

Society and Faith (p. 3), Shining a Light (p. 11), What's Your Plan (p. 15)  
I Was a Drunkard (p. 22), Rainmakers: More Than Two Mites (p. 28)

february 2019

# canadian adventist *Messenger*



## Forgiving the **Unforgivable**

Vas Pejcinovski's journey  
from triple bereavement  
to salvation and forgiveness

PM40069337

# Help Send Global Mission Pioneers!

Millions of people around the world still don't know Jesus. Global Mission sends pioneers to unentered areas to start new groups of believers. Pioneers are often local people who already speak the language and understand the culture. Using Christ's method of ministry, they strive to meet people's needs and bid them to follow Jesus.



Unnamed Country

## Back From the Grave

**M**y family tried to bury me alive because I wouldn't give up my faith. Faith in Jesus is punishable by death here—but I was ready to die for Him. My brothers dug the grave, and I climbed in without a fight. If I died, my family would consider me an apostate. But if I lived, they'd know that I believed in the true God.

The next morning, they dug me out and found me alive! Shocked, they admitted that Jesus must be real. Now, 14 members of my family have been baptized into the Adventist Church!

Since then, I have dedicated my life as a Global Mission pioneer. Your support helps me share the gospel in this challenging country.



Middle East

## Worth the Cost

**I** was tortured for 20 days. I had learned about Jesus from one of my neighbors who shared the Bible with me. Somehow, the government learned I was a Christian. They captured me, demanding that I reject my faith. But I wouldn't do it. Once I was released, I fled the country with my family.

Now in our new home, I've committed to God's work as a Global Mission pioneer. I know God spared my life because He planned for me to share the gospel with the people I meet here. Please pray for the gospel to spread throughout all the Middle East and the rest of the 10/40 Window.

We need your help to send more Global Mission pioneers. If you want to help share Jesus with unreached people, please send your check marked "Where Needed Most" to:

**Global Mission, SDA Church in Canada, 1148 King Street East, Oshawa, ON L1H 1H8**  
or call 800-263-7868 ext. 2097.



**GLOBAL MISSION**

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# Messenger

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heart to heart

“Your word is a lamp  
to my feet and a  
light to my path.”

—Psalm 119:105, ESV

## Society and Faith

We are facing daunting developments in surrounding society and our church. So daunting that they raise, according to some thinkers, the possibility of a total collapse of society and the church in real time, very soon. North America was established on Christian values; today we have drifted into a state of relativism. People do not seem to possess the same understanding that helped them recognize that the best way to a stable community was found in the Bible. People of faith sense that a strong commitment to God will be needed in the days ahead. How, then, do we strengthen our faith?

First, know your Bible. Live by it in modesty and unashamedly. Remember, living God's Word is more effective than the pronouncements you might make. Don't apologize for believing in God and His teachings. Live by His rules quietly. Don't be like the Pharisee of Scripture who wanted all to see how holy he was. Accustom yourself to hearing short, to-the-point sermons or devotionals. Longer thoughts contain too much information to grasp and digest. Teaching and messages need to be biblical, not rhetorical. And these days, beware of false teachers on the Internet. There is a dissonant chorus of many voices saying many things that sound like Scripture but are not.

Second, live a life of faith outside church. Your simple life, caring for others, is a powerful testimony. Such a life is a stronger witness than many sermons. Through a life of service to others, you will be changed in many ways for the better. The life of a practising Christian is very attractive to those who are deciding how to live.

Third, take the long view. No matter what is going on around you, the ultimate aim is reunion with God. Even when it looks impossible, there is a path that leads to connection back to the God we learn of in Scripture.

So in summary, learn to know Scripture and let it rule your actions and choices every day. Second, be who you claim to be in real time, at work, with your neighbours, and with your family. Third, stay focused on where we are headed, eternity. These simple goals will guide your choices and lifestyle in the days ahead. ■

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



February 2019

3

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# WHAT'S INSIDE

## February 2019



### FEATURES

- 24 COVER STORY** Forging the Unforgivable
- 28 NEW! RAINMAKERS** Alison Down
- 36 HEALTH** The Question

### IN EVERY ISSUE

- 3 HEART TO HEART**
- 7 PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE**
- 8 TEEN TALK**
- 9 CREATION CORNER**
- 10 AGUILARS IN UGANDA**
- 11 PLANNED GIVING & TRUST SERVICES**
- 12 WHERE ARE THEY NOW?**
- 14 A BETTER WORLD**
- 15 CONNECTED CHURCH**
- 16 ADVENTIST WORLD AVIATION**
- 17 PRAYER LIFE**
- 18 BARRY'S BLOG**
- 19 GROWING UP MILLENNIAL—TBH**
- 20 FARM TO TABLE**
- 21 VOAR/ON THE ROAD**
- 22 ADRA CANADA**
- 30 LITERATURE EVANGELISM**
- 31 EDUCATION**
- 32 BURMAN UNIVERSITY**
- 33 THE BURMAN EFFECT**
- 35 MAMAWI ATOSKETAN NATIVE SCHOOL**
- 38 NEWS**
- 42 ANNOUNCEMENTS/ADS**
- 46 FROM THE EDITOR**

Cover photo: Victoria, Vana, and Vas on vacation in Mexico, Christmas 2016. Top photo this page: Victoria and Vas, December 2018.



*Gerald and Barbara (Fowler) Chipeur* wanted the perfect gift in honour of Gerald's father, Edward, on the occasion of his 85th birthday.



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# A Question

## the Devil Asked!

Paul's ministry exuded the power of the Holy Spirit. Acts 19:11 states that God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, healing the sick and casting evil spirits out of possessed individuals. What would ministry be like today if we were endowed with God's Spirit the way Paul was?

Acts 19 contrasts the effects of God's power through Paul's ministry with the futility and impotence of the religiosity of the seven sons of Sceva. They talked the talk but lacked the connection to the Holy Spirit, and the devil knew that. They were connected to the worship service by tradition, and thinking that it was sufficient, they attempted to cast a demon from a possessed man. To this, the evil spirit responded, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" (Acts 19:15, NKJV).

The devil knows those with whom God's Spirit is.

This question, "Who are you?" confronts every worshipper today. The point is clear. Church membership is not enough. We need a deep relationship with Christ.

Jesus calls us not only to come to Him but also to go and represent Him.

"The church of Christ on earth was organized for missionary purposes, and the Lord desires to see the entire church devising ways and means whereby high and low, rich and poor may hear the message of truth."<sup>1</sup>

"All who receive the life of Christ are ordained to work for the salvation of their fellowmen. For this work, the church is established, and all who take upon themselves its sacred vows are thereby pledged to be co-workers with Christ."<sup>2</sup>

We must be careful that we have come not just to church membership but that we have come to Christ, and we must encourage fellow church members to be true disciples as well. "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works" (Heb. 10:24, ESV).

### SYMBOLS OF THE CHURCH

The Bible informs us about several aspects of the church by using some metaphors. In his book *Images of the Church in the New Testament*, Paul S. Minear lists 96 different metaphors for the church used in the Bible. Some are well known: the family, a pillar, a fortress, a flock, and an army.

The metaphor of an army, used in 2 Corinthians 10:3–5, is closely related to the imagery of the spiritual battle against the forces of evil, familiarly referred to in the Adventist Church as the great controversy. It seems the Salvation Army Church has held to this imagery as a significant part of its identity.

One definition of a metaphor is a comparison between two unlike things that have something important in common. It is common to refer to the Internet as a superhighway. While the Internet and the highway are dissimilar, there are some commonalities, such as connectivity, speed, and having many users at the same time.

### METAPHOR THAT CHALLENGES US

One of the most significant metaphors, in my opinion, is that of the church as the body of Christ.

It must have been eye-opening for the church in Corinth to have received Paul's letter stating, "Now you [members in Corinth] are the body of Christ, and each one of you is part of it" (1 Cor. 12:27, NIV).

For Paul, when one is baptized, he or she is not only baptized into the church membership but has also become a part of the body of Christ.

How, then, can some say, "I am leaving the church"?

Membership in the body of Christ is not a trivial matter. As the body of Christ, our presence should be a symbol of salvation in our communities.

### MEMBERSHIP COMES WITH RESPONSIBILITY

Today Jesus is asking us the same critical questions he asked his disciples: "Who do men say that I am?" (Mark 8:27, NKJV). And, more importantly, "Who do *you* say that I am?"

Does your life testify of Christ? His Spirit, who used Paul, is available to you today; are you available to Him? ■

*Mansfield Edwards is president of the Ontario Conference.*



<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* 6:29.

<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, 822.

# teen talk

**Q:** I've been having big ups and downs, spiritually speaking. Can I still help in the church?

**A:** The short answer is yes. The long one is "Yes, of course!" And I'm not kidding at all!

You know why? 'Cause nobody's perfect. There has been only one human in history who was always top-notch spiritually, and that was Jesus. Anybody else falls into the "ups-and-downs" category.

You see, it doesn't matter where you are in life, as long as your eyes are fixed on Jesus. If you are looking in the Right direction, you automatically become a leader (or helper, same difference). Whoever is in your circle of influence will benefit from it. That's why the book of Psalms has a positive impact on its readers; David kept looking at God, despite his abundant shortcomings. That's why Paul's teachings are so effective; he even wrote a whole chapter about his ups and downs (see Rom. 7), but he fixed his eyes on Jesus.

So go on, my friend. Help in the church. Expect to fall. Be ready to get up. As long as you look up and let Jesus guide you, you're fine. ■



Do you have a question for Pastor Josué Sánchez? Email it to [messenger@adventist.ca](mailto:messenger@adventist.ca).



# Creation Corner for Kids

*And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit ... and God saw that it was good.—Genesis 1:12*

## A Downtown Tree

A tree stands on a street corner in a busy city. Ants crawl up its gnarled brown trunk. A pair of robins carry twigs to a nest they're building on one of the limbs. Inside the leaves, green chlorophyll changes light energy into food energy, first splitting water molecules apart that would otherwise require enough energy to blow up the tree. At the same time, the leaves absorb pollution and noise and release refreshing oxygen into the air.

A tired and stressed woman looks out the window of her stuffy, hot apartment, and, seeing the tree, she carries her fussing child down to the street. The shade beneath the tree is cool, and her child busies himself with gazing into the canopy, then watching the ants march up the tree's trunk. A neighbour stops to chat, and soon she and the mother are laughing together under the city tree.

### Think about it.

Without plants to change the sun's energy into food, life on earth would end. But green plants do so much more than make food. Reduced crime and child abuse, fewer car accidents, improved thinking, lower blood pressure and other health benefits, less road rage, better street drainage and air quality are all benefits of city trees. What wonders God designed when He created plants and trees! The message that trees tell us is, "God is love!"

### Do it!

Make a list of ways God has blessed you and all creation with trees. Find a tree seed and plant it. Using a concordance, list the different kinds of trees that are in the Bible. Thank God for creating trees!

Tammie Burak and her family enjoy studying and learning from God's creation. Visit Creation Corner at [www.facebook.com/CreationCornerforKids](http://www.facebook.com/CreationCornerforKids). Based on *Christ's Object Lessons*.



aguilars in uganda

# Nsenene



**I** spot movement in two small plastic bags, and, with her biggest smile, Lydia declares, "Nsenene!"

We had accepted the challenge a year ago to try grasshoppers but only if cooked fresh. I had hoped this stipulation would delay the event, but in those bags were the freshest grasshoppers—trying to escape. November and June are the seasons for grasshoppers, and today was the day for our latest Uganda adventure.

Most Ugandans look forward to grasshopper season. They believe it's God's gift, since they don't know where they come from. In the rural areas, tall, iron sheet structures are seen angled in funnel formation—some as tall as a three-storey house. At nightfall a bright light at the bottom of the iron sheet funnel attracts insects, including the sought-after grasshoppers. Hundreds, if not thousands, are collected. It has become a lucrative market in Uganda, as they sell the grasshoppers to neighbouring countries that also enjoy this delicacy. Street vendors carry large, transparent bins filled with ready-to-eat grasshopper snacks for those stuck in a jam.

In my house I had two small bags full, and I was going to eat ... I mean keep ... my word today.

The grasshoppers are prepared by removing the legs, wings, antennae, and other appendages. Some don't mind this delicacy with all the appendages, but Lydia wanted to ensure we had the best first experience eating "nsenene." Hence, great care is made to minimize ripping these parts off in a way that exposes the internal areas. Also there is a specific way to handle the hoppers to ensure they don't bite you before you bite them. Jaden did not hesitate to assist with this task until she got bitten and decided she had plucked her last hopper. However, in the end Jaden took the last bite.



Jaden and Lydia with a big bowl of fresh grasshoppers.

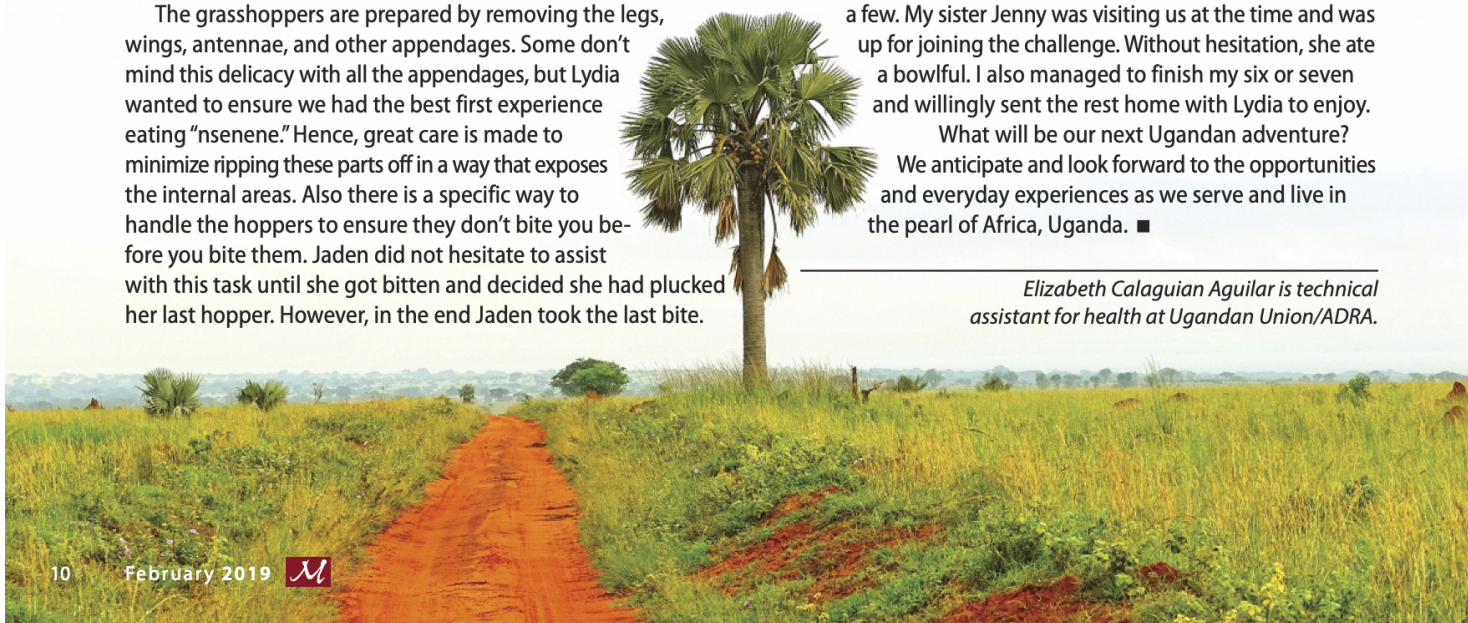
Sautéed in their own natural oil with tomatoes, onions, and salt, the grasshoppers change colour from green to yellow signifying they are ready to eat. But was I ready?

We were each served with six to seven in a bowl. We opted to use a fork, but they're supposed to be popped into the mouth like peanuts. Hesitantly, we placed them in our mouths. Surprisingly, the taste was quite flavourful! Jaden and Onyx described it best as initially crunchy, like a well-seasoned popcorn, and the rest a salty jelly bean. However, they still couldn't believe what they were eating and managed to eat only a few. My sister Jenny was visiting us at the time and was up for joining the challenge. Without hesitation, she ate a bowlful. I also managed to finish my six or seven and willingly sent the rest home with Lydia to enjoy.

What will be our next Ugandan adventure?

We anticipate and look forward to the opportunities and everyday experiences as we serve and live in the pearl of Africa, Uganda. ■

*Elizabeth Calaguian Aguilar is technical assistant for health at Ugandan Union/ADRA.*





# Shining a Light

*It is not often that I see gifts of shares  
or mutual funds going to our church charities.*

**A**s Christians, we are charged to go out into the world and let our light shine. Jesus asks us to be His hands and His feet. Of course, service to our churches is important. But so, too, is service to our secular communities. In these communities, we can shine differently depending on our personal or professional strengths.

Personally, I try to be involved in my community outside of church activity as much as possible and help where I can. Most often, this means serving on boards and committees for local charities. For example, I serve as an investment professional designated to handle all the share donations made to one of the largest charitable organizations in my city. When donations of shares or mutual funds are received, they are immediately sold, and the proceeds are sent to the charity for tax receipt purposes. What amazes me is how much money this charity actually receives from gifts of shares.

It is not often that I see gifts of shares or mutual funds going to our church charities. While I am not privy to all the church affiliates and their finances, I do have a close enough relationship with them to know that these types of donations are rare.

Given the benefits that such donations can create for donors, perhaps this is a good opportunity present a scenario and shine some light on this topic.

Dr. Grant wants to make a donation to his conference office and is looking for the best way to do this. Earlier this year he bought tech stock that has done exceptionally

well. His first thought is to sell the stocks and donate the cash. Let's say the cost of 1,000 shares of ABC Co. is \$1,000 (\$1 per share). When Dr. Grant sells the shares, they have increased significantly in value and are now worth \$5,000 (sold at \$5 per share). The capital gain—or amount the shares increased in value—is \$4,000. Done this way, Dr. Grant will pay 50 percent tax on half of the capital gain (50 percent of \$2,000 = \$1,000 paid in tax).<sup>1</sup> The conference office will receive a donation of \$5,000, but Dr. Grant will only realize a tax refund for \$1,500 (\$2,500 tax refund minus \$1,000 capital gain tax).

However, if Dr. Grant instead donates his shares directly to his conference office, it works out better financially for him. In this case, Dr. Grant does not have to pay any capital gains tax, saving \$1,000 he would otherwise pay. Dr. Grant will receive a full donation receipt for the value of the shares (\$5,000), which will give him a tax refund of \$2,500, and his conference office receives the same donation value of \$5,000.

This is a great way to donate to our favourite charities and causes. I have met some amazing people and gained some meaningful insights into the giving and caring that happens in the secular circles within which we live. I have done my best to shine Jesus's light in these circles, and, in return, the larger community has allowed me to shine a light on something that could benefit our church circles. ■

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

<sup>1</sup> Assumes a 50% tax rate and a value of contribution at 50%. This will vary by province.

where are they now

# Where Are They Now

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

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



Eugene and Betty Lou Rau

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

**Eugene Rau:** My brother, Harold, was born in Richey, Mont., where my dad was the station manager for the Great Northern Railway. Four years later I was born in Portland, Ore. That became our rainy location where my webbed feet grew and grew to size 13. Dad was of German descent, and Mom was Norwegian, so we boys begged them to teach us to speak their native languages, but we had to wait to learn them in academy and college. I was 10 years old when my dad died. After that we moved to St. Helena Sanitarium in California.

**M:** *Where did you attend school and what degrees did you earn?*

**E:** I attended the Sanitarium Elementary School and, later, Pacific Union College Preparatory School (PUC) in California.

Six years of study at PUC earned me a BA in physics. While engaging in that mental exercise, tuition and living expenses were paid by my wife, Betty Lou's, work at the Sanitarium and my work at the Texaco gas station in town.

While on furlough from mission service, I earned my MA in physics from La Sierra University (Calif.), planning to go to Mountain View College in the Philippines to teach in their science department. That was changed to an urgent call to go back to Singapore as academic dean of Southeast Asia Union College (SAUC) to bolster its transition from a junior college to a full four-year degree program in theology, education, and business.

The doctor of education degree was earned later at Andrews University in Michigan. Other universities I attended were the University of Southern California (USC) and University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) for summer courses. At USC I took an extension course

from Oak Ridge National Laboratories, which I really enjoyed. Upon my permanent return from Singapore, I took a year of study at the University of Oregon. The credits from there were accepted at Andrews University, where it was a pleasure to be in a non-smoking and non-swearing environment.

**M:** *Where, and in what capacity, did you serve the church?*

**E:** After earning my BA, I went to Glendale Union Academy in Glendale, Calif., to teach chemistry and math. Our first child was born on my first day of teaching. From there we accepted a call to Far Eastern Academy in Singapore to be boys' dean and teach physics, chemistry, and math; some years classes like English and physical education were added. This school was provided by the Far Eastern Division for students of missionaries to keep them in the American curriculum.

After the year at University of Oregon, we went to Auburn Adventist Academy in Auburn, Wash., for two years as vice-principal. Following that we went to Upper Columbia Academy near Spokane, Wash. Though I was principal, I always taught a math class to keep me connected with students. Betty Lou was a school nurse (RN). While there I was ordained to the gospel ministry at campmeeting on the campus of Walla Walla College (Wash.).

After our year at Andrews University, we went to Toronto Junior Academy with the union assignment to upgrade the school to a K-12 status. The name of the school was changed to Crawford Adventist Academy. It was while we were there that I completed my Ed.D. The staff took on the painting of the necessary new section. While working together, they sang hymns of praise in beautiful harmony.

Later we transferred to Fraser Valley Adventist Academy (FVAA) in a lovely rural setting in British Columbia. While there we took out Canadian citizenship. It was from there that I retired.

In my first year of retirement, we got very involved in helping an Iraqi refugee family to settle in Western Canadian living. I also did substitute teaching at FVAA.

When we returned to the United States, I taught physics, chemistry, and advanced math (as a volunteer) at Harbert Hills Academy in Savannah, Tenn., for three years, then stayed on as librarian until recently.

**M:** *Do you have a mission experience that showed God's leading in your time overseas?*

**E:** The year was 1967. The emphasis within the leadership of the Southeast Asia Union was being directed to evangelism. But how were the masses to "hear without a preacher?" They set their sights on their junior college, but they needed a senior college program that would train ministers, evangelists, and teachers to work in their homelands. The General Conference was supportive of funding this change. With much prayer and planning, the senior status became a reality. New staff were em-

ployed, and students were enrolled (at what then became called Southeast Asia Union College (SAUC)).

Independence demanded that there be a military protectorate for national safety. This action taken by the island government alerted the school staff to a potential problem: one student was soon to be called up for military service, interrupting his theology studies mid-semester. Obviously, deferment was of high priority.

Pastor Chong and I went to the recruitment centre to relate our problem. Our waiting frustration finally changed to a shuttle from clerk to clerk to explain our reason for being there. Minutes ticked by. No progress. We prayed for help. Suddenly, a big man in civilian clothes, important in demeanor, entered the room and quickly came over to us and asked why we were there, which we briefly explained. This man barked an order to the clerks to grant the requested deferments, then left. I inquired as to who he was. He was the commanding officer, a lieutenant colonel. We were on our way back to SAUC with the necessary papers. Sighs of relief? Yes! Rejoicing? Yes! Prayers of thanksgiving? Yes!

Our first theology graduates became pastors, some with advanced degrees and some carrying administrative positions in missions, conferences, and the General Conference.

**M:** *Tell me about your family.*

**E:** My wife, Betty Lou, graduated from St. Helena Sanitarium and Hospital in nursing. Our daughter, Brenda, lives and works at Harbert Hills Academy. Her husband, Steve Dickman, is the president of Adventist-laymen's Services and Industries (ASI). We have two sons, Jon and Jerry. Jon and Londa live in Vancouver, Wash., and Jerry and Heidi in College Place, Wash. For our 65th wedding anniversary, we drove to Orlando, Fla., to the national ASI meeting.

**M:** *Where are you now, and what are you doing in retirement?*

**E:** We currently live in Olive Hill, Tenn. I coordinate Bible correspondence studies in several homes and jails, teach a Sabbath school class, and volunteer at the academy (Harbert Hills Academy). Betty Lou leads out in our church prayer chain. In closing, just recently one evening we went to pick up a couple to take them to a baptism. We passed their street. It was dark where we turned around, and we didn't cut it sharp enough, so we started down a 15-foot bank with a quick prayer of "Lord protect us!" We expected any second for the car to roll over, but it didn't. The car just bumped down the hill in a level position and landed upright with no damage to it and no harm to us. Our tow truck driver said he didn't know how we got down there without rolling. "He shall give His angels charge over you" (Psalm 91:11). We are humbled and grateful for His miraculous deliverance. Philippians 4:19 says, "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." ■

## Edmonton-area golfers tee off for Kenyan school projects



**Marcel Paquin and Paulette Richter take part in the official opening of classrooms at Ndanai Primary School.**



**About 110 golfers attend Sierra Contract Flooring customer appreciation event and fundraiser for A Better World Canada in August 2018.**

**T**eeing off for a humanitarian cause thousands of kilometres away in rural East Africa is what Marcel Paquin looks forward to each year. For the last six years, the president and owner of Edmonton's Sierra Contract Flooring has hosted a golf tournament supporting A Better World Canada (ABW). The company has raised about \$200,000 for school and water projects in Kenya, most of which can be attributed to the tourney.

About 110 golfers attend the free one-day Sierra Golf Classic at Edmonton area's Sturgeon Golf and Country Club each August. They'll find all the bells and whistles of a regular tournament, and on top of that, their heartstrings may be pulled, too. ABW co-founder Eric Rajah gives a presentation to golfers on what their contributions have done in past years, something that isn't always done with other international charities.

Some write a cheque on the spot; others may donate later, or not at all—there's no pressure. An average \$35,000 to \$40,000 is raised annually for ABW. The 19-year-old tournament has previously raised money for other charities.

For Paquin, the choice to support ABW is a no-brainer. He initially heard about the charity's work through an employee whose child was attending a school sponsoring an ABW project. He has never regretted supporting people who are far from any Canadian putting green.

In October 2017, Paquin was part of a philanthropists' trip to gauge whether donations were being well spent in Kenya and Rwanda. Paquin's positive view of ABW's donation handling was solidified. He noticed all sponsorship dollars were going directly to projects. Trip-goers like him pay for all of their

expenses. Paquin can now share that information back home in a "much more powerful way."

As well, sponsors receive regular project updates, including photos. Since that trip in 2017, Sierra and its golf tourney have sponsored construction of four classrooms at Keringet Primary School. Paquin and his fiancée, Paulette Richter, have sponsored another four classrooms at Tulwap Primary School. In total, through Sierra's efforts, 20 classrooms have been built at three different schools.

Rajah commends Paquin for bringing golfers together for good. When they donate through the tournament, the company matches the donation, and Paquin also adds his personal contribution. "It's heartwarming to see businesspeople engaged in making a difference locally and globally," said Rajah. "Marcel is one of them, and now he's bringing his customers to be engaged. He could certainly write the cheque for the full amount of a school, but his passion is to give that opportunity to others."

Rajah's dedication and integrity have made a deep impact, too, on why this business wants to invest in Kenya. Rajah received the Alberta Order of Excellence, the highest honour bestowed on a citizen by the province, in 2011.

"What he's doing over there is a very special thing and rather humbling to see a person give so much," said Paquin.

It's a partnership that's definitely a hole-in-one for Kenya's less fortunate. ■

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

# WHAT'S YOUR

# PLAN

(PT. 1 OF 2)

In November 2018, American missionary John Allen Chau was killed after attempting to reach the people of North Sentinel Island, in the Andaman Islands of India. Chau broke the law by visiting these protected people and indicted numerous fishermen whom he had bribed to transport him to the shores of the village. According to various news reports, Chau was killed by arrows that were aimed at him by the tribal people. Some reports have claimed he yelled out his name and told the Sentinel tribesmen that "Jesus loves you" even as the spears pierced his flesh. Chau's body was seen buried along the beach in a shallow grave.

Since the news reports, some have called him a martyr. However, many have criticized his efforts and said he was irresponsible and put the tribe in danger by introducing them to new diseases they have never been exposed to. There are numerous similarities between Chau, 26, and "celebrity" missionaries such as David Elliot, who was only 28 years old.

In 1993, I moved to Papua New Guinea to live among an unreached people group called the Iwam. These indigenous people lived along the northern end of the May River, a remote tributary of the Sepik River. The Iwam were still living in the stone age and had been practising cannibalism just a generation before. My directive, through Adventist Frontier Missions, was to share Jesus to a group of 150 people living in a village called Arai. It was through this experience that I learned many life lessons about evangelism and how to reach people who don't share the same language, culture, ideology, or religion.

While I believe John Allen Chau's efforts and intentions were more than likely pure, I question how much preparation he put into understanding these people.

This situation leads me to wonder how well our churches understand the culture and society they are trying to reach. I would argue that the same methodologies that may have been successful 60 years ago are no longer effective and, in fact, may be detrimental to reaching people for Christ, especially in Canada where a growing number of individuals no longer believe in the Judaeo-Christian God.

When Jesus came to this earth, he took 30 years to become fully engrossed and inculturated. Before he ever spoke publicly, performed a miracle, or taught about his Father, he took the time to understand the culture (not only the Jewish culture but also the Romans who ruled over the Jews). He had a full grasp of the psychosocial needs of his audience.

What is your church doing to fully understand the language, culture, and needs of your neighbourhood? Can you articulate the demographic shifts that have occurred in your community? Do you have a plan to make in-roads and win them over without causing fear or creating scepticism? ■

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*Kumar Dixit is the creative principal of Dixit Media Group, an organization that rebrands religious and nonprofit organizations.*

>> This is Part 1 of a two-part series. Check out next month's *Messenger* for more on this topic.





Ryan and Janet Kennedy

## Trusting God's Timing in Northern Ontario

Since arriving with the Adventist World Aviation (AWA) Cessna 182 aircraft here in Sioux Lookout, Ont., Janet and I, along with Cree Rillo from Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) Canada, began planning for a follow-up diabetes and health program in one of the Northern Ontario First Nations communities. With plans in place, we departed on Tuesday and made it despite weather delays. We planned on a two-day trip, but again, because of the weather, we had to make a decision: either leave early the next morning and cancel half of the planned program, or wait out the weather. We decided to prolong our trip until Friday so we could have more time serving the local people.

During our stay we held info sessions and a cooking class in the small nursing station. We were able to meet more people and start building real relationships that would otherwise have been impossible had we left early.

Friday morning came, and the weather was lifting, so we packed our bags and loaded the plane, only to find that it wouldn't start! With the wind blowing in  $-21^{\circ}\text{C}$  temperatures, I tried to troubleshoot the problem while keeping warm by running around the plane! The sun quickly began to set, and the battery looked like it wasn't charging, so Janet and Cree got a ride with our bags back to the nursing station for the night.

As I stayed behind, I received help from the local foreman for the Ministry of Transport. He was very helpful and aided me in removing the battery from the plane and bringing it into

their heated facility to charge overnight. He even offered his services should we need them over the weekend, even though he was off work. Over the next 48 hours, there was more troubleshooting and multiple rides to and from the airport.

Our final act on Sunday was to try to jumpstart the plane with two 12-volt truck batteries. Once again we gathered our bags and got a ride to the quiet airstrip. We went out to start removing the covers from the plane. I opened the door and thought that I should try turning on the master electrical switch again just to see. I said another prayer and flipped it on. This time, however, I heard the instruments begin to buzz and spool up as they should! We had power!

I quickly asked Janet and Cree to remove the final cover and unplug the heating cord before I tried to start the plane. Turning the key made the engine turn over and start; however, not wanting to shut the plane down, I stayed inside while the engine warmed and made sure the plane didn't move, and continued running while Janet and Cree loaded the entirety of our luggage and supplies into the plane. The entire time, the propeller blew freezing wind in their direction, shutting the cargo door while they tried to load the luggage. They worked fast, motivated in part by the gusty, sub-zero conditions, and before long we were taxiing down the snow-covered runway to takeoff!

While we were blessed to spend extra time building relationships in the North, it felt great to be back home in Sioux Lookout and even better to know that we serve a powerful God who controls the wind and weather patterns, as well as the battery in our plane! ■

*Ryan Kennedy is the AWA pilot for the Northern Ontario Project, where AWA is partnering with ADRA Canada on humanitarian projects.*



Kennedys en route—airial view over Cat Lake.



# The Authentic Prayer

*"Remember, when you seek Him with all your heart, you will find Him."*

In the Bible we find several stories of men and women who prayed and God answered them. The chapter of James 5 gives us a very good example in the prophet Elijah, "a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit" (verses 17, 18, KJV).

Another example in the Bible is of a young lady married to a king. Her name was Esther. When she heard about the impending destruction of her nation, which would include her, she decided to pray earnestly and fast. Then Esther told them to reply to Mordecai: "Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!" (Esther 4:15, 16, NKJV).

God answered Esther's prayers. The accusation to destroy her nations was changed into blessings for the Jewish nation. The earnest prayers of Esther, Elijah, and many others have helped each of them win the most difficult battles of their lives. And I truly believe that God can do the same for us. Whatever trials you are facing—whether a separation, a family crisis, a sickness, a financial crisis, even death—don't give up, because God will never give up on us. He has our backs. He will fight our battles. Be God's friend. Trust Him; He will never forsake us.

What is prayer?

In *Steps to Christ*, Ellen G. White says, "Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. Not that it is necessary in order to make known to God what we are, but in order to enable us to receive Him. Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us down to Him."<sup>1</sup>

Someone shared the following story with me, and I will share it with you. A young man whose job required him to work in a boat on sea had a Christian mother who prayed three times a day. The man himself, however, did not have a relationship with God. One day a bad storm hit while he was in the boat, and he did not know what to do, as his life and the lives of others were in danger. Around noon he decided to kneel and said a heartfelt prayer: *Dear God, I know my mother is praying for me now. I will now connect with the prayer of my mother. Please, if you save my life, I will follow you.*

Before he ended his prayer, the storm had ceased. And today the young man follows Jesus and testifies of His goodness. God thus also answered the prayer of his mother for her son to become a Christian.

Friend, God is still in control of every situation in your life. Please pray and open your heart to him. He will never deceive you. Remember, when you seek Him with all your heart, you will find Him.

Jeremiah 29:11, 12, says, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you" (NIV). ■

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*Esther Paul-Emile is the director of prayer ministries for the Quebec Conference.*



## barry's blog

# Grandparent Right

**Family heirlooms, according to recent news reports,** are being consigned to thrift stores and rubbish heaps.<sup>1</sup> In an era of disposable goods and digital storage, younger generations are not interested in inheriting their grandparents' heavy brown furniture, silver-plated tea sets, or shoeboxes of old photographs.

Porcelain gravy boats and gilt picture frames aren't the only inheritance that millennials are rejecting.

Religious freedom has been described by some scholars as a "grandparent right." It has been recognized for centuries and informs many newer rights—former chief justice Brian Dickson even referred to it as the "prototypical" or "paradigmatic" right. But it is now being neglected. Data from the Pew Research Center indicates that hostility against religion is on the rise; as of 2016, 42 percent of countries around the globe had high or very high levels of restrictions on religions—up from 29 percent a decade ago.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, my own research into the accommodation of religious practices has revealed a revolution underway in the legal profession. Instead of respecting religious freedom as vital to a diverse, pluralist society, many legal academics and policy makers seem to feel that this right is outmoded—even offensive. This is particularly true when it comes to young lawyers who have been inculcated with the rhetoric of sexual identity politics. In their view, religion and its special legal treatment should be discarded along with the wooden armoires and floral curtains prized by past generations.

However, this dismissive attitude belies the foundational role that religious freedom played in the historical and political development of liberal democracy. It also undervalues the beneficial contributions of religion to society and fails to account for the tenacity with which religious adherents cling to their beliefs.

A prime illustration is the Canada Summer Jobs debacle of 2018, where the government required charities and small businesses to "attest" to their support for abortion in order to receive funding. Ultimately, the courageous and unyielding resistance of religious charities forced the government to back down on its demands for ideological compliance, clearly showing the strength and influence of religious communities when they are united and unwavering. But the entire fiasco could have been avoided if the government had simply been willing to accommodate the deeply held convictions of its religious citizens.

There are, of course, other situations across the country that point to a loss of respect for religiously based exemptions: witness the condemnation of religious hospitals that refuse to practise medically assisted death, or the social outrage over Catholic schools in Alberta requiring teachers to abide by a Catholic lifestyle.

Clearly, religious accommodation is falling out of fashion in certain circles.

It would seem that, to a minimalist and mobile generation of millennials, the centuries-old right of religious freedom is as quaint as Great Aunt Mildred's chintz sofa. But religion continues to guide and shape millions of lives. It is part of the legacy we have inherited from our forebears, to help us navigate the complexities of human existence. Its survival speaks to the enduring relevance and power of religion to transform lives, provide meaning, and motivate compassion. Before we consign it to the dumpster, we would do well to contemplate the wisdom of generations gone, while looking ahead to the wellbeing of our children. ■

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*Barry W. Bussey is director of Legal Affairs at Canadian Council of Christian Charities. He blogs at [lawandreligion.org](http://lawandreligion.org).*

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Richard Eisenberh, "Sorry, Nobody Wants Your Parents' Stuff," *Forbes*, Feb. 12, 2017, [www.forbes.com/sites/nextavenue/2017/02/12/sorry-nobody-wants-your-parents-stuff/#3d2b91ae24ed](http://www.forbes.com/sites/nextavenue/2017/02/12/sorry-nobody-wants-your-parents-stuff/#3d2b91ae24ed).

<sup>2</sup> Pew Research Center, "Global Uptick in Government Restrictions on Religion in 2016," June 21, 2016, [www.pewforum.org/2018/06/21/global-uptick-in-government-restrictions-on-religion-in-2016/](http://www.pewforum.org/2018/06/21/global-uptick-in-government-restrictions-on-religion-in-2016/).

# Growing Up Millennial



*"Forgive one another if anyone has a grievance  
against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."*

## 70 Times 7 ...

**A**ll of us have been wronged before, and all of us have wronged someone before. We may have been hurt physically, and we may have been destroyed emotionally. Either way, it's easy to hold some resentment toward the people who have hurt us.

People tend to hold on to this frustration and anger—sometimes for years. I could still tell you (and it has been over three years!) the names and stories of people in high school who have hurt me so deeply that I ended up cutting off the relationships. I could tell you some of the arguments I've had with my family that hurt me (and them!) to the core.

And of course, I have moved past these moments. I have forgiven, and I hope I've been forgiven by most. But forgiving can be so hard.

I remember one time when a friend betrayed me. I hadn't seen it coming, and I was absolutely devastated. I spent hours crying, was furious for weeks, and the longer I held it in, the angrier I got. I never actually ended up fighting with this friend over this; instead, I kept a distance. I just needed to be far away so that I wouldn't erupt. I trust people—it's just who I am, and I can't seem to help it. So when my trust gets broken, I'm very hurt. Obviously, this "friend" wasn't treating me right by going behind my back and not telling me some things that I had the right to know. But did I have a right to hold such a big grudge?

Of course. When someone hurts you, you have the right to be angry. You have a right to be frustrated and feel irritated. No one can tell you how you're supposed to feel, because you have a right to your own feelings. When

someone tells you that you have hurt their feelings, it's not your business to tell them that you haven't, because you don't have a right to dictate how someone else feels.

But over this particular friend and this situation, I was angry for a long time. And that didn't make me happy. I just couldn't seem to let things go. A new year had just begun, and I had hoped and anticipated that this year would be the best yet (hint: it wasn't). Other things were going on that were also making me miserable, but this situation was among the worst. It probably took me four or five months to forgive this person, but when I did, I felt a lot better. And I don't think that once you forgive someone you have to forget what happened. In fact, I think it's better if you *don't* forget: that way, you can prevent the same incident from happening again.

But the thing is, God forgives us so easily! I mean, Colossians 3:13 says, "Forgive one another if anyone has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you" (NIV). The Bible makes it so clear that forgiving is important and that we as people are all sinful, yet Jesus forgives us.

Of course, as humans, this can be pretty hard to remember: that God is constantly forgiving us for the mistakes or bad choices we make. But once I realized that God's forgiveness is so great and that mine was so weak, I recognized that it was time to forgive this friend. It was time to let go of what had happened. And it did make me a whole lot happier. ■

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*Jordyn Boonstra is a British Columbian millennial studying at Walla Walla University.*



## Scalloped Kohlrabi

### INGREDIENTS:

- 1.5 kg (3.5 lb) sliced kohlrabi (peel skin before slicing)<sup>1</sup>
- 1 cup (250 ml) raw, unsalted cashew pieces
- 1 cup (250 ml) raw, unsalted sunflower seeds
- 4 cloves garlic, smashed and left for 10 minutes
- 2 ½ cups (625 ml) water
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) dried basil powder
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) onion powder
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) dried dill
- ½ tsp (2 ml) freshly grated nutmeg
- ¾ tsp (4 ml) Himalayan salt
- Breadcrumbs

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Soak the cashew and sunflower seeds in hot water for half an hour. Discard the water and rinse the nuts/seeds well.
- Preheat oven to 375°C.
- Peel the kohlrabi and, using a mandolin, slice in 3-millimetre slices.
- Place all ingredients *except* kohlrabi and breadcrumbs in a high-speed blender. Process until very smooth. Consistency should be like a heavy but pourable cream.
- In a greased 9 x 13-inch glass casserole dish, arrange the kohlrabi slices one layer at a time. After each layer, pour on a thin layer of the cashew cream, reserving enough cream to pour over the entire top layer.
- Sprinkle a coat of breadcrumbs on top.
- Bake covered at 375°C for around 70 to 80 minutes, or until kohlrabi is tender.
- Enjoy!

A few months ago, I introduced you to kohlrabi fries. Well, once again, we're swapping potatoes for kohlrabi in this tasty alternative to the usual scalloped spuds! Hubby and I collaborated on this easy-to-make recipe, and we just love it! Be sure to use a high-speed blender in order to blend the cashews and sunflower seeds nice and smooth. Purchase the raw, unsalted cashew and sunflower seeds at your local bulk food store. Using a mandolin for slicing the kohlrabi makes the slices beautifully uniform and gets the job done quickly. ■

*Beverley Edwards-Haines is a registered dietitian, an associate raw cuisine chef, and a Food for Life instructor.*



<sup>1</sup> You'll likely need around 8 to 10 medium-sized kohlrabi.



# God on the Mountain

*"God of the day, is still God of the night."*

Val worked in the Friendship Day Care looking after children in Cranbrook, B.C. Although she and her husband, Bill, had no children of their own, Val loved being around the little ones. As a couple, Bill and Val enjoyed donning their hiking boots and heading out to explore the mountains and countryside. Bill told us Val was a very social lady, and even worked with a neighbourhood nursing program.

They would have been married 20 years; however, Val died last year just one month short of their 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It was while she was in hospital that Bill discovered Voice of Adventist Radio (VOAR). He said VOAR got him through the most difficult time of his life. A song by Lynda Randle, "God on the Mountain," has come to mean so much to him. As someone who has

had to say goodbye to a loved one, he knows firsthand what it's like to go through the darkest valley, but Bill knows that the *God of the day, is still God of the night*. He says, "My faith is strong!"

Bill called Sharathon this year to donate \$2,000 in Val's memory. He wanted to continue to support VOAR and to also dedicate a day sponsor in honour of his lovely wife. Bill was excited to hear about VOAR's new main FM tower during Sharathon. He said, "I just had to call and give. It thrills me to hear the news of how God continues to work through VOAR. Blessings to you all." ■

*Sherry Griffin is the station manager for Voice of Adventist Radio.*



Rebecque Johnson

ON THE  
ROAD WITH

Becky

AT THE IT IS WRITTEN PARTNERSHIP MEETING  
AT CAMP HOPE, B.C.

*What is one of your favourite things the Lord has done for you?*

**Rebecca Stonecypher:** "He has taught me to trust in Him. Through a variety of life circumstances, I have found Him to come through no matter what. Things always happen in His time, and looking back, I wouldn't want it any other way."

**Bless Arriola:** "My favourite things the Lord has done for me was when I got to work at It Is Written Canada."

**Simona Abel:** "The Lord delivered me from the demon of death. I had wished I was dead every morning for as long as I can remember, until 2011 when the Lord delivered me. I now wake up each day in the joy of the Lord!"

**Lisa Schmidt:** "I grew up in foster homes, and my childhood and family were very broken. God knew I needed someone to be my family. The Lord gave me a mentor or "Dad," Mr. Hiob, and a sister, Simona Abel. I finally felt I belonged to someone. I am able to call and feel needed, wanted, and loved. Although God loves me the most, He made sure I have a family here to love ... till I can go home.





Alfred, Betty, and baby.

I would spend all of our income on alcohol.

I would beat my wife every night when I came home from the bar.

## I WAS A DRUNKARD

I was born in the Northern Province of Rwanda. Life was so difficult for us there that my parents decided to move here to the Eastern Province in 2009 when I was just 14. It was here that I met my wife. She grew up here in this village.

This part of Rwanda is very dry. In fact, it is considered to be the driest region of Rwanda. When it does rain here, the land is very productive. We are able to grow cassava, maize, beans, even rice down in the valleys. But this lasts only about four months out of the year, and even that is on a good year. Many years it has been

even less than that. Most of the families who live here are just not able to grow enough food to last through the year. We have to try and supplement our income by doing day labour jobs, when they can be found. In this area a day labourer makes 1,000 RF per day (CA\$1.50).

Before joining the ADRA Men's Club here in our village, I was a drunkard. I would spend all of our income on alcohol. I would beat my wife every night when I came home from the bar. She finally left me and went to live with her parents. She was pregnant with our first baby at the

time, and she was worried that she might lose the baby in one of our fights. I am not really sure why I beat her. It is something that I saw a lot when I was growing up, not only in my own family but also in the homes of a lot of my friends. It seemed very common and a part of normal life for a husband to beat his wife. It was one way that a husband would show that he was "the man of the house," that he was in control.

After my wife left, I continued to get drunk every night, but then something happened. Some of my friends in the

village had joined the ADRA Men's Club and had made some big changes in their lives. They kept stopping by my place and telling me about the things they had learned. They told me how they had stopped drinking and how they were now spending time playing with their children and helping their wives around the home! They were no longer beating their wives; they were working in the family garden, cleaning around the house, washing clothes, washing dishes, even cooking meals!

At first, I wondered what had happened to my friends. Had they been bewitched by their wives? Were they under some kind of spell? But then they told me how by doing all of these things they were much happier now. They had not been bewitched; they had learned these new ideas from the training that they had gone through at the ADRA Men's Club they had joined. They told me about all of the things that they had learned about human rights, gender equality, and gender roles. Something they said really caught my attention. They said that life was like a farm. If you plant good things, you will harvest good things. If you plant bad things, you will harvest bad things. If you want good things in life, you need to live a life of good.

They kept visiting me every day, encouraging me to change my life, give up the beer, plant a kitchen garden, and start building my own place. By this time my wife had had our first baby. My friends said, "If you start making these changes in your life, maybe you will get your family back!"

It wasn't easy for me. Babies don't stand up and walk the first day. A long journey is made slowly with many small steps. I got so much support from the ADRA Men's Club. With their encouragement, I stopped drinking. They helped me buy my own plot of land, build a small house, and plant a garden. They helped me convince my wife that I was a changed man and it was safe for her to come home.

My friends were right! Life is so much better for me now. My wife came back to me with the new baby, and we have fallen in love again. Because I am no longer spending money on beer, we are saving money and are planning to use the money to make improvements to our home. My wife and I now sit together and discuss all of our purchases and do all of our planning together. I now respect her as my equal. We now have a vision for a happy future. I have built a latrine, and we are observing all of the hygienic practices that we learned in the club meetings.

I now fetch the water, I collect firewood, I sweep, I mop, I cook, I clean, I work in the garden. I have become a champion husband! Our neighbours are amazed at the change in me! They say, "Can this be the same man?" My wife is very, very happy with the changes I have made in my life. We have become close. Our love has grown and is now like the ocean! We have joy in our home!

I am so happy with my new life that I tell every man I know about how to become happy! Truth cannot be hidden. How can I hide this joy? I am an example to all men around here so that even if they have many bad habits, they can change and find joy as I have. I am sharing my testimony everywhere. I am proud! Some men still laugh when they see me fetching water, but I have no shame.

We are very thankful for all of the things that we have learned from ADRA. This has changed our lives! Even after ADRA has finished working in our village, we will continue the men's club. We will continue to implement all of the things that ADRA has taught us. ■

*Frank Spangler is the communications specialist for ADRA Canada.*



Men's group meeting.

cover story

# Forgiving the Unforgivable

**March 14, 2019, will mark one year since the day that Vas Pejcinovski's wife, son, and youngest daughter were murdered. In that year, he learned to cope with his immense grief; consoled Victoria, his eldest child and only surviving family member; became a baptized, born-again Christian; and he forgave the accused killer.**



The Ontario electrical contractor lost his wife, Krassimira (“Krissy”); his only son, Roy, a 15-year-old star hockey goalkeeper; and his youngest child, 13-year-old Venellia (“Vana”), whom he affectionately remembers as the one with “the wild spirit” and “a smile that could light up any room.”

How did Vas Pejcinovski (pronounced “Pay-chen-off-skee”) make the improbable journey from triple bereavement to salvation and forgiveness?

I wanted answers to these and other questions, so I spent an evening with Vas. Here are seven things I learned.

### 1. Before forgiveness, there were pot, parties, and pride.

Pejcinovski’s evolution began with the music, dancing, and drugs common to many youths in Toronto’s “Greektown,” aka “The Danforth.” He was more attracted to partying than to praying.

When “Krissy” Kapanova migrated from Bulgaria, she and Vas formed a mutual attraction. They married twice—at City Hall in December 2000 and in church the following month. They birthed three children, whom they both loved.

Vas emphasizes that Krissy was a good woman. She strove to show she loved him and laboured to strengthen their marriage. But the fine art of spousal affection escaped him. Even fatherly love did not come easily. The value of reciprocating Krissy’s affection could not compete with his pursuit of the biggest houses, the best cars, the finest wines, and the classiest garments.

“I led a sinful life,” Vas confesses. “There was not much of a basis of Christianity. I was lost. I was heavily into cocaine and drug use.” He adds, “The underlying theme of my life was pride. Pride is the main thing you have to drop to be able to forgive.”

### 2. Finding forgiveness in a looking glass

Late 2014, he discovered that Krissy was having an affair. His pride was hurt, seemingly beyond repair. He recounts how he spent the next four months in search of opportunities for revenge. He sought every possible way to inflict pain on the woman he had sworn 14 years earlier to love, cherish, and protect.

Then, early 2015, from the recesses of his mind, he heard a voice advising him to look into the mirror and reflect on his own conduct. That very day, he did. By day’s end, he had forgiven his wife, and he told her so.

Although not yet a born-again Christian, he recognized, as did Krissy and others familiar with the affair, that such forgiveness, and his overall change in attitude and behaviour, could only represent a miracle from a powerful and gracious God.

### 3. The healing power of the Lord’s Prayer

Vas not only forgave Krissy but also asked her to forgive him. He realized that his loveless treatment of her and of



A young Roy, Victoria, and Vana, circa 2007.

their marriage had driven her to seek affection outside the matrimonial home. He learned to recognize forgiving others as a demonstration of humility. His conviction about the link between forgiving and being humble increased as the years went by.

In the three years after 2015, he became more intentional in his pursuit of spirituality and righteousness. “Three years after I heard that voice was when I got on fire for the Lord.” He listened to sermons on YouTube. He borrowed a Bible from his long-time friend and business partner, Phil Efstathiadis, a Christian of Greek Orthodox persuasion.

Vas loved the parables of Jesus in the Gospels. A petition in the Lord’s Prayer especially touched him: “Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.” Many say those words but “don’t realize how much power there is in that small verse.” Earnestly, he asks, “How can you expect the Lord to forgive you if you don’t forgive others?” This scriptural call for forgiveness affirmed his prior transition from criticizing his wife’s action to looking into the mirror, from focusing on her faults to seeking forgiveness for his own. This simple but meaningful theological understanding became the essence of Vas Pejcinovski’s faith and the cornerstone of his emerging Christian lifestyle.

He shares further, “The second the Lord let me see myself in the mirror, His peace came upon me. It was such a happy and peaceful moment, I don’t want to lose it.” While it doesn’t mean that everything became perfect, he says, “the Lord gave me the power, the peace, the blessing, of forgiveness.”

He has reflected on the “true healing” that results when one forgives. “When I forgave my wife, I became happy, and I wanted to be healthy. I stopped smoking.” He shows me photographs demonstrating that he had lost 60 pounds as a result of other changes he had made.



Vas and Roy, age 10, in Edmonton at the Brick Hockey Tournament.  
Left: Roy in his goalie gear during a local hockey tournament.

Krissy, Victoria, and Roy at Victoria's Grade 8 graduation in 2015.

The relationship with his children was transformed, but unfortunately, his marriage was not repaired. However, his relationship with Krissy changed from bitterness to friendship from that day forward until the day her life was stolen.

#### 4. When more than half of a family died

It was a bleak and chilly spring morning in Ajax and elsewhere in the Durham region of Ontario when Vas and daughter Victoria lost more than half of their family. The night before, Vas had driven Roy to his team's hockey game. Neither the lad nor his dad knew this would be Roy's last performance as his team's champion goalkeeper. Near midnight, to save his mom a drive to Pickering to take him to school in the morning, Roy asked his dad to take him to spend the night at his mother's home in Ajax. "Otherwise, he would have spent the night with me, and he wouldn't have died," Vas laments.

Meanwhile, on that same Tuesday night, Vas had summoned an Uber taxi to take Victoria from her mom's home to spend the night at a friend's place. Thus, ironically, was Victoria spared. Wednesday morning, Victoria telephoned to remind Mom to collect her, but she received no answer. In desperation, she called her dad. He called Krissy's phone and also got no answer. He called Roy's phone. No answer. He tried Vana's. Again, there was no response.

An uneasy feeling came over him. "I called 911 and started making my way there." By the time he arrived, police had already installed the yellow tape indicating that Krissy's home had become a crime scene.

Vas declares mournfully, "It was the worst day of my life." For the next week, he says, he was "asking God, 'Why?'" After all, he had "taken up the Bible." In addition, feeling that he had been a bad father, he "had started trying to teach them [his children] the truth about heaven and hell and about the mark of the beast." He adds, "My boy was the one who was asking questions."

On the day of the viewing, Vas was "weak and scared." He recalls, "I did not want to see my boy in a casket. But the strength the Lord gave me that day was the first miracle. I was able to stand for seven, eight hours greeting about 4,000 people. I ran out of tears, and after the first couple of hours, I was the one consoling people."

#### 5. The genesis and meaning of forgiveness

One of the most remarkable outcomes of that tragic event remains the act of forgiving the person who had almost decimated Vas's family. How and when did fury give way to forgiveness, I ask.

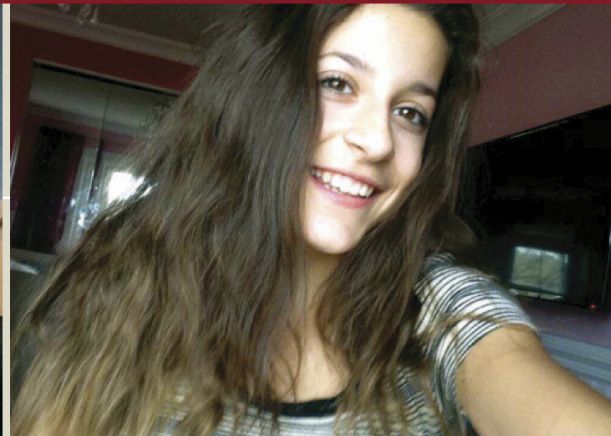
Vas ponders. Then he replies, "It was not a specific day or time. I don't think I was angry ever. I was sad, because I missed them. Anger or hate never seeped in."

So he has completely forgiven the accused murderer, while holding him responsible for his crime. Sure, "it was a dark day" and "a chunk of me was ripped out" and "nothing can take the pain away," says Vas. He still struggles not to think back on that day. "I don't even think about that guy," Vas said of the accused. He does think about Krissy, Roy, and Vana. He dwells on the years of joy, smiles, and laughter.

Apart from not harbouring thoughts about the accused killer, what does forgiveness mean? Unlike



Vana, age 12, and Vas.



A selfie of Vana in her Ajax home.

forgiveness only God can provide, man's forgiveness does not mean that the sins are wiped out. The killer of the Pejcinovskis has to answer to his Creator one day. In the meantime, he has to answer to the court. And for Vas, Victoria, and other suffering family and friends, the loss and the pain are still real.

Vas says he tries to guide Victoria without putting too much pressure on her. After all, "she lost not only her brother and sister but also her mother. And although a strong, young woman who still scores in the 90s academically, "a teenage girl needs her mother." With the help of "a network of friends," Vas himself is, day by day, finding greater peace in his God.

As for the trial of the suspected killer, Vas says little. Prosecuting the case, he declares, is for the district attorney. Decisions on guilt or innocence are for the judge and jury.

## 6. Memorials

One evidence of the love for Krissy, Roy, and Vana is the support for the Pejcinovski Family Memorial Fund. The fund can be reached through the Toronto Foundation or through the fund's website. The sold-out gala, held on Thursday, Oct. 25, 2018, with 600 people in attendance, raised \$200,000 toward the fund. Vas and Victoria have allocated that amount to dealing with domestic abuse and such children's initiatives as sports and play.

Meanwhile, the Greater Toronto Hockey League has established the Roy Pejcinovski Goaltending Character Award. The league says the award will honour Roy, who was "much more than just a goalie," but "a caring, compassionate teammate," who "had a passion for people and the community," and was "a leader among leaders."

## 7. Love, Adventist faith, and the waters of baptism

Late December 2018, Vas was baptized by Pastor Jayson Levy and accepted enthusiastically into fellowship at the Agape Temple Adventist Church in Pickering, Ont. While listening to sermons online, Vas was impressed by preachers who took their teachings directly from the Bible. There was one whose approach was especially biblical.

That preacher offered to provide the addresses of Bible-believing churches to anyone who was interested. Vas provided his coordinates and received a list of churches in his area.

He chose the Agape church for two reasons. It was the one closest to his home. And, given his familiarity with the Greek tongue, he knows that the word *agape* means "love." So he made contact with Pastor Levy, and the rest is history.

Pejcinovski now awaits the first anniversary of the worst day of his life. His burden, while still painful and unfair, is lightened somewhat by the God-given strength to forgive the unforgivable. It's mitigated also by the assurance of the forgiveness of his own sins, by the hope of the resurrection, and by his fellowship in a little church in Pickering that has come to be known as Agape, or the "Love Church."

Love, fellowship, and forgiveness are important to Pejcinovski. Of all the words he shared during our interview, the ones I hope never to forget are: "Forgiveness is not an event; it is a state of mind." Yes, Brother Pejcinovski, it is. ■

*Frank Campbell is a freelance writer and editor, and is a local elder at Agape Temple Adventist Church in Ontario.*

rainmakers

# RAINMAK



## More Than Two Mites

In Mark and Luke, we read about a widow who gave “all that she had, her whole livelihood.” Here is a woman who gave the little bit she had and trusted God to provide for all her needs. Jesus sat and watched the people put their money into the treasury, and He saw their motives more so than the amount they gave. It was in the littlest of offerings that Jesus saw the purest heart. The widow had deprived herself of food in order to give those two mites to the cause she loved. Her faith was strengthened in her belief that her heavenly Father would not overlook her greatest needs. Her gift was not estimated by the amount, but by the motive that had compelled her to give all of it.

In a distant northern part of Ontario lives a woman of such character. Alison Down spent her childhood years in southern Ontario and attended a one-room multigrade school. Her mother suggested that she pursue a career in nursing, but Alison was not interested. Challenged by her mother to pray about it and ask God for direction, Alison asked God to provide an obvious sign that He wanted her in nursing. She requested a sign no one else would recognize, and when God answered, she went to the Branson Hospital School of Nursing in Toronto to become a nurse.

In 1976 Alison married and, shortly thereafter, moved with her husband to Cochrane, Ont., several hours north of Toronto. She worked at the local hospital

in delivery, ER, and the operating room, eventually ending in ER management before her early retirement in 2005.

Alison had always been active in church life alongside her husband. Alison confides, “What most people didn’t know was that shortly after my marriage began, my husband started abusing me.” She continues, “Not a day went by that I didn’t have a bruise to cover up.” Some pastors told her to stay with him in the hopes that she could lead him back to God, but after the abuse escalated dangerously, the marriage finally ended.

In 2005, Derick Nichols, the Ontario Conference president at the time, asked Alison to lead a group of believers who were meeting in Cochrane and Timmins, Ont., until a pastor could be assigned. Her role as an Ontario Conference Bible Worker became ongoing, and in 2010 she became an ordained elder. She soon began holding Bible studies with the people of Moosonee and Moose Factory, as well as farther north in Fort Albany and Attawapiskat.

With little in the way of serviceable roads, she often has to take the train hours north and in some cases, depending on weather, either fly in or drive over the ice roads to reach these isolated communities. Having taken the train with Alison to Moosonee in February 2017 to present a concert, I know firsthand just what challenges the northern weather can pose. And yet Alison is undaunted in her mission to lead others to Jesus.

Alison serves on the Native Housing Council in Cochrane and the board of the local Food Bank. In her free time, she teaches voice and piano, which allows her to share the love of Jesus through music. She is active in her local fitness club and shares her faith with her classmates. She asked God for some “hard nuts” to minister to, people who think they have no place for God in their lives. With her genuine friendship, Alison has been able to reach them, too.

Alison takes people to medical appointments, grocery shopping, and even picks up their mail for them, daily. She works at the local First Nations reserve, where she shares health principles and agricultural tips. She holds health fairs, VBS programs, concerts, sings in a local choir, and assists STORM Co youth workers. Even more, she works with the local ministerial group in serving their community. Every Thursday Alison joins these pastors in Bible study, praise, and worship. In addition, Alison uses her meagre savings to support worldwide medical missions to the Philippines, Nepal, and countries in South America.

Through radio stations in Cochrane, Moosonee, Attawapiskat, and Fort Albany, Alison has provided listeners access to programs such as *The Voice of Prophecy*, *It is Written*, and *Lessons 4 Living*. She is also the Ontario Conference representative for the SDACC’s Native Ministries Council.

If that wasn’t enough to keep her busy, in 2013 Alison began to pursue a

# ERS

master's degree in pastoral ministry. After her third trip to Burman University to attend classes, she knew she couldn't afford to continue, as she had been using all of her savings to cover the cost. Although the cost of the course she was taking at the time was being covered by the North American Division, other expenses were not. Furthermore, as a Bible worker, she did not qualify for financial assistance to cover her expenses.

Alison asked God to assist her with funding. God answered in a mighty way, and thanks to friends who provided accommodations, meals, and transportation, she was able to complete the course.

Through her incredible determination, passion, and study of God's Word, she excelled. At her graduation in May 2018 at Andrews University, I saw the admiration that Alison's professors have for her.

Tears filled her eyes as we read the scripture together: "You must not fear, for I am with you; you must not be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, indeed I will help you, indeed I will take hold of you with the right hand of my salvation" (Isa. 41:10, LEB).

Alison walks in faith every day with her Saviour, and she says, "I wouldn't want it any other way." ■

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*Pam Tucker (formerly Lister) is married to Mike Tucker (of Faith for Today) and lives in Dallas, Tex. She is a singer, writer, and full-time gypsy4Jesus.*



Alison Down



## That Still, Small Voice

*“Could it be that God is speaking to us on a daily basis to lead us to a closer walk with Him?”*

**S**ome time ago Susan<sup>1</sup> heard a knock on her door. Going out to answer, she saw on the steps a young woman with some books in her hand. The woman, a student literature evangelist with Canada Youth Challenge (CYC), explained why she had come and showed Susan her books. As Susan looked through them, she and the CYC missionary, whose name was Diane, talked together. Soon their conversation turned to faith, and Diane, being impressed by the Holy Spirit, took out a little flyer and handed it to Susan. The flyer advertised a Revelation of Hope series that was being put on in the community.

Susan looked at the invitation with some surprise. The day before a friend of hers had mentioned the exact same program and had asked if she wanted to go. “I’ll think about it,” Susan had answered, not really sure she wanted to. But with this second invitation coming so soon after the first and from a stranger at her door, she felt she had to go and see what the presentation was all about. It was as if God was speaking to her and prompting her to go.

So on the day of the very first meeting, she and her friend went together.

As Susan listened to the speaker, she was immediately drawn by the information shared during the presentation. Night after night she went, excited about the things she was learning. Somehow she managed not to miss a single night!

The final meeting was held at the local Seventh-day Adventist church, and there she met a congregation of people who were truly caring and genuine. “This,” she said, “is a place I want to be.” When the meetings ended, both Susan and her friend became members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

In the book *Ministry of Healing* by Ellen G. White, we are told that “Christ is ever sending messages to those who listen for His voice.”<sup>2</sup>

Many of us are scared not to be able to discern God’s voice in the big decisions of life, such as what to study, where to work, or which house to buy. These decisions are all important. However, could it be that there are higher-priority things for which we must learn to hear His voice? Could it be that God is speaking to us on a daily basis to lead us to a closer walk with Him as in Susan’s case? And beyond that, could it be that every single day He is guiding and prompting us to take advantage of the opportunities He provides to share His Word and His love as in the case of Diane?

If ever Christ is speaking to us and we do not hear Him, the problem probably lies in our willing hearts and our listening skills. So this month let us surrender our wills, seek to be still, and quietly listen for that still, small voice. ■

*Lifestyle Canada is Canada’s literature evangelism ministry that operates Canada Youth Challenge.*

<sup>1</sup> Name changed to protect privacy.  
<sup>2</sup> 510.



Campus Ministries Team (l. to r.): Kalista Ziakris, Andrew Bhebhe, Luke Ganson, Megan Walsh, Julia Beaudoin, Ava Schafer, Michelle Mbong

## Michelle Mbong Finds Her Niche

**For Parkview Adventist Academy** (PAA) senior Michelle Mbong, coming to PAA in Lacombe, Alta., has changed her life. Michelle explains:

*My parents wanted me to go to an Adventist school. At first, they thought of sending me to my homeland to the Adventist school in Nigeria. I had been in Canada since I was a baby. I worried about integrating back into the culture. We also considered a local Adventist school in Calgary, Alta., but the commute would have been over an hour, so my dad and I decided to come to Parkview.*

*It was a really quick decision. We went to the [grocery store] late in the fall and came straight to PAA.*

Michelle remembers taking her parents' advice to "lay low" and focus on her education. And that's what she did her first year at PAA. The welcoming attitude of the school's youth pastor, Ted Deer, and being elected as dorm pastor led to many new opportunities. Michelle tells how these interactions helped to grow her spiritually:

*It forced me to become social. I got involved in Campus Ministries. In fact, I served as a co-lead with Alex (Oleskii*

*Zabebra), planning our chapels and special events like the Christmas Chapel and the end-of-year get-together. I also sang with the school's praise teams.*

Michelle gave her first sermon in spring 2018 during the student-led week of prayer. "I spoke on Mephibosheth and how God can use and bless damaged human beings," she said. "It was terrifying but awesome at the same time."

This year Michelle is the director of Campus Ministries for the academy. "Our goal is to involve as many PAA students as possible in our programming," continued Michelle. "We want more student-led worships and events; we think this is the best way to support spiritual growth."

As far as this year's Campus Ministry team goes, Michelle says, "You can tell they love Jesus. We are very excited about the many talents of our team and at our school." One member, Ava Schafer, captures that sentiment:

*Campus ministries is important to me because I've really wanted to be able to be a witness for God in my school and impact people. I went to a public school all of my life, and so coming to PAA has given me the opportunity to express my faith and*

*actively work with others in a Christian environment where everyone shares the same values. That's why working in Campus Ministries is so great, because we all have the same goal, which is to show Jesus to others. I can already tell that God is working through my team members. He's shown them powerful things through His Word, and it's only the beginning of the year.*

"PAA has a lot to offer, especially in the spiritual realm," Michelle concludes. "I 'found' myself at PAA. It has changed me spiritually. I have discovered my niche in service and leadership."

For Michelle, the future is bright. She plans to use her strong academic background to pursue a career in the medical field, taking either a degree in biomedical or nursing.

If you would like to know more about PAA or about its many opportunities for spiritual leadership and mentoring, please call Principal Dallas Weis at 403/782-3381, ext. 4112. ■

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*Patti Smedley is part of the communications team at PAA and also oversees the student-run bakery and serves as assistant dean for Maple Hall. Megan Walsh is the communications teaching assistant.*

# Burman student wins provincial Voice Competition



Deepa Johnny

ON MAY 31, 2018, DEEPA JOHNNY, senior music major at Burman University, won the Provincial/National Vocal Competition in Edmonton, Alta. As the top singer in Alberta, she qualified for the Nationals, held in New Brunswick in August 2018.

Over the past four years since she began studying voice, Deepa has participated in local festivals that are held throughout the province. The adjudicator for the Provincial/National Vocal Competition, where three Alberta finalists competed in May, was Darryl Edwards, a professor at the University of Toronto.

Deepa performed seven pieces in the competition: one opera aria, one oratoria aria, and five Greek songs by Maurice Ravel. At the National, she added two pieces: a second aria and "Grace" (by Michael Tilson Thomas) in honour of Leonard Bernstein, who was born 100 years ago.

Deepa's family immigrated to Canada from the Western Asia country of Oman in 2008. Like her father, Deepa loves singing. She was a member of a praise team in her church.

One of her pastors urged her to take music lessons, so she started studying with Wendolin Munroe, chair of the music program at Burman. She also joined the choir. Not until then did she think of music as her vocation; she had planned on a career in dental hygiene.

Now Deepa is applying to several graduate schools but hopes to get accepted into Indiana University, Dr. Munroe's alma mater, to pursue a master's degree in opera performance. Joining the Burman University Choir and taking singing lessons from Munroe has "opened my mind to the impact music can have on people," Deepa says. She adds, "I feel completely prepared for success if that is God's will for me. I feel so blessed and privileged to have been selected as the representative of Alberta to compete in voice nationally. This opportunity has been so wonderful for me as I continue to grow as an artist and experience the necessary hard work and dedication required in such an industry. My time and study under Dr. Wendolin Munroe prepared me well to be able to be there amongst the other top singers from around Canada. Her dedication to my growth has been unparalleled, and I credit all my successes to her and my God."

Professor Munroe attributes Deepa's success, at least in part, to her strong work ethic. ■

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*Written by Renate Krause. First published in the September 2018 issue of our new Burman University Magazine. For more Burman stories, visit our website at [www.burmanu.ca](http://www.burmanu.ca).*





Clarence and Beryl Grosso on the occasion of their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.

## Inviting God to Be in Charge

When Clarence graduated from Parkview Adventist Academy (PAA) in 1965, he didn't have any career plans. His father encouraged him to think about studying theology. But Clarence had worked at the University of Alberta hospital during the past few summers and over Christmas vacations. He had earned decent money, and the job was not bad. So he took the nursing orderly course at the university hospital.

Over the next five years, Clarence continued studies at Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT). He found that respiratory therapists not only had much more stylish uniforms than nursing orderlies but also earned more money. So he applied and was accepted into the program. He graduated and worked as afternoon supervisor at Edmonton's Royal Alexandra Hospital, but continued taking business courses at NAIT.

Clarence's meandering career path seemed to gain more direction when he was invited to be the administrator of the nursing home, Kennebec Manor, being built in the Maritime Conference. When he arrived in Saint John, N.B., he found that his job description had all the variety associated with being a conference officer at that time.

In addition to everything else, he was given the responsibility of being Pastor Werner Seidel's associate. When Pastor Seidel unexpectedly moved to Alberta, he was left shepherding both the Barnsville and Saint John churches on his own. But he liked it! It was exciting, fulfilling work.

He returned to Alberta, fully intending to study for the ministry at Burman University. But the recession was spreading throughout North America. It didn't seem wise to invest in a job that may not be there once he finished his studies.

As he was casting about, wrestling with God, Clarence discovered that a few more courses at NAIT

would complete his business degree. He told God, "If You want me in ministry, You'll have to take me as I am." And God did. Clarence was chosen head elder at the Central Church in Edmonton, a position he filled for 20 years.

Currently, he is head elder at the Sherwood Park church in Alberta. He and his wife, Beryl (Roper), open the church at 9:30 a.m. every weekday morning to meet, study, and pray with anyone wanting to join them.

On several occasions, people have walked in asking for Bible studies. For example, a mother walked in off the street with her children. Once Sabbath issues are worked out, they will be ready for baptism. Another example is the lady who had planned her suicide after watching her husband die a painful death from cancer and was now diagnosed with the disease herself. She wanted to talk to someone before going through with her decision, but the door to her own church was closed. So was the door to another church she tried. Clarence and Beryl talked with her and befriended her.

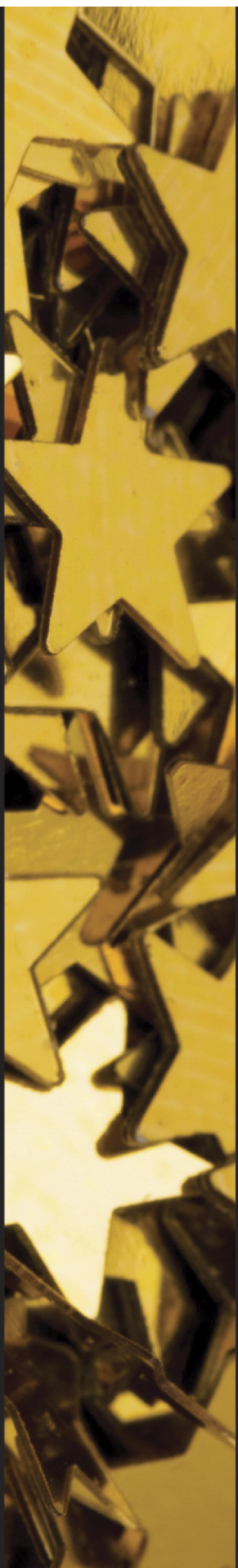
When Clarence isn't ministering at the church, leading his group of seven elders, he is volunteering as board treasurer for the large group of volunteers at Sherwood Care. Or he may be at the COLD Club, a support group he helped establish for people with chronic obstructive lung disease and their family members. Or he may be representing the Sherwood Park church at the Sherwood Care board meetings.

Clarence's newest volunteer position is advisor to the president for Alumni and Donor Relations at Burman University. He says, "As long as God gives me wisdom and strength, I will continue to serve Him in whatever He asks of me. Health care was my profession; ministry is my life." ■

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*Renate Krause is the editor for Burman University Magazine.*

Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada



# Excellence in Education Awards 2019

Nominate  
your Adventist school  
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Deadline April 15

Forms can be found on CAT~net:  
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Excellence in Education Award  
or you may call the  
SDACC Office of Education at  
905.433.0011



# Welding Class Attracts Two-Thirds of High School



**Seizing Equal Opportunity:** These two Grade 10 girls love getting into the welding shop and working with big equipment to create their designs.



**State of the Art:** A MANS high school student models new welding gear with Star Wars style.

It's every teacher's dream: teaching a class so popular that a second section has to be offered! Mike Willing, the assistant principal, is living that dream. Methods in Metalworking is the first class to be offered in the new Leon Ingraham Industrial Arts/CTS Building at Mamawi Atosketan Junior and Senior High School, and a second teacher, Arden Kay, has been pulled in to teach the second section of the fall semester class.

It's been a practical, hands-on class from Day 1, with students helping to install the equipment, even building the welding tables. "Our capacity is state of the art," says Mike, who is pleased that about half of the enrolled students are female.

When I visit the class, two girls are donning welding jackets, ready to get down to some heavy metal clean-up so they can get on with using a plasma cutter to create the shiny version of their own designs. They tell me they really like this class, and even stay back a few minutes after it's over to let me take a photo.

Mike takes me to the neatly organized store room of scrap metal that William Piersanti, who built the high school, brought from northern Alberta. "No public school in Alberta provides metal in their classes," says Mike, "but this makes it possible for us to do that for years to come." The scrap, which was purchased at a deep discount, will provide students with the raw material they need to practise and make the projects they are eager to create.

"The welding class has generated a lot of interest," says Gail

Wilton, the school's principal. For one student, who has struggled in other classes, welding is the highlight of the day, and time in the WCB Welding Foundation welding shop is highly valued. He was, in fact, unhappy when horsing around by some of his classmates caused the hands-on time to be shortened one day—a reaction to class horseplay his teachers hadn't seen in him before.

WCB Welding Foundation spokesperson Cody Vigeant, who attended the opening of the high school in September, continues to be connected with the school and its new program, looking for opportunities to help as the welding program gets underway.

"It's great to have that relationship," says Mike. "We look forward to continuing to work with the foundation and building a really strong program and interest in welding as a possible career."

As donor Dr. Richard Bird, who funded the Bird Construction Building Technologies Shop next door in the new school building, observed, industrial arts/trade education is focused on the very practical career opportunity side of things. "It certainly won't be for everyone," he says in remarks written for the high school opening, "but how will you know that it is or isn't for you unless you have the opportunity try it out in high school, at least a little?" ■

*Lynn McDowell is director of Planned Giving/Philanthropy for the Alberta Conference.*



You can follow school life and activities at MANS on Facebook.



February 2019

35

health feature



Jim and Inez Gaul

# Do You Want to Be Healed?

**HOPELESSNESS** is a place none of us in our right minds would choose to be. But no matter how well our minds work, hopelessness is a reality for many.

I've learned much from the story in John 5 of Jesus healing the paralytic at the pool on the Sabbath. I've tried to put myself in his place and imagine what 38 years of chronic infirmity feels like. Jesus, the One who said He had come to release the captives (Luke 4), asked this man, "Do you want to be healed?" I've asked myself that same question.

To be honest, my answer over the years has been "I don't think it's possible for me." I relate to the pitiful story of never being able to make it into the pool when the water was moved. Someone else always got there first, again and again. Thirty-eight years is a long time.

Jesus heard the man's answer, and it encouraged Him to do something amazing in that moment. He said, "Rise, take up your bed, and walk."

Inez, my wife, recently broke her hip, and although we are grateful she is walking again, they say the full healing will take 18 months. Compare that to instantaneous movement! Thirty-eight years of misery and suffering gone. New life, new thoughts,

new faith, new strength, new abilities now!

For many years I have wondered what it would have been like lying there, waiting. And now I know from personal experience. Let me tell you my story.

I have lived with being pudgy, my mom's word, to being morbidly obese for over 67 years. Along the way I struggled with feeling worthless and being unable, although I fully committed my life to Jesus when I was 24.

I tried many different diets over the years. I lost hundreds of pounds, but I gained more back every time I lost. My legs were swollen and discoloured, my blood pressure and cholesterol were high, and I was pre-diabetic. My father died at 58 from complications of diabetes. I was 70 years old and 301.5 pounds, my highest weight ever.

My wife looked at me with love and genuine concern and said, "Jim, if you don't do something to change, you are going to die."

In December 2015, Inez and my daughters had an intervention for me. I have never felt so helpless or hopeless as I did that day.

She didn't give me answers, because she didn't know what I needed. I didn't have answers. In fact, I was desperate to find a

solution. I asked God what He thought, and the message I got from Him was, "What she said." Talk about hopelessness.

I did the only thing left for me. I fell into God's hands. I asked Him to lead me and show me the way. I admitted I had no clue what to do. While I was praying, I realized everything in my life was out of control. My physical, spiritual, relational, and emotional tanks were all on empty. I was afraid my life would soon be over. I felt helpless to stop the downward spiral.

Soon after my prayer, I met a friend who had just lost 15 pounds. I asked, "What are you doing?"

And the answer shocked me. "I am not eating sugar or flour."

My first reaction was, "That's insane."

Then after thinking about all the foods I could not eat if I followed her path, I was convinced that it was insane!

She knew I needed information and invited me to watch some videos about the plan. I did. The science behind it made sense. It matched what I already knew from our church. While this was happening, I kept thinking about my prayer and my total surprise in learning about this. Could this be God's answer for me?

I would soon find out. I followed a link to a short online test to discover my susceptibility to food addiction.<sup>1</sup> I scored 9 out of 10. (The algorithm has since been updated. Now I score 10 out of 10.)

What did being a food addict really mean? It was the answer to why I had continued to sabotage myself even though I knew better. As a vegetarian, I felt good about my diet. I discovered quickly that all the sugar and flour I was consuming was messing with my brain. It was working against me and dishonouring my Saviour.

This was God's leading for me. Yes, the paralytic had been in bondage for 38 years, but I had been in bondage for 67 years! I never expected to learn this. No wonder this story means so much to me. Jesus was inviting me to "rise, take up your bed, and walk!"

I had to decide what to do. Would I keep looking for an easier way? Would I give up the things that were killing me slowly and surely?

On Jan. 2, 2016, I began the journey to health God had led me to. I haven't looked back since. By His grace, I have lost 128 pounds. I reached my target weight of 173.5 pounds on March 3, 2018! It was an amazing and wonderful victory. I praise God and thank my family and friends. Even more amazing is the fact I have maintained my right-sized body for over nine months. I intend to live this way until my Saviour returns!

Here are a few things I have learned so far:

1. Your brain talks to you in your own voice. It lies to you. Check out Proverbs 3:5.
2. The right food in the right amounts at the right time will heal your brain.



**Jim Gaul, before and after making his journey to better health.**

3. Appetite was key in the fall of humanity and the temptation of Jesus. It remains our problem whether we acknowledge it or not. It's not just about food.
4. Being happy, thin, and free is possible and far superior to being sad, fat, and trapped.
5. Willpower is not the key to overcoming addiction. The key to overcoming is building automaticity through following simple and powerful guidelines you choose not to cross. Mine are: No sugar. No flour. Three meals a day. No snacks. Proper portions.
6. I love food, more than ever. Every bite is an act of worship to my Creator and an adventure in joy.
7. Food and prayer go together, so being addicted to food is really weird. Addicts find freedom in abstaining from what hurts them. For me, I find freedom in eating in a totally different and healthy way.
8. You have to be careful when listening to what others say. Trust in God on this. Don't let them change your path of obedience, no matter what.
9. There is power and joy in the thought I have decided to be happy, thin, and free for the rest of my life. I will be eating 21 colourful, delicious, and tasty meals a week! That is so sweet!
10. Jesus healed me and is blessing me. I am very thankful He wants to give each one of us abundant life. I take Him at His word. He still can and will free us from every sin that holds so tightly to us. Go ahead. Respond to Him. He's able. He's willing. He's asking you, "Do you want to be healed?" It's your call {> ■

*Jim Gaul is a recently retired pastor and most recently served as chaplain at Fraser Valley Adventist Academy. He likes to stay active with church work and growing relationships with youth and adults every week in the community.*

<sup>1</sup> Check out the test yourself at [brightlineeating.com](http://brightlineeating.com).

# news

of Canadian Adventist members and churches in action

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

## Alberta

### Calgary Central Choir Performs at Carnegie Hall

Photo: Dan Wright Photography/DCINY Productions



Calgary Central Church Choir members with conductor, Pepper Choplin.



Mass choir and orchestra on the Carnegie stage.

*The Calgary Central Church Choir has been singing for many years and has been led by Sandra Dodds since September 2014. Along with regular church duties, the choir performs a Christmas Cantata and Easter Cantata every year, together with the church orchestra, for the local community, and they have performed for various other community events. The main focus and pleasure of the choir is singing to the glory of God.*

On Sunday, Nov. 18, 2018, twenty-four members of the Calgary Central Seventh-day Adventist Church choir joined 20 other church choirs from Canada and the United States at Carnegie Hall in New York City to debut a new Christmas cantata, *Christmas Presence*, by renowned Christian choral composer and conductor Pepper Choplin.

The concert producer, Distinguished Concerts International New York (DCINY), discovered the Calgary Central choir in fall 2017 through the church's YouTube channel, which had recordings of the choir's performances, including Pepper Choplin's music.

Two days before the performance,

there were two half-day rehearsals and one dress rehearsal with the 275-member mass choir. Pepper Choplin made rehearsal time enjoyable with his humour, while providing excellent choral direction. He also took time to elaborate on the spiritual context of the words as well as explain his composition process. He made reference several times to the importance of the work church choirs do for their churches and communities, and that the performance at Carnegie Hall was an opportunity to celebrate the choirs' dedication to their ministry. He even prayed with the choirs at the end of the rehearsal.

The performance on such an iconic stage as Carnegie Hall was the highlight

of the trip. Singing with fellow believers to the glory of God was a tremendous blessing, a small glimpse of that great day when we can sing with the heavenly choir.

Outside of rehearsals, choir members and their invited family and friends enjoyed exploring New York City and shared a closer bond as a result.

The choir members are honoured and blessed to have this experience and are thankful to the Calgary Central church family for their prayers and support for this amazing once-in-a-lifetime experience. ■

— Candace Bell,  
Choir Member

## Ontario

### Mansfield Edwards Receives NAD Chaplaincy Award

On Dec. 1, 2018, at Oakwood University, Ontario Conference president, Dr. Mansfield Edwards, was awarded The Flame Award for 2018 by the North American Division Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries department.

Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries (ACM) has been a department of the NAD since 1984, but they have been endorsing Adventist chaplains since World War II. The ACM endorses credentialed pastors to chaplaincy in six different categories: campus (post-secondary schools), community (law enforcement agencies, disaster and emergency response, government legislatures), corrections (prisons), health care (hospitals and assisted living facilities), military (armed forces), and workplace institutions or organizations (airports, businesses, sports organizations). There are currently over 700 chaplains within the NAD. It is among this field of chaplains that Edwards was awarded one of three awards for his excellent service as an outstanding chaplain.

Mark Johnson, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada remarks, "We appreciate the excellent contribution of Mansfield Edwards to the field of chaplaincy ministry in the Greater Toronto Area as recognized by the NAD. Through ministry to the public and local law enforcement in times of peace as well as times of crisis, a great work can be done by our serving chaplains."

Edwards has served as chaplain for the York Regional Police since 2004. ■



At Oakwood University Church (L. to R.): Chaplain Washington Johnson II; Mansfield Edwards; Paul Anderson, the director of Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries NAD; and Chaplain Phillip Willis.

### Ontario Conference Assists 1,500 Individuals Left Homeless After Fire



John Scott and Maria McClean responding to the appeal made on behalf of those left homeless by the fire.

On Aug. 22, 2018, a six-alarm fire left 1,500 tenants of a Toronto apartment building at 650 Parliament Street temporarily homeless. Some displaced residents arranged to stay with friends or family, while the City and Red Cross found accommodations for others at the Regent Park Community Centre and other places.

Mayor John Tory of Toronto appealed to the public to assist these individuals. In response to the appeal, Maria McClean and John Scott, representatives of the Ontario Conference, contacted the mayor's office, met with a staff member of the City of Toronto at a site where residents were housed, and later made a contribution of gift certificates to the intake staff at the Response Office on Wellesley Street on behalf of the conference.

James Thomas, the individual who has been managing the situation onsite, expressed deep gratitude to the directors, McClean and Scott, for the conference's contribution. Although the situation has grown cold in the news, the need is still great. Conference representatives promised to make another presentation of gift

## news

certificates before the end of the year.

While at the site, the directors got a sense of the volume of work involved as employees face the ongoing and daunting task of resettling the 1,500 residents. Work is still being done on the building, and there is a heavy security presence.

Please keep this initiative in your prayers. If you would like to know more, contact Maria McClean at [mmcclean@adventistontario.org](mailto:mmcclean@adventistontario.org). ■

— *Christelle Agboka and Maria McClean, Ontario Conference*

# SDA Church in Canada

## Hope and Wholeness Health Summit



Participants about to embark on a 5K run/walk fundraiser to raise awareness about the horrors of human trafficking.



Teacher Frank Kelemen shares his story of Christ's love through his diagnosis of cancer at age 25.

When you climb to the top of a mountain, you do so to gain more than a spectacular view. It is about the hope of coming away positively transformed by the journey. And what a spiritual journey it was for the 150 people who gathered this fall at the SDACC's Hope and Wholeness Health Summit in Pugwash, N.S.! The summit began with a fast climb to a mountaintop experience in Christ Jesus with a powerful prayer session asking God for His vision for health ministries and His church. We had inspiring messages from Dr. Angeline David, the NAD Health Ministries director; Stephanie Schwarz, the SDACC Health Ministries coordinator (Maritime Conference); and our other conference health ministry directors, Ern Brake, Darlene Blaney, Glenda Nischuk, Elisa Osbourne, and Maria McClean.

Distinct to the summit was the highly spiritual culture it engendered. It was a



weekend of much introspection and prayerful reflection. It was common to see folks huddled together with heads bowed in prayer.

The summit provided certification opportunities in depression and anxiety recovery, mental health first aid, and addictions recovery. Workshops were given on wellness coaching, health expos, establishing sustainable health ministries, and conducting in-home health retreats. Attendees also learned of Diabetes Undone, a diabetes reversal and management program.

The question-and-answer session and open-forum discussions allowed lay people to share ideas, concerns, and field questions to a panel made up of the summit's speakers and provincial health directors. Among the many topics covered by 23 speakers were Reaching Refugees, Christ and Cancer, Living the Anti-Inflammatory Lifestyle, Journeying to

Wholeness, and Unlocking Your Heart. Guest presenters included Dr. Neil Nedley of Nedley Health Solutions; Dr. Eddie Ramirez, the director of research at the Nedley Clinic and Weimar Institute; Drs. Beverly and David Sedlacek of Into His Rest Ministries; Pekka Määttänen, a professor at Burman University; Jon Betlinski, MD, Director Division of Public Psychiatry; Frank Kelemen, M.Sc. biology; Breck Lang, M.Sc., RN; Angela Poch, CN, health coach; and Johnathan Zita, the director of Lifestyle Education Canada.

While minds were expanded and the spiritual experiences deepened, the physical was in no way neglected! Attendees were well nourished with a wide variety of succulent plant-based meals. In addition, there were morning exercise sessions and free chair massages to enjoy. They were even treated to a "Make and Take" spa where they made their own natural

charcoal teeth whiteners, bath salts, nasal inhalers, and face masks on the spot! Sunday they attended a cooking class by Bonny Musgrave, an assistant professor in the Vegetarian Culinary Arts department at Southern Adventist University. And then they ran their meal off in the five-kilometre run/walk charity event that was organized to raise awareness about human trafficking.

Between the singing toddler evangelist, who reminded us that there's hope in Jesus who loves you, and the divine-hour message, which made it clear that we can be "doing" many things for God but missing the point that Jesus really wants our whole heart and to be our Saviour and best friend, you couldn't leave the summit without the hope and wholeness you had come for! ■

—Elisa Osbourne, Health Ministries Coordinator, Quebec Conference

## NAD Releases Memorial Medallion



Leona Alderson



North American Division Memorial Medallion

The North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists has recently made available a memorial medallion as one way of honouring deceased pastors and educators who dedicated their lives to full-time ministry for the church. The

medallion is to be presented to the family of the deceased to express appreciation for faithful service, and can be affixed to a headstone/grave marker or kept as a reminder of our hope in Jesus's soon second coming.

The SDACC Office of Education is pleased to present the first SDACC memorial medallion in honour of Leona Alderson Brooks, who devoted more than 40 years of dedicated service to Adventist education. ■

**>> SDACC REVOLVING FUND REPORT:** As of Dec. 31, 2018, there were 402 depositors with a total deposit of \$28,539,655. There were 91 loans with a value of \$28,768,087.

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



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## ■ Announcements

### PROCESS:

- All announcements (non profit events, new member notices, birth announcements, weddings, anniversaries, obituaries, and tributes) should be emailed to Aimee Perez (perez.aimee@adventist.ca) or faxed to her attention at 905/433-0982.
- Every individual named in the announcement must be aware of the submission and have granted the submitter approval for printing.
- Obituaries *must* be submitted on the appropriate form, completed and/or approved by a family member of the deceased. The forms (both printable and electronically submittable) are available at [www.adventist.ca/messenger](http://www.adventist.ca/messenger).
- The *Messenger* assumes no liability for typographical errors or responsibility for inaccuracies originating in submitted material.
- For more information about *Messenger* announcement policies, go to [www.adventist.ca/messenger](http://www.adventist.ca/messenger), click "Writers' Guidelines" then click "announcements."

## ■ Announcements

**Spirit Of The Pioneers**—Beauvallon Church 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and North East Regional Camp Meeting, July 5–7, 2019. Come remember the past and celebrate how we are being led into the future, with our special guests, The Melashanko Family and Marian Kossovan. Info at <http://beauvallon100.ca> or call 780/366-3982. (6/19)

## ■ New Members

### MARITIME

**Lincoln Heisler** was baptized in Pugwash, N.S., on July 29, 2017, by Ricky Schwarz. He is now a member of the Halifax church.

## ■ Obituaries

**Victoria Blanch Covey** was born on June 3, 1917, in Hackett's Cove, N.S., and died on Sept. 29, 2018, in Halifax, N.S. She will be remembered for her kindness and creativity as a Sabbath school teacher and hosted Sabbath lunches in her home, even at 100 years of age. Victoria is predeceased by her parents, Sherman and Lalia

(née Boutillier) Covey; brothers, William Covey, Raymond Covey, James Covey, and Harold Covey; sisters, Frances Hubley, Effie Rhod-enizer, and Evelyn Fraser.

**Joyce Loreen (née Davis) Duncan Hartel** was born on Dec. 4, 1940, in Grande Prairie, Alta., and died on Sept. 5, 2018, in Mackenzie, B.C. Joyce is predeceased by her first husband, Leroy Alvin Duncan; parents, Charles Albert and Marion Clara (née Best) Davis. Surviving: husband, Ira John Hartel; son, Lance E. Duncan of Edmonton, Alta.; stepson, Bruce (Maxine) Letkeman of Medicine Hat, Alta.; daughter, Karen (Warren) Toombs of Prince George, B.C.; sisters, Terry Lynn Ryder of Whitecourt, Alta., Shirley (James) Czeh of Fernie, B.C.; seven grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

**Alice Lerena (née Budd) Richards** was born on May 31, 1937, in Chatham, N.B., and died on Aug. 14, 2017, in Moncton, N.B. She was a member of the Moncton church for over 40 years, at which she served as Investment, Pathfinder, VBS leader, and children's Sabbath school teacher. She also volunteered at Camp Pugwash as a teacher and helped with National Camps for the Blind. Alice is predeceased by her parents, James Murell and Mary Catherine Budd. Surviving: husband, Norman Richards; sons, Lee (Cheryl) Richards of Oshawa, Ont., Daniel (Michelle) Richards of Grand Barchois, N.B.; sister, Margaret (Wallace Jr.) Kelly of Moncton; three grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

**George Schwartz** was born on June 3, 1930, in Kelowna, B.C., and died on June 26, 2018, in Salmon Arm,

## ■ Advertising Policies

### PROCESS:

- All advertising should be submitted with local conference approval.
- Payment must accompany your ad, or it will not be published.
- The *Messenger* assumes no responsibility for typographical errors, nor liability for the advertisements. Acceptance of ads does not constitute endorsement of the products or services by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada.

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# HopeChannel

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B.C. He served the church for many years as a deacon as well as teaching in the youth division. George is predeceased by his parents, Fred and Margaret Schwartz; son, Sydney Schwartz; brother, Louie Schwartz; and sister, Eileen Schwartz. Surviving: wife, Florence (née Neudorf) Schwartz; son, Adrian (Yolanda) Schwartz of Enderby, B.C.; stepsons, Scott (Linda) Seidel of Langley, B.C., Timothy (Fallon) Seidel of Salmon Arm; daughters, Vivian (Glenn) Mashan of Salmon Arm, Eunice Schwartz of Enderby; brother, Ken Schwartz of Quesnel, B.C.; sisters, Evelyn Lawton of Vernon, B.C., Marjorie Ritchey of Lumby, B.C., Joan Schwartz of Vernon; 12 grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren.

## ■ Advertisements

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### Experienced graphic designer needed for print publication.

The *Canadian Adventist Messenger* is looking for an experienced graphic designer who is available for full-time work starting in late spring of 2019. Please send resumé and sample PDFs to [jensen.stan@adventist.ca](mailto:jensen.stan@adventist.ca). Submission deadline: Feb. 15, 2019. (2/19)



advertisements

**2019-20 Adventist Tours.** Israel in Jesus' Steps June 2-10, 2019; New Testament Alive (Revelation's 7 Churches/Patmos/Greece) June 6-16, 2019; Bethlehem to Rome June 2-19, 2019; African Safari & Service July 14-26, 2019; Egypt to Israel Spring 2020; Thailand July 14-24, 2020. All tours are Adventist-led. \$1990+ /person. For full info, contact tabgha tours@gmail.com or Facebook.com/TabghaTours or call Cindy Nash at 423/298-2169. (2/19)

**Free advertising**—*Canadian Adventist Messenger* is offering free classified ads (max 50 words) in the June 2019 (campmeeting) issue. Receive another month free when you book and pre-pay your ad for one year. Submission deadline: April 1. For more details, contact Aimee Perez, Ad Manager, at 800/263-7868 x2092. (3/19)

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## 2019 OFFERING SCHEDULE

**FEBRUARY**

Local Church Budget .....February 02  
It Is Written Canada\* .....February 09  
Local Church Budget .....February 16  
Conference Advance .....February 23

**MARCH**

Local Church Budget .....March 02  
Adventist World Radio\* .....March 09  
Local Church Budget .....March 16  
Conference Advance .....March 23  
NAD Evangelism .....March 30

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## from the editor



**THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH'S OFFICIAL TV CHANNEL,** Hope Channel, is available on a few cable companies as well as Roku and other legal means of distribution in Canada.

Over half a million homes have access to watch this truth-filled media network, yet only a fraction know that it exists. How can we change this? Use social media. Platforms such as Facebook and other advertising media are great for reaching out to those in your community.

But it's not enough to say, "Watch the Hope Channel on Eastlink." Be specific!

*Concerned about your health? Go Healthy for Good has great information and tips for healthful living. It's on CityWest Cable, Channel 94.*

*Do you sometimes feel hopeless about your future? You can watch Disclosure with Shawn Boonstra on Hope TV in the privacy of your own home, at noon on Eastlink, Channel 893, right here in St. John's.*

If you are not getting Hope TV on your local cable lineup, call your service provider and tell them you want the Hope Channel.

A number of church members have told me they have no need to get it on cable, because they view it via satellite or some other means. But the push for Hope Channel is not just for us, it is for others: our neighbours, our grown children who have left the weekly fellowship, people who are seeking a balanced faith. Think of the possibilities.

In other locales around the world, entire families walk into our churches ready to be baptized because of the Hope Channel. I have heard amazing stories coming out of New Zealand.

I believe that getting Hope TV approved to broadcast in Canada was nothing short of divine intervention. The CRTC, the Canadian regulatory body for television and radio, recently noted that Hope Channel was the first single-faith network in Canada, and there has been no negative feedback. In my own experience with the CRTC, I have also found them to be very supportive of Christian—especially Adventist—media in Canada. All it took was a miracle.

So what does the future hold? There are about 50 different Hope Channels that we would like to get approved for broadcast. Our next goal is to make the Chinese and Filipino Hope Channels available here in Canada.

Want more help? Contact your conference's Hope Channel advocate. Let's keep working together to use all available means to share hope and wholeness with those around us.

Let's do more. ■

from the editor  
Let's Do More



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2019

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