *You know what? I messed up. But next time, I will act differently.*

Now, as I looked at the woman with the phone who had experienced so many tragedies in such a short period of time, I decided I would not walk away. I would not make the same mistake.

“Ma’am,” I said, “I’d like to give you this book for free. I hope it will help.” With that, I handed her the book. She was very happy and gave me a hug. As she resumed her phone conversation, I heard her explain what had happened and say that she was grateful for the book.

I don’t know what happened to that young girl, but my experience had taught me a lesson. If we are willing, God will put us in contact with people who have needs and hurts we don’t understand. God will impress on our hearts to give, to share, to help. When those impressions come, we can’t ignore them. It may be our one chance, our only chance, to eternally impact a life. It’s a lesson I had to learn the hard way, but it’s one I will never forget. We can’t ignore the needs out there. We must be willing to go and be the light God has asked us to be. ■

Rolani Robinson served as a Literature Evangelist with Lifestyle Canada, a charity organized to better fulfill the mandates of the literature ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church across Canada.



God's Army of Youth

"OK, students, please split up into twos, pray in front of each home on your mapped walk, and then hang the 'CAA prayed for you today' door hanger," instructed Mrs. Kibbee.

Left to right: James Donice, Andrew Mora, and Magali Arrieta-Andrade.

"BUT I DON'T WANT TO DO THE PRAYER WALK! I don't see why we have to do this! What are we supposed to pray for?" questioned Danielle, a second-year student at Coralwood Adventist Academy (CAA) at the time.

"Pray for whatever God impresses you to pray for," responded Mrs. Kibbee.

The assigned Move58 students set out, moving from home to home and offering a variety of prayers for each household. As Danielle came to learn later, the power of God works through each prayer, guiding us when we don't even know what to pray for! "In the same way, the Spirit helps in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans" (Rom. 8:26, NIV).

As the students finished their walk and regrouped at the CAA gymnasium, Danielle and her friend recounted that at one of the houses, they had felt impressed, "for some reason," to pray specifically for physical healing. Mrs. Kibbee, having lived in the community for a long time, shared that in that home in particular, a family member was struggling with Multiple Sclerosis (MS), a disease that attacks the central nervous system. Unbeknownst to these two CAA girls, God knew the needs of this home and used them to petition the Master for help in their time of physical need, while bolstering the faith of two young ladies and their group.

Move58 is a "movement" of "an army of youth" upon the Edmonton area

through prayer, service acts, visitations, and in-depth Bible exploration. It is based on Isaiah 58 and is designed to take our junior high and senior high students to the brink of a *selfless expression* of their relationship with their God through community service.

This is only one of the stories Move58 and Adventist education has inspired in CAA students. Countless parents, of both new and returning students, have come to my office to stress that character development/spiritual discernment is the most important aspect they're looking for in an educational institution.

"Mrs. Ferreira, when Emma left a half a year ago, within the first week of being at her new school, we were faced with moral questions far beyond her Grade 1 years. As her daddy and I talk, we feel the need to return to Coralwood. We know she is spiritually gifted and we want a school that supports that discernment," expressed Katrina Fillmore, one of our returning CAA parents.

These kinds of conversations cross my desk nearly every day. Our world is a changing place, and Adventist education is my way, as a principal, to provide a "safe place" for our kids to grow and learn and live for God. What *really matters* at Coralwood Adventist Academy is our commitment to our students' character choices as a reflection of their relationship with their God.

"If they [the youth] do not willfully rush into danger, and needlessly place themselves in the way of temptation, if they shun evil influences and vicious society, and then are unavoidably compelled to be in dangerous company, they will have strength of character to stand for the right and to preserve principle and come forth in the strength of God with their morals untainted. If youth who have been properly educated make God their trust, their moral powers will stand the most powerful test.

God's elect must stand untainted amid the corruptions teeming around them in these last days.... The Spirit of God should have perfect control, influencing every action."¹ ■

Teresa Ferreira is currently the principal at Coralwood Adventist Academy.

If you are interested in an Adventist Christian education at Kingsway College, contact the enrolment office at admissions@kingswaycollege.on.ca.



On Jan. 25, 2017, at 2 a.m., we were packed and ready to travel to Tesopaco, Mex. After delays, layovers, and a few complications, we made it through two flights: from Toronto, Ont., to Calgary, Alta., and then from Calgary to Phoenix, Ariz. We landed in Phoenix at 3 p.m. on Wednesday afternoon and boarded our bus for the 12.5-hour journey to our final destination. Stepping out into the brisk Mexican air was not what we all had expected.

The next couple days consisted of Mr. Gryte, a former Kingsway dean, giving worship talks about how much we are worth to God and about learning to grow and appreciate all that we were fortunate for back home. Following worship, we headed to our designated locations—roofing, plumbing, framing, brick relocations, and to our many other tasks such as Vacation Bible School (VBS) with the elementary school or town children, to just feeling God working through the people we were surrounded with on the job. Although every day consisted of the same tasks, we were shown the light of God on this special mission.

One of the most memorable days was Sabbath. After Sabbath school with Mr. Gryte; we divided into two small groups, one with the Kingsway students and the other with the school's students. The task at hand was to get to know each other—our fears, likes, future careers—and then our final task was to put our hand on the shoulder of the person to our right and pray for them.

Following Sabbath school was church. We shared the service. Both schools took part in music and prayers; then Mr. Gryte and Mr. Isaac Chagoya, program director, delivered the sermon in both English and Spanish.

After the service, and lunch, we went for a 1.5-hour hike to the top of the closest mountain. It was so beautiful. Then we hiked back down the mountain and boarded a bus that would take us to the town to meet with our group of neighbourhood children, and to hold a VBS. The kids were so shy initially, and some remained shy throughout the entire time we were there. We sang, did a craft, played a game, and then, finally, came time for the piñata; the children were ecstatic.

On the last night the students, along with their teachers, set up tables and speakers in preparation for the farewell event. Mr. Isaac called us all together. We stood in the middle as the students of Tesopaco made a circle around us and Mr. Isaac prayed. We then started to visit the different stations that had been set up to sample a tasty variety of Mexican food. Everything was delicious! It was a memorable event. The mayor attended and said a few words before making a presentation to our group. Before saying our goodbyes and shedding a few tears and a heartfelt "I hope to see you again!" we all joined hands in the classroom (its new roof above us) and had our last worship.

God showed us that one day we would see one another again and that we would soon join hands again in heaven. The trip was for the benefit of the school, put together by Isaac and Francis Chagoya, but it was also so that we could be enlightened. Sometimes we take for granted all of the things given to us because we have grown accustomed to them, but at any time God can give or take, so we should always appreciate what has been given to us. ■

Faith Withers is a Grade 11 student at Kingsway College.

Wrinkled Heart Teaches Powerful Lessons

In a Grade 1 classroom, students are working diligently and cooperatively on math problems. It's not an uncommon sight at Mamawi Atosketan Native School (MANS) to see children engaged in learning. What is slightly unusual is the crumpled piece of red paper on the wall.

It's in the shape of a heart. Small and unassuming, it can easily be missed if you don't notice the students pointing to it periodically throughout their lesson.

The wrinkled heart is not mere decoration. Longtime MANS teacher Suzann Self uses the heart to teach universal lessons in Christian values of empathy, compassion, and mutual respect.

Suzanne tells her students that our hearts are the same as that paper heart. When words or physical actions hurt us, our hearts become crumpled just like that piece of paper. Responding to the wrinkles on our hearts with love and compassion can help us smooth out the hurt.

When someone is hurt by words or physical violence, the child can simply point to the heart on the wall, and they are understood at once. It is a powerful symbol of how our actions affect others.

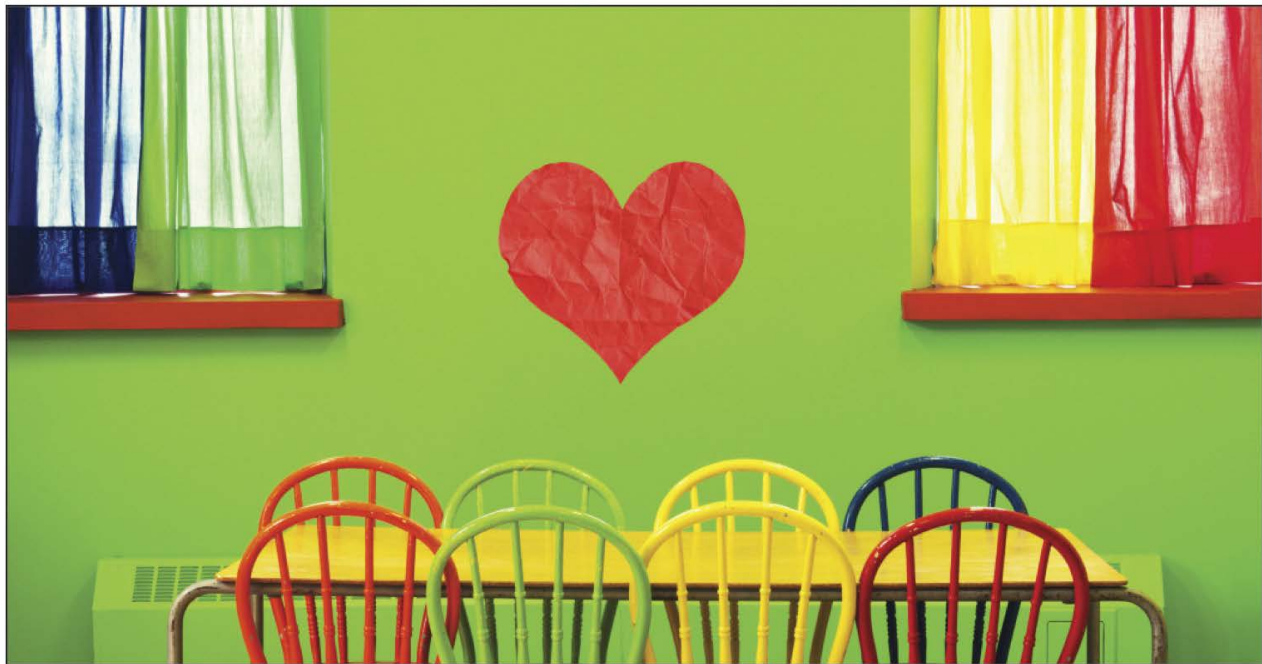
"All I have to do is put my hand on my heart or point to the

wall," Suzanne says. Children in the class immediately know what it means.

It's a lesson that kids have easily adopted, using it to overcome their daily challenges. One child explains that she and her classmates use it when they are kicked, punched, or are the target of cruel words. The compassion and empathy symbolized by that small paper heart is changing how children respond to all manner of hurts. Students use the wrinkled heart every day to resolve conflict in their lives, embodying the values of compassion and empathy.

One paper heart on the wall and the dedication of a teacher are showing the transformational impact of the Christian values taught at MANS. The proof is with the paper—literally! Wrinkles in our daily lives can be hurtful, but MANS children have proven that empathy and compassion toward ourselves and others can help everyone's crumpled heart be stronger. ■

Alison Bottomley was Communications Assistant for the Bridge Campaign for Mamawi Atosketan Native School when she wrote this story. She now lives and works in Jordan.



>> Learn more about Mamawi Atosketan Native School and our students at MANS1.ca. You can also find out more about how The Bridge Campaign is changing the future of education among youth.

Parkview Profiles

by Katelyn Ruiz

"Everything about PAA is designed to spark an interest in God and invite people to get involved."

Egan Schmidt Weiss knew "it was kind of a given" that he would attend PAA when his family moved from Argentina in 2008. He is glad of it and says, "This place uplifts Christian values and other things that some schools do not take time to involve." His entire junior high class shared this same perspective, as they were heading in the same direction. "Initially, I came to PAA because it was the thing to do, but it quickly progressed to me really liking it here. This school is not like any other."

In Egan's three years PAA, he has embraced a variety of experiences, all preparing him for the next steps in his life. According to him, high school is the perfect training ground because "God understands that humans require time to adjust to new things and experience Him." With growth and practice, Egan's skills in basketball have greatly improved, and he has also been a committed volunteer of PAA's outreach ministries. His excitement for campus programming is evident, as he can be relied on to have an excellent contribution to his favourite events like Handshake, Class Challenge, and Senior Survival.

Egan attributes his interests to his attitude in approaching new things: "Even if you are an expert in something, there will always be someone who knows more than you do. I choose to be on the road of constant improvement." Many mentors have joined Egan on his journey, and he credits his community as having the greatest impact. "My parents are a humungous factor in my faith," he shares, "and my teachers have an impact as well. Most teachers have been teaching at this school for as long as I've been here, which is nice because you really get to know them. They have always been great. I mean, as people they may not be perfect, but the God they serve is."

In reflecting on the spiritual programming of the PAA campus, Egan says he is blessed by his personal knowledge of God but recognizes that his classmates may be at different places in their own growth. "From religious studies classes and ministry outreach to Sabbath schools, chapels, and even classroom worship, it's all about planting seeds. Everything about PAA is designed to spark an interest in God and invite people to get involved."



Egan Schmidt Weiss

For Egan, the seeds have led to his passion for service with his peers. "I joined Dauntless in Grade 10 and learned a lot from the people with more experience than me. PAA certainly provided an environment where I would not be judged for my desire to grow. Through my own life, I learned that God does not necessarily stick to the talented when calling people to help others, but chooses those who are willing of heart." Egan's willingness allowed him to not only prepare and share his heartfelt personal testimony but also learn how to support his peer group in their ministry together. "It was so worth it," he says, "because when we are visiting a church or school and connecting with their little kids, we have their undivided attention. A few times I have run into these families later, and the kids from these recognize me. They remember everything we've done and said."

The role Egan has played in his school community is just the beginning of the plans God has for him after graduation, but as he reflects on his experience, Egan is convinced he is ready: "I feel that PAA is doing good work to prepare students for life and for a lifetime of faith," and that is the very best work an Adventist school can do. ■

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

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6:30–7:30pm *Divine Commission*

7:30–8:30pm *Our Greatest Need*

Sabbath, June 3

Church Service *Why Adventism?*

2:00–3:30pm *Friendship Evangelism*

3:30–5:00pm *Giving Christ-centered Bible Studies*

6:30–7:30pm *Nurturing New Believers*

7:30–8:30pm *Cycle of Evangelism*

Sunday, June 4

9:00–10:00am *Sharing Your Personal Testimony*

10:00–11:00am *Evangelism Workshop*

11:00 AM–Noon *Gaining Decisions*



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HELPING STUDENTS KNOW GOD

ENCOUNTER

A D V E N T I S T C U R R I C U L U M



IN THE SUMMER OF 2015, the North American Division Office of Education (NADOE) began rolling out a new Bible curriculum. Using the Bible as the textbook, the *Adventist Encounter Curriculum* seeks to help the students in our schools (1) develop a tangible, vibrant relationship with Jesus Christ; (2) have a deep and personal knowledge of the truths of the Bible and Seventh-day Adventist beliefs and apply

them to everyday situations; and (3) be passionate about the salvation of others.

Advice from the Spirit of Prophecy has helped guide the development of this curriculum: “Parents and teachers should constantly seek for improved methods. The teaching of the Bible should have our freshest thought, our best methods, and our most earnest effort.”¹ Through rigorous pedagogical practice and the use

of 21st-century learning techniques such as collaboration, problem solving, digital literacy, higher-order thinking, and creative expression, students are encouraged to use the Bible as their guide book to grow in today’s world. Students are led to think deeply, to make practical applications of their learning, and to, as Ellen G. White recommends, “see the force of truth for themselves.”²

¹ Ellen G. White, *Education*, p. 168.

² *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 434.

Kent Rusk, pilot teacher of *Encounter* and Associate Superintendent of Schools, shares: “I am convinced that *Encounter* is God’s answer to how we’ll reach students in our Bible classrooms. We have realized that merely teaching our children about God is not enough. We want to reach them where they live with the saving message of a living, loving, involved Father God. The *Encounter* Bible Curriculum is enabling our teachers to do just that.”

The Adventist *Encounter* Curriculum was initially developed by the Australian Union Conference and New Zealand Pacific Union Conference in response to their schools’ needs for a curriculum that honoured the Great Commission—to “go, make disciples.” After a thorough pilot of the *Encounter* Curriculum over a two-year period, involving 30 pilot teachers across each union in the North American Division (NAD), a decision was made to use the pilot feedback to review and update the curriculum under the guidance of the NADOE *Encounter* Steering Committee.

Dennis Plubell, vice-president for Education, North Pacific Union Conference, was involved in the pilot process. “I still remember clearly sitting in five different classrooms in five different locations across the NAD where units of the *Encounter* curriculum were taught on a pilot basis. It was evident that this was far different than the Bible class I had taken in academy. The engagement of students in deep discussions in all classrooms did not resemble a textbook-based curriculum. With the Bible as the textbook, a plethora of good resources, and helpful teacher guides based on proven learning strategies, it was evident that students were being led to ‘encounter God.’”

Each unit consists of a detailed teacher plan, which includes a variety of age-appropriate creative activities, short videos, object lessons, in-depth Bible studies, group activities, discussion questions, assessment options, and worship moments that seek to build the student’s knowledge, faith, and relationship with God. Each teaching unit also comes with a Resource Kit, which includes various items such as posters,



“... students will learn not only how to read and understand the Bible, but how to apply its lessons to everyday life.”

DVDs, books, and other unit-specific resources. The variety of material and learning activities seeks to engage all learners from all backgrounds and knowledge bases. Betty Bayer, the director of Education at the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada and chairperson of the *Encounter* Elementary Committee, shares some feedback from teachers in her union about the material: “Teachers have found the units and accompanying resources to be ‘planning friendly’ and, even more importantly, that their students have been powerfully engaged.”

“My students love the hands-on, group, and responsive activities,” said another teacher. “They really seemed to develop a close and authentic relationship with their Creator. There were so many times I could just strongly sense the Holy Spirit working on their hearts.”

Jud Lake, professor of Preaching and Adventist Studies at Southern Adventist University, had this to say about the secondary curriculum units he reviewed: “Teachers will especially appreciate the whole-person lesson plans that impact students intellectually, emotionally, and behaviourally. Accordingly, students will learn not only how to read and understand the Bible, but how to apply its lessons to everyday life.”

The NAD Office of Education and each of the nine unions have invested in running many two-day training and in-service events for all Bible teachers before they teach this new curriculum, to have a thorough understanding of new pedagogy and methodology that will make

a real difference in the classroom. At these training events, teachers not only hear again the purpose of Adventist education, and the methods and approach of the *Encounter* curriculum, but they are personally challenged to spend more time with Jesus in His Word—for we cannot share with others what we do not have. As we abide in Jesus, we are able to model His love to others.

With the help of the Holy Spirit and guidance from their teacher, *Encounter* encourages students to search for truth in the Bible for themselves and to be able to explain and defend their faith to others. Teachers and administrators have enthusiastically shared how their students are responding to this curriculum—that it is changing the way their students are responding to the truths of the Bible, the call to walk in a close relationship with Jesus Christ, and the call to share the Adventist message of hope and wholeness to those around them.

For more information on the Adventist *Encounter* Curriculum and to view a sample teaching unit, go to <http://encounter.adventisteducation.org/>. ■

Nina Atcheson is the Secondary Associate Director at the North American Division Office of Education, and is the writer/trainer of the secondary Encounter curriculum.

Arne Nielsen is the Director of Secondary Education for the North American Division Office of Education, and is co-chair of the Encounter Steering Committee.

Note from the SDACC Office of Education: The Adventist *Encounter* Curriculum is currently being used in Grades 9 and 10 in our Adventist high schools across Canada, with Grades 11 and 12 to be introduced in the next two years. The full elementary program (Grades 1–8) will be implemented beginning with the 2017/2018 school year, and elementary teachers will be trained this spring. Please pray for the writers, our teachers, and our students as we seek a closer walk with God through the use of this new Bible curriculum.

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SDA Church in Canada

Health Summit Report



Photo credit: Tina Cooke

From Sept. 28 to Oct. 2, 2016, several health leaders from across North America converged at Camp Hope in British Columbia for a grand worship, learning, and networking experience. Attendees were blessed to be hosted in a place surrounded by stately mountains and nature's art. The summit provided an opportunity for warm fellowship and continuous reminders of God's masterful creativity. Delectable meals, a treat from horses enjoying an unbridled break from their corral, and occasional glimpses of a family of black bears all contributed to the memorable experience.

In addition to enlightening seminars and workshops during the day, the group spent several evenings at the community centre in the town of Hope, where retired dietician Ketti Goudy and Zeno Charles-Marcel, MD, associate director of GC Adventist Health Ministries, presented food demonstrations and health presentations, respectively. Organizers of the summit collaborated with Tim Nagy, Charles Hodgins, and a team from the Mount Hope congregation on this initiative. Members of the community responded with great interest.

For the Sabbath service, Daniel Jackson, North American Division (NAD) president, challenged the group to commit to balance and compassion in leadership as we encourage individuals who are at different places on their journey to health and wholeness. Other plenary speakers/seminar presenters included Fred Harding, DrPH; Katia Reinert, PhD; Wesley Torres, D.Min.;

Ern Brake, D.Min., Ermine Leader, PhD; Kiti Freier Randall, PhD; Edward Dunn, PhD; Ricardo Whyte, MD; Jonathan Zita; Phil Brewer; Hether Fankhauser, M.Ed.; Bert Connell, PhD; Randy Bivens, MD; Diane Ludington; Duane McBride, PhD; David Sedlacek, PhD; Glenda Nischuk, RNCP; and Wes Youngberg, DrPH.

The event was chaired by Maria McClean, D.Min., director of Health and Children's Ministries at the Ontario Conference and health coordinator at the SDACC; Angeline David, DrPH, director of NAD Health Ministries; and assisted by health directors and coordinators from across Canada. Special thanks to Wesley Torres, Ern Brake, other administrators and staff of the BC Conference, the BC Health team, volunteers, AdventSource, and Chariolett Johnson, event planner for NAD. Camp Hope staff Bill Gerber, Stephanie Schafer, Todd Schafer, Steven Hodgins, and the entire camp crew went way beyond expectations to ensure that accommodation and meals were exceptional.

The health summit is a time for health leaders and others to meet and learn from experienced, skilled presenters. The next summit in Canada is planned for 2018. Plan to join the group then and learn ways to develop and deliver initiatives that meet the needs of a changed and changing culture. ■

— Maria McClean, health coordinator, Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada.

Maritimes

Maritime Conference Elects New President



Paul Llewellyn

On Feb. 11, 2017, the Maritime Conference board of directors, with the assistance of SDACC president, Mark Johnson, elected Paul Llewellyn to be their new president. Llewellyn will succeed John Fournier, who has served as president of the Maritime Conference since 2010 and had announced his retirement last year.

Johnson affirms, "I am confident that Paul will provide excellent leadership in this important region of our church."

Llewellyn comes with many years of

experience working for the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a teacher and pastor. He has served as a teacher, camp director, and principal in Ontario and Ohio before moving to the Maritimes.

His most recent postings at the Maritime Conference have been as executive secretary, educational superintendent, youth director, and camp director. A search is now underway to find a replacement for Llewellyn's current duties. He will begin his new role as president on April 1, 2017. ■

New Executive Secretary Appointed



Teresa Ferreira

The Maritime Conference would like to announce the appointment of Teresa (VanWart) Ferreira as our new executive secretary, education superintendent, and camp director. Mrs. Ferreira succeeds Paul Llewellyn, who was elected as president of the Maritime Conference on Feb. 11, 2017.

Ferreira is currently the principal of Coralwood Academy in Edmonton, Alta., and will be

assuming her new portfolio this coming summer. Mrs. Ferreira joins us with her husband, Brian, and daughter, Sophia. Their daughter was a surprise a year ago but truly an honourable gift from God. She attests that the passion to keep people in our church and spiritually on fire for an absolute God of love in a world that triumphs compromise is woven into every detail of who she is and what she represents. She considers her ministry for God to be the lifeblood of her very soul, and challenges people to hold fast to Psalm 16:8 and "not be moved."

"We are proud to have Mrs. Ferreira join the administrative team at the Maritime Conference. Her vast experience in education and youth ministries will be a powerful resource and asset to our small conference. All three provinces our now fully represented by birth, of all three officers for the Maritime Conference," states Paul Llewellyn. ■

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>> SDACC REVOLVING FUND REPORT: As of Jan. 31, 2017, there were 427 depositors with a total deposit of \$30,361,713. There were 86 loans with a value of \$26,687,807.

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

British Columbia

Revival

Can you think of a better way to start the New Year than with a revival series? Beginning January 13, Lee Venden, pastor, educator, and author, along with his wife, Marji, captivated guests at Church in the Valley of Langley, B.C., with a nine-night revival series entitled “All About Jesus.” Each evening, supper was served. This proved to be an excellent way to socialize with guests before the evening meetings.

When’s the last time you’ve heard a truly great series of sermons that caused “a lightbulb to go on” (or, as Venden called it, “the click”) that reminded you of your “first love”—Jesus Christ. Lee’s messages were simple and easy to understand. “It’s not what you know.” (Click. Click.) “It’s Who you know.” (Click. Click.) Jesus longs for a relationship with you!



Lee Venden presented a nine-night revival series.



Marji Venden had the children’s full attention.

Venden’s series caused me to reflect as to whether, for all these years, I had been walking more hand-in-hand with “the church” than with Christ. It’s true I loved God, but I wondered, especially after this revival series, whether I had loved “the church” more. After being a part of this

revival series, I like to think that there’s more of “an awakening” or “a climate of change” within our church that places more emphasis on “The Who.” ■

*Betty Lang, member,
Church in the Valley,
Langley, B.C.*

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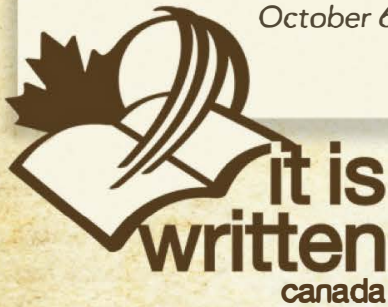
Sandy Lake Adventist Academy
September 9

Kelowna, British Columbia

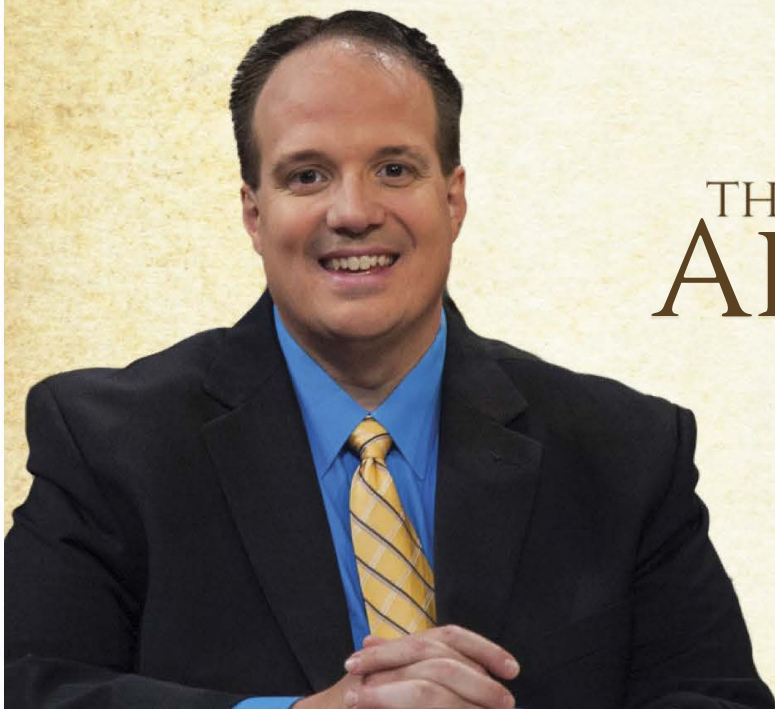
Kelowna Seventh-day Adventist Church
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Winnipeg, Manitoba

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Seventh-day Adventist Church
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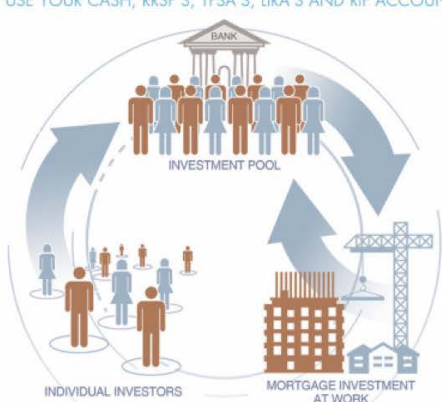
Speakers:
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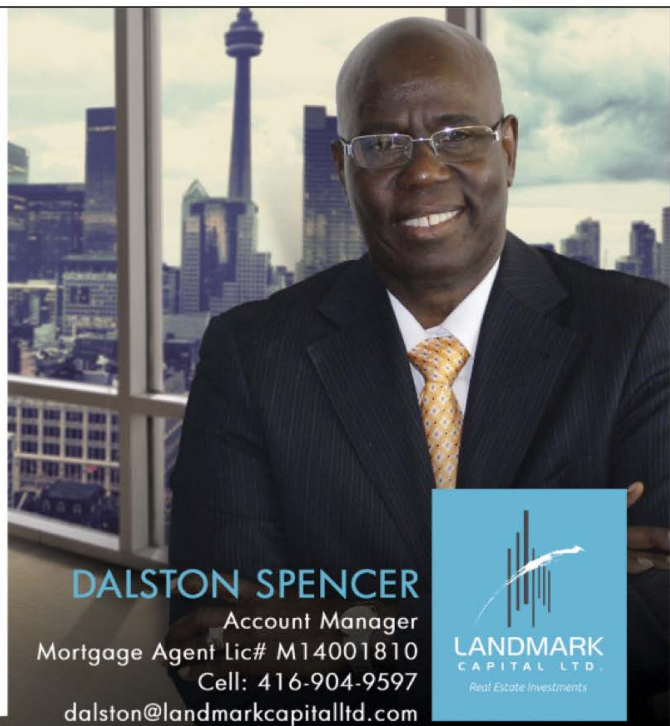
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■ **Announcements**

PROCESS:

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- 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.
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■ **Announcements**

64th TJA/CAA Alumni Homecoming Weekend—Crawford Adventist Academy will be holding its 64th Alumni Homecoming Weekend on May 27 and 28, 2017, honouring TJA classes of 1982 (Grade 12), 1977 (Grade 10), 1972 (Grade 10), 1967, and all classes prior; CAA Classes of 2007, 2002, 1997, 1992, and 1987. We welcome all our alumni and families, former and current administrators, board members, faculty & staff, parents, friends and supporters. Please contact Judy Cardona Gamez, Development Director, 416/633-0090 / toll-free 866/960-2125 ext. 248 or jgamez@tadsb.com. Visit our official website www.caasda.com; follow us on Twitter @TJACAAAlumni; like us on Facebook "The Official TJA/CAA Alumni Group." (5/17)

Okanagan (Adventist) Academy: 100th Anniversary Centennial Celebration. Calling all Alumni, Teachers, Students, and Staff (anyone who ever attend or was otherwise involved) to join us June 30–July 2, 2017. Go to www.okaa.ca, click on "Alumni" to register for the weekend, Sabbath lunch, and to reserve an OK(A) History book. For questions, please email okaaalumni@shaw.ca.

Join us for an opportunity to reconnect with friends and classmates where students are "Developing Purpose and Shaping Character." (5/17)

Fraser Valley Adventist Academy Alumni Weekend will be held on May 5 and 6, 2017. Honoured classes are 1977, 1987, 1992, 1997, 2007. For more information, please contact the office at 604/607-3822 or info@fvaa.net.

Missing Members—The Toronto Central church is looking for the following missing members: Joan Allen, London Baptiste, Sharon Baptiste, Norma Blair, Nadina Blake, Jacque Bowen, Nicholas Bonney, Joan Brown, Isolyn Brown, Leroy Brown, Neville Brown, Monica Browne, Leris Buchanan, Kenrick Burris, Keisha Bussue, Deslyn Calliste, Renee Cameron, Ethelin Campbell, Gloria Campbell, Ruth Campbell, Janet Chambers, Agnes Charles, Elizabeth Charles, Rosey Charles, Winsome Chase, Cecilia Clarke, Ransome Clarke, Ted Clarke, Kem Dass, Cheryl Dorwen, Corene Duncan, Camalita Edwards, Steven Faber, Kenneth Fordjour, Lora Foster, Shari Francis, Hermelyn Frazer, Leslie-Ann Frazer, Maria Fredericks, Carol Freemantle, Brent Fudge, Champagne George, Simone Gordon, Javier Green, Joy Green, Anne Harfort, Joseph Harfort, Augey Henry, Dorothy Henry, Jacquile Hill, Shawn Hutchinson, Adina Ineram, Myreteen (Tina) James, Florence Johnson, Jonathan Johnson, Ann Jones. If you have a current phone number and address for any of these people, please contact Petra McGann at 416/784-0261 or tccentralclerk@adventistontario.org.

■ **Legal Notice**

Seventh-day Adventist Church (British Columbia Conference)
Notice is hereby given that the 58th Regular Constituency Meeting of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (British Columbia Conference) will be held at Camp Hope, 61855 Loughheed Hwy (Hwy 7), Katz, British Columbia. Camp Hope is located on Highway 7, approximately 10 kilometres (six miles) west of Hope.

The General Meeting of the Regular Session will begin at 9 a.m. on Sunday, Aug. 6, 2017, in the main Campmeeting Pavilion.

The agenda of the Regular Meeting will include: 1) election of officers for the ensuing term; 2) appointment of the Board of Directors; 3) appointment of the Standing Constitution and Bylaws Committee; 4) transaction of other business as may properly come before the Regular Session.

The Constitution provides for representation from each church within the Seventh-day Adventist Church (British Columbia Conference) on the basis of 1 (one) delegate for each church without regard for membership, plus 1 (one) additional delegate for each 50 (fifty) church members or major fraction thereof, based on the membership as of Dec. 31, 2016.

*Wesley Torres, President
Ern Brake, Vice-President
for Administration*

■ **New Members**

ALBERTA

Tysen Littman was baptized in Leduc, Alta., on Dec. 3, 2016, by Melbourne Turgott. Family and friends were present to pledge their support and prayers for him throughout his life. He is now a member of the Leduc church..

■ **Births**

Elsie Dylan Kirkby was born on July 14, 2016, to Adrianna and Michael Kirkby, of Bowmanville, Ont.

Nevaeh Marilyn Irene Kirkby was born on Oct. 29, 2015, to Evan and Sheila Kirkby, of Seeleys Bay, Ont.

■ **Weddings**

Jennifer Laan and Joshua Perkins were married on Dec. 29, 2016, in Oshawa, Ont., and are making their home in Loma Linda, Calif. Jennifer is the daughter of Karen Laan of Oshawa, and Joshua is the son of Jason and Brandy Perkins of Courtice, Ont.

■ **Anniversaries**

Roswitha (née Darmstadt) and Udo Muller of Embro, Ont., celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Feb. 5, 2017. They were married in Toronto, Ont., and are members of the Woodstock church. The Mullers have two sons, Lars Muller and Karsten (Danielle) Muller; and three grandchildren.

Mavis (née Anderson) and Enoch Ramsay of Ajax, Ont., celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Jan. 14, 2017. The Ramsays have three children, Jackie (Colin), Enoch (Elizabeth) Ramsay Jr., and David (Joanna) Ramsay; and seven grandchildren.



Mavis and Enoch Ramsay

■ **Obituaries**

Winnie (née Bezanson) Daurie was born on March 22, 1928, in Musquodabitt, N.S., and died on Nov. 19, 2016, in Halifax, N.S. She was a charter member and deaconess of the Dartmouth church and worked as a Nurse Aid before retirement. Winnie is predeceased by her husband, Lloyd Daurie; son, Evert Daurie; parents, Walter and Mary Bezanson; brother, Winston Bezanson; and sister, Ethel Dunlap. Surviving: son, Miles Daurie; brothers, Walter Bezanson and Stanley Bezanson; sisters, Shirley Bezanson and Ann Bezanson; three grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Lillie Rose (née Aab) Heckenlaible was born on June 8, 1927, in Cymric, Sask., and died on Dec. 25, 2016, in Calgary, Alta. She spent most of her youth in Lacombe, Alta., attending and graduating from Canadian Union College. She also worked at the Adventist Book Centre for 16 years. Lillie is predeceased by her husband, Emanuel Heckenlaible; parents, Alexander and Katarina (née Keil) Aab; brothers, Alex Aab, John Aab, Richard Aab, Herb Aab, Bill Aab, and Fred Aab. Surviving: daughters, Lori (David) Steed and Rita (Gary) Gibbins; brothers, Rueben Aab and Clarence (Helen) Aab; sisters, Esther Gabrys and Bernice Lindley; and five grandchildren.

Jean (née Miller) Johnson was born on Nov. 5, 1932, in Beaverlodge, Alta., and died on Aug. 29, 2016, in Oshawa, Ont. She served as a faithful pastor's wife in Alberta, Newfoundland, and Ontario for many years and was a Master Guide in the Pathfinder club. Jean is predeceased by her husband, Curtis Johnson. Surviving: daughters, Zeld (Stan) Jensen of Oshawa, Valerie Bagnariol of Edmonton, Alta., and Sherry Ortega of Oshawa; nine grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.



Mary Lister was born on Jan. 5, 1918, in Poplar Point, Man., and died on Dec. 19, 2016, in Kelowna, B.C. She was very involved in the Winfield church as treasurer and Sabbath school superintendent for many years. Mary is predeceased by her brothers, Steve Lister, William Lister, Peter Lister; and sister, Kathleen Dietz.

Norma (née Carlson) Loran was born on Oct. 13, 1919, in Bow Island, Alta., and died on Oct. 18, 2016, in Abbotsford, B.C. She faithfully led out in the children's divisions and community services in her husband Russell's pastoral districts. Norma is predeceased by her first husband, Russell Spangler; second husband, Joseph Loran; and sister, June Spangler. Surviving: sons, Russ (Ann) Spangler, of Abbotsford, David (Lois) Spangler of Abbotsford, Frank (TruckKhanh) Spangler of Newcastle, Ont.; daughter, Joanne Wageman; sister, Zelma (Tom) Kay of Lacombe, Alta.; 18 grandchildren and 22 great-grandchildren.

Israel Arevalo Mendoza was born on Feb. 29, 1936, in the Philippines, and died on Nov. 12, 2012, in Glendale, Calif. He served as a church deacon for many years. Israel is predeceased by his parents, Albino Mendoza and Irene Arevalo. Surviving: wife: Elodia (née Robles) Mendoza; son, Rael Mendoza; brother, Joshua Mendoza; and sister, Fe Hernandez.

Greeta (née Roberts) Bortoletto Wagner was born on April 8, 1930, in Swan River, Man., and died on Dec. 27, 2016, in Kelowna, B.C. She attended Canadian Union College and served as the assistant girls' dean. In addition to serving as a deaconess, she served her church as a vocalist

and by providing floral arrangements. Greeta is predeceased by her parents, David and Gladys Roberts; brother, Lloyd Roberts; and sister Llewella (Henry) De Roo of California. Surviving: husband, Cleon Wagner; stepdaughters, Angela (Ken) Graves of Aldergrove, B.C., Anna Waugh of Surrey, B.C., and Bonnie Stoker of Burnaby, B.C.; sister-in-law, Betty Roberts; and sister, Winnifred (Dan) Murphy of Kelowna.

Roberta Wood was born on Sept. 8, 1926, in Norton, N.B., and died on Oct. 10, 2016, in Fredericton, N.B. She graduated from Kingsway College, loved infants and children, and took great pleasure in caring for the foster children who resided in her home.

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She also spent considerable time as a volunteer at Town Hall Estates nursing home in Keene, Tex. Roberta is predeceased by her parents, G. Perley and Alice (née Kierstead) Wood.

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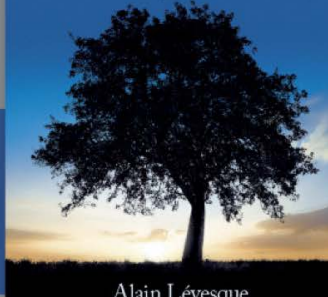
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from the editor

mission statements

ONCE UPON A TIME, I served on a committee who was charged with the duty of drafting an organizational mission statement. *What exactly is a mission statement?* you may ask.

mission statement

noun

a formal summary of the aims and values of a company, organization, or individual.

A mission statement defines the objects, goals, passions, and even the culture of an organization. It clarifies what an organization does for the community, its members, and its purpose. Mission statements are vital to the church.

Over my years of denominational service, I have developed a love-hate relationship with these creatures. Developing them seemed like such a good and noble act. However, many mission statements are so generic that they could apply to almost any organization. Other times, they were so similar to every other church in the community, logic would dictate that we might as well merge or close these seemingly duplicate entities.

Don't get me wrong. It's not that I believe we shouldn't have mission statements. However, I have sometimes felt that if we spent as much time, money, and energy on the mission as on writing the mission statement, more could have been accomplished.

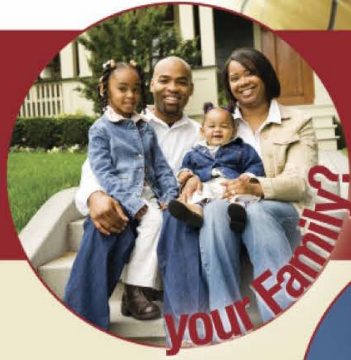
A mission statement is useless unless it actually informs the decisions and actions of the church. The best way to evaluate your organization's mission statement is to look at the budget as approved by the board. Where are they investing resources? Where are they *decreasing* funding? Do your organization's agenda items, budget, and conversation represent its mission statement?

The good news is this: There is no better time to reboot the mission and the mission statement of the church than now. ■

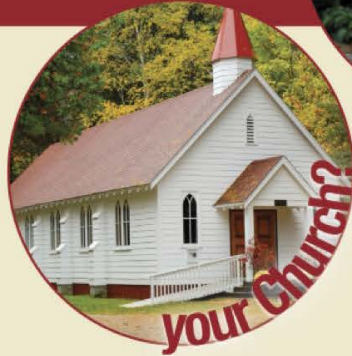
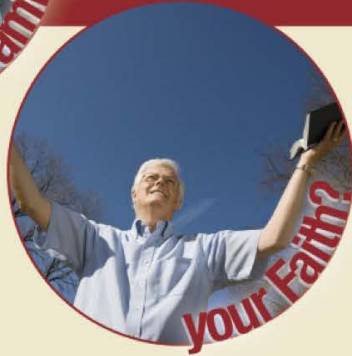
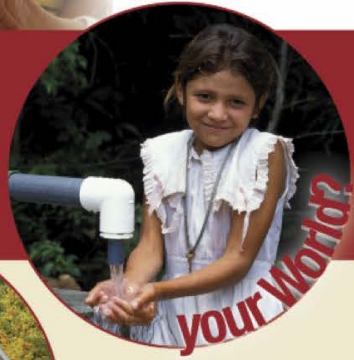
A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Stan'.

Stan Jensen, editor
Canadian Adventist Messenger

P.S.: What are your thoughts? Share them with me at jensen.stan@adventist.ca.



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Charles Spurgeon

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