

When Jesus Says Yes (p. 11), First Responders (p. 13),
The Most Unlikely Man (p. 32), Light (p. 35)

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

Art Director Aimee Perez
perez.aimee@adventist.ca

Secretary, Writer/Ad Liaison Adrianna Lewis
lewis.adrianna@adventist.ca;
messenger@adventist.ca

Copy Editor Vesna Miroslavjevic
messenger@adventist.ca

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Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada

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

President Mark Johnson
johnson.mark@adventist.ca

VP Administration Paul Llewellyn
llewellyn.paul@adventist.ca

VP Finance Paul Musafili
musafili.paul@adventist.ca

Conferences

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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heart to heart

“What are we doing for those around us who have been overlooked or neglected?”

Dad's Friends and Christmas

On our far northern farm, Christmas Eve was a special time. The Christmas tree had two or three parcels each for Dad, Mom, Grandma, my brother, and me. It also had several packages for my “uncles.” They were Dad’s friends—older men who were alone, without families, often unnoticed in their communities. To us, however, they were special and part of our extended family.

On those cold nights when even the coal-burning furnace downstairs struggled to keep up, I pressed my hand against the frost on the window so I could catch the first glimpse of Dad turning into our country lane, bringing with him Nels, Victor, and Leonard. What joy their presence brought as we sang together of the birth of Jesus and opened our humble gifts to one another.

I learned a lot about living a life of active faith from Mom and Dad and those Christmases as a child.

At a time when we often wonder what’s in that package for *me*, perhaps the bigger question should be *What are we doing for those around us who have been overlooked or neglected?*

Current health concerns may limit presence, but do they limit our ability to *do*? I think not.

A meaningful phone call, a thoughtfully prepared box left on the doorstep, a special note tucked in the door, may mean more than we can fathom to someone who’s home alone or isolated from family and friends.

And then there’s us. By remembering “the least of these my brethren,” we’re doing the works of Jesus, who is the one we really ought to remember at this time of year.

How about it? What if we thought hard and compiled a list of names of the people God has placed around us—ornaments of His creation and soon residents of a better place where disease, danger, and dismissal will no longer thrive?

May God be with you as you seek to do His will this season. ■

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



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FREEDOM OF RELIGION



Q: *During the COVID-19 pandemic, the government has shut down our church buildings and has stopped us from gathering and worshipping together. This has ended our regular Sabbath school classes, worship services, communion, baptisms, and other regular worship events. I live in a rural area that had no COVID-19 [cases], yet our church obeyed this and closed. Was it lawful for the government to shut down churches?*

A: These are very trying times for so many people. The pandemic has been very hard on churches and church members. I will answer your question in a general sense, since I don't know what province or territory you live in. The public health orders across the country have all been a bit different in terms of what gatherings are permitted and how large those gatherings can be.

While some churches across the country have now been able to hold limited in-person services, they look very different. The number of people who can attend has been limited, and other protocols have been put in place that significantly changed our worship experience.

The question of whether these limitations are lawful under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is a complex issue. I will address your question in two parts, with Part 1 this month and Part 2 in next month's *Messenger*.

Under the Charter, we have the right to freedom of religion and freedom of association. In my view, these public health orders infringe on both of these fundamental freedoms. I will focus on freedom of religion.

The government breaches religious liberty when its conduct interferes with an individual's religious beliefs or practices in a way that is more than trivial. The courts have recognized that the protection of religious rights must account for the social nature of religion as well as the deep link between belief and its manifestation through communal institutions. The right to freely worship together is of primary importance.

Public health orders have had a significant impact on

communal worship in Canada and in other countries. For many months, churches were unable to have worship services altogether. This may be still be the case in some jurisdictions, whereas in others, worship is now allowed but still precludes many people from attending in person because of ongoing limitations.

These government orders did not target only churches; their primary purpose was not to cancel worship services per se. Many other types of gatherings and conventions, such as business, cultural, social, sports, and humanitarian events and activities also had to be cancelled or postponed. I do not believe that these government orders constituted an intentional or malicious attack on Christians. However, the orders have most certainly had the effect of eliminating or significantly reducing communal religious practice and services across the country. That impact is enough to find a breach of the Charter.

In short, my opinion is that the public health orders have infringed the constitutionally guaranteed right of freedom of religion in Canada; however, that is not the end of the analysis. These limitations may still pass constitutional muster if the government is able to justify them as a reasonable limit on religious liberty. That is what I will address next month in Part 2. ■

Kevin Boonstra is a lawyer in British Columbia. Send your religious liberty questions to messenger@adventist.ca.

Disclaimer: This article is written for general information only. It is not legal advice and should not be relied on as legal advice. All individual circumstances are different. If you have a legal issue or problem, seek the advice of a qualified lawyer in your area.



Waiting for Jesus

"He who testifies to these things says, 'Surely I am coming quickly.' Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!"—Rev. 22:20, NKJV

The joy of holding my new grandson for the first time was a joy I could not express in words. He was born at 27 weeks, weighing only 2 pounds 10 ounces. The term they used was micro preemie. And after months in the NICU, he was finally home. I felt blessed to be holding this miracle in my arms. As I studied the perfections and beauty of this new miracle I was holding, I couldn't help but reflect on another baby boy that had been born so many years ago.

And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said:

*"Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace,
According to Your word;
For my eyes have seen Your salvation
Which You have prepared before the face of
all peoples,
A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles,
And the glory of Your people Israel."*

And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him. (Luke 2:25–33, NKJV)

I can only imagine the joy that Simeon felt as he took Baby Jesus into his arms, as he held the long-awaited Messiah.

As I held my grandson and imagined the joy of Simeon, two lessons came to my mind.

Lesson 1: Simeon, a righteous, devout man, eagerly desired to see Jesus. The Bible doesn't mention very many who were actively looking forward to the coming of the Messiah. It was to these faithful few that the Messiah's coming was revealed.

In our world today, how many are really living as if they believe Jesus is coming soon? Brennan Manning says, "The greatest single cause of atheism in the world today is Christians who acknowledge Jesus with their lips and walk out the door and deny Him by their lifestyle. That is what an unbelieving world simply finds unbelievable."

I truly believe that we need to have the same desire to see Jesus as Simeon did. And as Seventh-day Adventists, we need to be sure we're living out our faith.

Lesson 2: Simeon listened to the Holy Spirit.

Verse 25 tells us that the Holy Spirit was upon him.

As we get closer to the soon return of Jesus, as individuals—and as a church—we need to be asking for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Ellen G. White said, "Talk of it, pray for it, preach concerning it; for the Lord is more willing to give the Holy Spirit than parents are to give good gifts to their children. 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.'"¹

As wonderful as FaceTime and Zoom are, few things are better than seeing my grandson face to face. As good as worshipping Jesus is here on earth, there will be nothing better than worshipping with Jesus face to face. I am longing for that day, and I pray that you are as well. ■



Dave Miller is president of the Maritime Conference.

¹ *The Home Missionary*, Nov. 1, 1893.



aguilars in uganda

Christmas in Uganda

In Uganda, as in many places around the world, Christmas is a time for family and reflection on God's greatest gift: Jesus. Students attending boarding school are home for three months, and families retreat to the village. Christmas and Easter are the two times in the year when families have a meal with chicken, beef, or goat. In addition, family members are given new outfits, and the lady of the house receives a new dress.

For one reason or another, Adventist churches in Uganda don't celebrate Christmas. However, on New Year's Eve church members spend the night with testimonies, songs, and prayers of thanksgiving. Despite the challenges and hardship they endure, they prioritize ending and starting the year together in God's church.

Being a Filipino-Canadian family living in Uganda, we seek to find ways to "feel" Christmas. Filipinos start the Christmas season during the first "-ber" month—September—and continue until mid-January. The Christmas tree gets decorated, Christmas lights are hung, and Charles adds to the neighbourhood playlist with a jumpstart on the Christmas songs. The Banaugandan (people of Uganda) join in by mid-October, and the whole city is in the mood for Christmas festivities.

Every year the kids yearn for snow. They creatively use the lids of the yellow-topped bins to toboggan down the grassy slopes on our compound. We spray "snow in a can" on our windows, but the heat and humidity cause the fluffy stuff to disintegrate in less than a day. The closest thing we get to snow is the freak hailstorm we get every once in a while.

Our first Christmas in Uganda was very difficult until a fellow missionary introduced us to the *Watoto Church Christmas Cantata*, an annual Christmas production put on by Watoto Church in Kampala, Uganda. Imagine a Christmas musical and singing carols with a dynamic African choir and singers. It was so powerful and moving—and worth the three-hour lineup to experience the free program that is repeated three times a day for 10



Charles with a Batwa family in front of their stone mud house with their newly acquired sheep.

days. Attending has now become a family tradition we look forward to every year.

Helping those less fortunate is by far the most rewarding way to celebrate Christmas; however, the need is so great—and not just at Christmastime. A combination of meeting the immediate need and intentional sustainable donations makes the greatest impact.

So, when the youth director of the British Columbia Conference, Brian Wahl, and his wife, Pam, mentioned they wanted to bring a mission team to Uganda for Christmas, we were thrilled. They emphasized they wanted their contributions to help, not hurt, the Batwa community. We were on the same page.

The team arrived December 2019. In collaboration with ADRA Canada and ADRA Uganda, the team renovated school buildings, installed new water catchment equipment and tanks, and distributed over 1,000 kits of school supplies. In addition, they promoted women's health and distributed over 500 hygiene kits containing reusable feminine pads, soap, and underwear. This met the immediate needs. In addition, a herd of sheep and a donation for cooking equipment to start a business were given. These are sustainable donations that help rather than hurt the community.

There are plans to donate sewing machines, goats, and motorcycles. Even more importantly, a business plan is being developed and grants/loans will be provided to help families start small businesses. These types of sustainable gifts promote independence and ultimately preserve their dignity. The Batwa Chief expressed it best: "Our smiles will last only today, but our hope will last until tomorrow."

May we continue to spread the gifts of love, joy, hope, and peace to those near and far as we remember the greatest gift of all—Jesus. Merry Christmas! ■

The Aguilars are a missionary family from beautiful British Columbia.



Creation Corner for Kids

And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day.

—Jude 6, NKJV

Ringed Seal

Ringed seals get their name from the pattern of silver-coloured rings on their grey fur. They live in the Arctic Ocean, where the water may be under ice for eight months or more. These plump, little seals eat mostly fish, but they'll also eat crustaceans, such as crabs and lobsters, and cephalopods, such as squid and octopus.

Because they're mammals, ringed seals have lungs and must have their heads above water to breathe. All through the long Arctic winter, the seals use their sharp claws to keep their breathing holes open. A mother ringed seal will also use her claws to scratch out a den in the snow over the ice, where she gives birth to a single pup.

Do it!

Next time you hear about aliens from outer space coming to visit the earth, remember that aliens are a lie Satan invented to trick people. Look up these verses to learn more about "visitors from space": Matt. 24:24-27; 2 Cor. 11:14, 15; 1 Tim. 4:1; Rev. 16:14.

Think about it.

Sea mammals like ringed seals live in two worlds, an underwater world and an above-water world. Except for sea mammals, all other sea creatures must stay in the water. They can't leave. Because of sin, the whole earth is in lockdown or quarantine from the rest of the universe. Satan and his angels can't leave the earth and its surrounding space. Nobody, except God's angels, is allowed to come to earth, either. Only God's angels visit earth from heaven to minister to those who are sick with sin.



Tammie Burak and her family enjoy studying and learning from God's creation.



Linda (third from right) and her family have moved into a new home thanks to ADRA.

The economic situation in the country where Linda* resides is dire. Inflation is rampant and there are severe shortages of food and other essentials.

Linda and her husband are unemployed and struggle to raise their family of six children. It is heart-wrenching for them to see their children suffering from want. They worry constantly about their health. Their concerns are not unfounded. Linda has already lost one baby because she could not afford prenatal care and was unable to buy enough food to eat properly.

In 2019, thanks to a project funded by the Government of Canada, ADRA was able to provide Linda's family with hygiene and sanitation supplies. She was thankful that her family was more protected from sickness. She was able to use the money saved to buy more food than would otherwise have been possible.

ADRA needed to do more.

In March, we appealed to our faithful supporters, asking them to provide food for hundreds of families who were experiencing severe hunger. The onset of the global lockdowns caused by the COVID-19 pandemic created unprecedented uncertainty, but our donors chose faith over fear and we were overwhelmed by the generosity of their response.

Partnering with the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, we were able to multiply the funding and more than double the number of families who would receive food.

The food distributions were more logistically difficult because of the pandemic. However, by following the personal protective guidelines and observing physical distancing, life-saving food reached the families most in need. Our ADRA staff and volunteers also used the distributions as an opportunity

to educate people on the virus, its spread, and how to best protect themselves and their families.

Linda's family was overjoyed to be one of the recipients of ADRA's food assistance.

Shelter was another concern for Linda's family. They had no home of their own. They had been given permission to live in a small concrete house with a dirt floor and deteriorated zinc sheeting forming a partial roof. The kitchen and toilet were uncovered. When it rained, the house flooded. Linda's family lived with the fear that they could be asked to leave at any time.

Using donations from our Shelter fund, a home was purchased for Linda's family. The new house is in the same community where they currently live, so they do not need to leave all that is familiar. It has multiple rooms and a sturdy roof. Linda's family is grateful for the many blessings they have received. They were very vulnerable and have been through severe hardship, but they have also been blessed by the compassion of others.

Linda's family is just one of the tens of thousands of families who have been touched this year by the generosity of ADRA's supporters.

As we enter the season of goodwill, we thank you for your unfailing kindness. May you be continually blessed. ■

Sharmilla Reid is the supporter relations director for ADRA Canada.



*Name has been changed.

FRESH FAITH

When Jesus Says Yes

by Alannah Tjhatra



There's a gospel song by Michelle Williams that goes, "When Jesus say yes, nobody can say no"—and Jason Romans knows this to be true in his own life.

With a passion for Christ and youth ministry, Jason is a recent paramedic graduate who began working for the Toronto Paramedic Services earlier this year.

Jason's childhood involved many extracurricular activities, including Pathfinders, swimming, track and field, choir, drama clubs, and karate. He believes that it was his busy schedule outside of school, along with intense focus on academic excellence from a

young age, that helped him to develop the ability to work well in the high-pressure situations that paramedicine entails.

Jason always loved the sciences, and he knew that he would enjoy a career that would allow him to interact with people and take care of their physical needs. A friend in university told Jason about paramedicine, and sure enough, Jason realized that it embodied the exact career he was looking for. He loved everything about it.

Like all career fields, paramedicine came with its own set of challenges. Some days it felt as if everything and everyone was against him. Through challenges and triumphs, however, Jason has truly learned what it means to be compassionate and treat all people with the same care and respect, despite their backgrounds or circumstances. Whether paramedics are responding to calls from dazzling mansions or caring for homeless patients, Jason recognizes that each patient should be cared for with the same empathy and dignity.

"This job has been more than I imagined," says Jason. He has experienced the most exciting as well as the most depressing moments on the job. Still, Jason knows that when God calls you for a purpose, He doesn't just give you a map on how to get there—He prepares you and sticks by you for the entire journey.

"This job has enabled me to spread God's love in a practical way. It's an amazing feeling to be able to witness for Christ every day at work by simply following His example to care for the physical needs of the people I come in contact with," says Jason. There is no question that some calls are stressful, but they also remind him about why he chose this career in the first place. "I'm able to show Christlike compassion," he explains. "That is my true calling." ■

fresh faith/35 & under

35 & UNDER

In 35 words or less, what's the best Christmas gift you've ever given or received?

Ashley Kim

When I was little, I woke up in the middle of the night to find a bag of gifts. Even though they were small things, that night was a treasured memory for me.



Jovi-Ann Alexander

Life is truly a gift because, in all honesty, we're not supposed to have life—because of sin. I'm healthy, alive, and living well, and that's a great gift.

Jakob Kwon

I would say the best gift I've ever received was a squishy ball, candy, and a glow stick. It wasn't about the contents, but about the heart of the individual who gave it to me.



Matthew Tseng

Earlier this year my sister was trying to learn to draw, so I bought her this art book by a popular artist she really liked. I think that was one of the best gifts I've given.

Delilah Drew

The best gift I ever got was a doll from my sister. She saved up the whole year for it, so it meant a lot.



Jason Mokua

The best gift I've received is LEGO when I was younger. It's always fun building stuff.



December 2020

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Q: If God loves me, then why isn't He answering my prayers?

A: One of the worst things in life is to feel ignored and uncared for. I'm so sorry that you've been feeling this way. Often in times of extreme difficulty and discomfort when there seems to be no resolution to our pain and anguish, and no clear direction, we feel God's silence. But when we experience God's silence, it doesn't mean He isn't still *actively* working things out for us. He says in the book of Isaiah, "Can a woman forget her nursing child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands" (49:15, 16, NASB).

God is very intentional about us and doesn't take His eyes or thoughts off of us. He is very attentive to anything that troubles our hearts. When we don't see how or where God is answering our prayers, we have the opportunity to exercise trust that He is all-knowing

and all-powerful to direct us in the best way.

What we are praying for may not be the right thing for us, or it might not be the best time for us to have it. The Bible teaches that God does not withhold any good thing from us; He wants us to have the very best. So, when we notice we haven't received what we have asked, in God's knowledge of everything, He has a better opportunity or relationship or outcome.

One of the prayers I often pray when I feel this way is to ask God to open my eyes to all the other answered prayers He has granted and to highlight where He is working in my life. And would you believe, He often does. ■

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



Presented by the
Seventh-day
Adventist Church in Canada

CHRIST IN THE CRISIS



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UNIVERSAL SOCIAL UNREST, DIVIDED CHURCHES—OURS IS A PLANET IN CRISIS.

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Tech SAVvy

BY SANDY AUDIO VISUAL

Still Hosting Zoom? Ten Tips to Improve Your Services and Avoid Zoom Bombing

Since March 2020, the novel coronavirus pandemic has caused many church services to go online, and many are using Zoom online conferencing software to deliver their online services and programs. There are many benefits of using Zoom, and the product has steadily improved since the beginning of the pandemic. One of the major drawbacks, however, is getting “Zoom bombed.”

To minimize disruption to your worship service, I would like to share some helpful tips:

- 1 Pray.** Ask for God’s direction in everything that you do in your online worship service so that He receives all the honour, glory, and praise.
- 2 Prepare.** I would recommend allowing a 30- to 60-minute window to perform a sound check for guests who are part of your Zoom service. This ensures that when your presenters join the services, they have been confirmed and their equipment is functional. You should organize and test your media files prior to every presentation. Before the program, restart your machine and reduce the number of open apps.
- 3 Train backups.** Spend time training additional team members to host calls. I would suggest that each online service have at least one host and one co-host designated. Should the host’s computer get disconnected from Zoom, the co-host will assume the host position. Zoom’s current structure allows only one host per call, so having a co-host as a backup is critical and ensures continuity and consistency when delivering the program.
- 4 Know your audience (name your users).** As you host your weekly church services and programs, do your best to get to know, engage, and educate your audience. For example, I encourage our guests to log in under their name. I also track new users as they join the service, so that we can follow up with them later and so we can be prepared for intruders who might be there to disrupt the program.
- 5 Encourage interaction with all of your audience.** Keep seniors engaged by having an audio file for any visual content provided. Provide instructions at the start of your Zoom meeting

letting your guest know how to mute/unmute, video on/off, noise (background/device), raise hand, etc. A short instructional “how-to” video will help your guests become more comfortable and familiar with online services.

6 Monitor and manage the audio/chat of users. As the host, Zoom gives you the capability to lock down the video/chat/audio to/from specified users. This could be useful for managing the chat that is visible to your guests.

7 Shut out intruders—three steps. To prevent intruders from disrupting your service,

- ensure your meetings are scheduled with a password;
- use the waiting room to screen users (especially if you’re delivering a program that you expect will attract many new users);
- remove Zoom users who cause distractions immediately (using the “remove” function).

8 Permit only hosts and co-hosts to share their screen. Enabling the “Share Screen” function for only the host and co-hosts will prevent an intruder (Zoom bomber) from grabbing your screen and displaying inappropriate material to your audience.

9 Stay current with your version of Zoom. Always make sure that your instance of Zoom is updated. On a regular (weekly) basis, check and confirm that you have the most recent version of the software, as this will address some current issues by providing fixes and upgrades that will also improve user experience.

10 Stay on the lookout for new ways and content to engage your Zoom members. Challenge your fellow church members to create their own content (songs, testimonies, and scriptural content) on their smartphones and use it in services. ■

Lance Flash (lance@savweb.com) is member of the Ajax Seventh-day Adventist Community Church and has been involved in hosting their Zoom services since March 2020. For more information on Sandy Audio Visual (SAV), visit www.savweb.com.

Growing Up Millennial



"I learned to look past the fact that I was hating 2020 and, instead, to focus on how I could build myself and grow."

This Year (and Its Issues)

It's December. Usually, this means I'm excited about Christmas and being together with family and friends. And don't get me wrong; I *am* excited about that.

But this year, it's so much different.

This year really drove people apart. It felt as if the world was going up in flames. Between COVID-19, fires, major social issues and civil unrest, explosions, earthquakes, and anything else I can't think of at the moment or don't know about, it's been stressful and overwhelming and scary living on this planet. And that doesn't even include any personal challenges that I'm sure many have had.

I try hard to be positive in these articles, but looking back at this year, it's hard; however, I don't want to give up on trying to find some good things that happened this year.

For starters, I think that this year really showed me the importance of doing my own research regarding, well, everything. Understanding the history of things and possible consequences of others is vital.

This year I also learned strength. There were days that I would just think, "Are you kidding me?" or "This just might be the worst year ever." I learned to look past the fact that I was hating 2020 and, instead, to focus on how I could build myself and grow. When people live through something difficult, part of their individual reactions have to do with how they interpret what's going on (not discrediting biological factors and environmental factors in this interpretation). I taught myself that all that has happened could allow me to grow as a person and to understand the world around me.

Moving across the country to live alone was also something that I found really, really difficult this year. It took me weeks to overcome feeling lonely. I spent time worrying about

whether I'm in the right master's program. I spent a long time wishing I wasn't alone, missing my family, missing my friends, and missing my boyfriend. I still do miss all of these people. On top of that, most of my classes are online, so meeting people is a massive challenge. Eventually, though, I realized that there were nice things about living alone. And I've never been more grateful for FaceTime and Snapchat.

This year taught me that things sometimes happen when I least expect them. I expected to graduate from Walla Walla single and alone; I never saw a relationship coming. And even though things aren't always perfect when you fall in love with someone, I'm so grateful for having met him. Sometimes, letting God just take over is really beneficial. I can't tell you how many times I forced myself into new situations because I wanted to meet someone, or I wanted to change something about myself. And it never worked.

I also learned this year that mental health is impacted by the environment more than I ever thought it was. I was trying to find a counsellor just a few months ago, and it took many phone calls. Lots of people have been having a challenging time this year, especially with the pandemic and feeling alone because of it. This also showed me something positive, though, because it meant that people were reaching out for resources to help them cope and to professionals for guidance.

But most importantly this year, I learned the importance of just trusting God. I learned to pray and really delve into conversations to confront my problems. I learned that even when I feel like I'm totally alone, I'm really not. God carries me through, every time, whether I recognize it or not. ■

Jordyn Boonstra is a British Columbian millennial pursuing a master's degree at Andrews University.



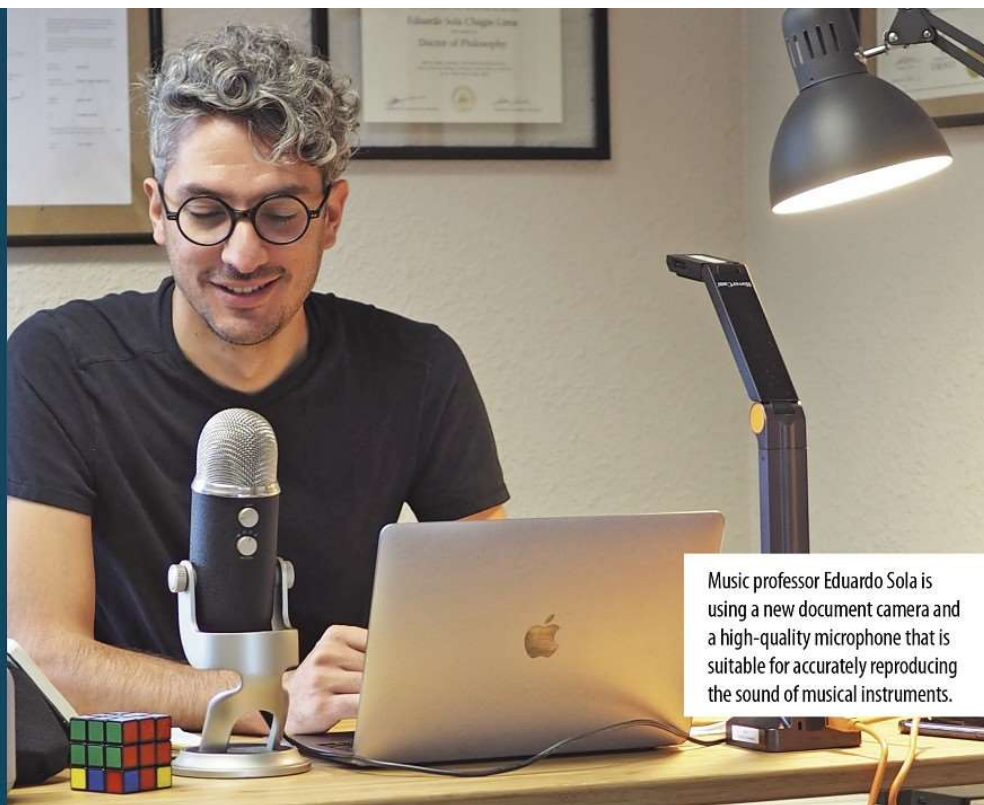
The onset of COVID-19 suddenly compelled universities across Canada (and the world) to rethink how best to provide high-quality online education.

Delivering the online version of the “Burman Experience” would not be easy and required summer-long specialized training in presentation skills and equipment operation. As a result, the early weeks of online instruction have been very successful.

Gifts from two donors have funded almost half of the amount needed to provide training and equipment—a great help to meet the critical needs imposed by the pandemic. Their generosity will continue to be important in a post-COVID world when remote learning is certain to be a required skill set for every member of the faculty.



Both faculty and students have discovered that once challenging (and sometimes frightening) skills are mastered, this new learning experience can continue to meet their goals.



Music professor Eduardo Sola is using a new document camera and a high-quality microphone that is suitable for accurately reproducing the sound of musical instruments.

Lights. Camera. Action!

Photo by Colin Hill

Burman University thanks its supporters for “stepping up” when the unexpected circumstances of the pandemic forced major operational and financial responses.

Explaining the rationale for his gift, one donor wrote:

Christian education is extremely important to our youth as they grow in their walk with our Lord. To ensure that our young people will continue to have access to such an education in these unprecedented pandemic times, we are pleased to help provide the necessary technological tools for a successful online learning platform.

Elvin Saruk, *Calgary, Alberta*

On behalf of his colleagues, a grateful faculty member says:

The era of COVID-19 has required us to become directors, videographers, sound engineers, video editors, and webmasters in our daily delivery of online classes. The generous donations for necessary equipment (video lights, microphones, webcams, document readers, and more) make it possible for us to deliver a superior student-learning experience. Thank you!

Laurence Wong, *Professor of Biochemistry*

Future projects will transform the functionality of the university’s management systems to become more compatible with the online world and expectations of students.

To speak with the president or advancement chair about specific needs, your call or email message is always welcome.

Loren Agrey

President
403-782-3381, ext. 4147
president@burmanu.ca

Eric Rajah

Chair, Advancement and Donor Relations
403-782-3381, ext. 4161.
ericrajah@burmanu.ca



Pour On the Love

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.—Mark 12:30, GW

I remember the day I realized that I didn't actually love God. It was a real shock to me. Intellectually, I appreciated Him and all He had done for me—no problem there—but none of those things moved my heart in any way. When I imagined heaven and all the fun things to do there, He wasn't part of my picture. Should He be off someplace else throughout eternity, I wouldn't miss Him or wish He was around. My picture was already filled to the brim ... with other people and things.

This was a serious issue for me. I'm a pastor's daughter, and yet I had only ever "loved" God intellectually, without any emotional attachment. And intellectual "love" is a very poor substitute for the real deal. What could I do? It's impossible to make oneself love another, even if that other One is God.

I realized that if anything was going to change, God would have to do it. I could give Him permission to change me, even if I couldn't change myself. And that is what I did. "Lord," I cried out, "please make me able to love you. I know that I don't, and I know that I should. Please heal me and change me so that I do!" I had no idea how He would go about it, but I knew that if He didn't do it, my heart would remain locked.

Believe me when I say that He definitely heard that prayer and is answering it. There are a lot of facets to the changes being made, but He has tailored each one exactly to my needs.

At Christmas we often spend a lot of time, effort, and money letting those we love know how special they are to us. It is a wonderful thing to receive a thoughtful gift from someone, knowing that they took the time to understand who you are and what you would appreciate.

God delights in giving us that special, individualized attention. I hope you don't miss what I often fail to see—namely, that He's reaching out to me and making certain things happen just to see the pleasure I receive from it.

Have you ever wondered what He might like to give you? Have you ever asked Him what special gift He has for you that you haven't asked for? Have you asked for eyes to recognize what it is He's giving you, or for ears to hear what sweet things He's whispering to you?

The greatest gift has already been given, in Jesus, but God's giving didn't stop there. Daily He gives to all who can receive. This Christmas season, as we become more aware of His generous and thoughtful giving to us, let's not be so busy that we forget to receive and appreciate those outpourings of love, and may our love for Him grow deeper! ■

Erna McCann is the prayer co-ordinator liaison for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada.



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 Karen Wallace.

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



Karen Wallace

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

Karen Wallace: I was born in Walla Walla, Wash., and lived in Milton-Freewater, Ore., most of my childhood. Even though I lived in an Adventist mecca, I was not raised in the church. My maternal grandmother was a wonderful Christian woman who greatly influenced me. She was a member of the First Christian Church in Milton-Freewater, and my sister and I sometimes attended church with her.

My grandmother read her Bible every day, kept Sunday like it was Sabbath, and shared her faith easily. My dad came home from serving in the Marines during World War II attached to a bottle. His drinking made chaos out of our lives. My mom suffered from an abusive husband and severe hearing loss. I had two siblings and, as I was painfully shy, my sister became my go-to person, my protector, and my comfort. We are still very close.

M: *Where did you go to school and what degree did you earn?*

K: I was 39 years old when I stepped into my first college class at Canadian Union College [now Burman University] as it was called back in 1988. I earned a bachelor of education degree while teaching full-time at Montana Adventist Private School (MAPS) [in Maskwacis, Alta., where MAPS served the First Nation communities and later became part of Mamawi Atosketan Native School (MANS)]. Full course loads during the summers, correspondence classes, night classes, and some independent study classes and one year as a full-time student on campus helped me complete a four-year degree in five years.

M: *What were the factors that influenced you to choose education for your career?*

K: Becoming a teacher was never a dream of mine. I got married at 18 and had three beautiful, amazing babies in quick succession. They were my whole life. During this time I studied the Bible, attended church, and was baptized at the age of 20. Learning about God's unconditional love, His sacrifice for me, and the knowledge there is a reason for the life choices we make gave me the peace and security that I had been missing in my life.

My husband, Garry, encouraged my decision because he had been raised in the church. I led out in the children's divisions in Sabbath school, volunteered at the Adventist school in Creston, B.C.—and that, I believe, is when God began calling me to become a teacher. One year the Creston school was experiencing growing pains, and I was hired to be a teacher's aide. A few weeks into the school year, the superintendent visited our school. At the end of the day, he took me aside and said to me that he wanted me to take Grades 1 through 4 into another room and teach them myself. I told him I couldn't, and he told me I could. And so I did.

Later when my children were ready for high school, we moved to Lacombe, Alta., so they could go to the academy but still live at home. Garry and I took jobs as teacher's aides to help get the Montana Adventist Private School started. Again, it wasn't long before I was needed to take a group of students into my own classroom and teach them. After two years at MAPS, the superintendent took me aside offering me financial assistance if I would go to CUC and work on getting a teaching degree. I told him I couldn't, and he said I could—and so I did. I knew God was calling me to teach for Him. He opened the door for me and gave me a little nudge. I thank God for entrusting me with His children.

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

K: I taught at Montana Adventist Private School in Alberta for eight years. I became the principal for the last two. I was then hired at North Okanagan Jr. Academy in Armstrong, B.C., to teach Grades 1 to 3 and be principal. I stayed only one year then moved back to Creston, and taught there for 11 years. It began as a one-teacher school but soon grew to two teachers, and I had the privilege of mentoring three younger teachers over the years.

I then moved to Port Hardy, B.C., to teach Grades 5 and 6. Due to unfortunate circumstances, I was needed to step in as acting principal while I was there. Near the end of my second year in Port Hardy, the superintendent asked me if I had ever considered being a full-time principal. To be honest, it had never crossed my mind. He encouraged me to consider it. I knew if God called me

and opened the door, with His help I could do it. Fraser Valley Adventist Academy hired me to be principal. I was there for five years and then retired.

M: *What did you enjoy most about teaching our First Nations children?*

K: My First Nations students were so eager to hear stories from the Bible. The stories, characters, and lessons from the Bible were new to them. They were like sponges soaking up liquid. What a thrill it was for me to be able to teach about God every day to these precious children. Also, after we gained their trust, the students considered school their "safe place." They liked being at school and I liked being there with them. My "mother bear instincts" kicked in and all I wanted to do was to protect, encourage, and prepare them for the future.

M: *Tell me about your family.*

K: My son, Martin, lives in Redlands, Calif., with his two children, Jamie, 17, and Katerina, 13. He works as a freelance 3D animator. My daughter, Shelley, earned an MA degree in community health from Loma Linda University, is a registered dietitian, lives in Fiji with her daughter (Kira, 14), and works for the World Health Organization. My daughter, Wendy, is the administrator of an ambulatory surgery centre. She lives in Mount Vernon, Wash., with her husband, Dan Siapco, an ophthalmologist. Their oldest son, Christian, and his wife, Laurel, live and work in Walla Walla. Their youngest son, Asher, is a senior in WWU's aviation program.

My estranged husband, Garry, was in a head-on motor-vehicle accident in 2016. He sustained severe brain injury and now resides in a long-term care facility in Creston.

M: *Where are you now and what are you doing during your retirement?*

K: After I retired, I moved from Abbotsford, B.C., to Auburn, Wash. My daughter, Shelley, lived in Auburn as a single mom of two, and I wanted to be close enough to help out. I feel guilty when I say I love retirement because it sounds as if I didn't enjoy my career, which is far from the truth. Retirement has provided opportunities to travel with my girls and their families and with my sister to amazing places like Italy, China, Greece, Mexico, and Fiji.

I must also mention my two Shih-poo puppies. I have become hopelessly devoted to these two little balls of fluff, much to the surprise of my family because I was never a dog lover before. Overall, as I reflect on my life, I can say that God has been faithful and good to me. I am blessed. ■





Vegan Mac and Cheese

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup (250 ml) onions, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tbsp (30 ml) olive oil
- ½ cup (160 ml) raw cashews, soaked in advance until soft
- 2 cups (500 ml) water
- ¼ cup (60 ml) roasted red bell peppers
- 1 tsp (5 ml) salt
- 1 package whole wheat elbow macaroni or other short whole wheat pasta

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Sauté onions and garlic in olive oil until softened.
- Place the cooked onion and garlic, cashews (rinsed and drained), water, and roasted red bell peppers in a blender. Blend until very smooth.
- Pour this “cheese” mixture into a saucepan and cook on the stove over medium heat for 10 minutes, stirring constantly. Sauce will thicken as it cooks.
- Cook pasta in lightly salted water until *al dente* (cooked but with some bite). Drain pasta.
- Add the “cheese” sauce to the pasta and stir to combine. Let sit for 5 to 10 minutes as pasta absorbs the sauce and thickens. Stir once more to mix.

Makes 6 servings (approximately 1 cup per serving).



NUTRITIONAL INFO:

Serving Size 195 g
 Calories 327
 Total Fat 11.6 g
 Saturated Fat 1.6 g
 Cholesterol 0 mg
 Sodium 440 mg
 Total Carbs 51.7 g
 Dietary Fibre 7.5 g
 Sugars 4.3 g
 Protein 10.2 g

The late Afia Donkor was a passionate health advocate who volunteered for LCES and authored the cookbook The Powerful Plate. It is now available for purchase at the ABC Christian Bookstore in Oshawa, Ont.

2021 DEVOTIONALS

"Go daily to the Lord for instruction and guidance; depend upon God for light and knowledge." — FUNDAMENTALS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION, 531

ADULT: DAILY

ADULT: EVENING

BOXED SET

Jesus: Name Above All Names
Ellen G. White
 Hardcover

A World on Fire
David Metzler
 Hardcover

Both devotionals included **INCLUDES A FREE GIFT**

<p>WOMEN</p>	<p>YOUNG ADULT</p> <p>Discovering Why God Wants Us to Care for Each Other</p>	<p>TEEN</p>	<p>JUNIOR</p>	<p>PRIMARY</p>
<p>Color My World With Love <i>Carolyn Rathbun Sutton</i></p>	<p>Community <i>Troy Fitzgerald</i></p>	<p>Time Warp <i>Bradley Booth</i></p>	<p>Skyscrapers <i>Eric B. Hare</i></p>	<p>God's Big Idea <i>RosAnne C. Tetz</i></p>
<p>My Best Friend Jesus <i>Cheryl Lynn Woolsey</i></p>				<p>PRESCHOOL</p>

The Devotional Clear Word
Jack Blanco

The Devotional Clear Word is organized into 365 daily readings that make it easy to read the entire Bible in a year. Each day includes a portion from the Old Testament, the New Testament, and Psalms or Proverbs.

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rainmakers

RAINMAK

A Scientist After God's Own Heart

Dr. David Burt's energy is infectious. As he speaks, a smile breaks across his face. Eyes twinkling, he employs his arms, grappling with the words he would like to impart. "So, you say you don't know anything about me? I was born in the U.K. My parents were from Montserrat and Saint Kitts, part of the Windrush generation who arrived in England from the Caribbean in the 1950s. My mother is an Adventist, and as they say, I was born in the church, the eldest of five children, four boys and one girl.

"I vividly remember the time when one of my high school teachers said to my parents, 'Mr. and Mrs. Burt, your son will not become anything in life.'"

David was one of only two Black pupils in his school of 400 boys.

"I guess the teacher didn't see any potential in me," David continues. "I was an average student and was more interested in sports than anything else."

Although hard-working, David's parents had no academic or professional training; however, they understood the importance of education and encouraged David and his siblings to take advantage of its opportunities.

Despite his teacher's assessment, David made it to the sixth form, where he took the university entrance exams. The path was not a smooth one.

"I failed my math exams twice," David admits, "but I was determined and eventually passed. Being interested in science, I pursued biochemistry at university but had no great aspirations for myself. I'd read about famous scientists and thought you needed to be special to achieve what they had.

"While at university, I undertook a successful research project, and began to realize, 'Hey, I can do this!' Looking back, it seems that God was giving me challenges at every stage of my schooling that at first sight appeared difficult, but with His help, I was able to meet every obstacle.

"I remember the university had scheduled one critical exam on a Sabbath and refused to change my exam date. Fortunately, a professor in the arts faculty of this secular university was a Seventh-day Adventist who volunteered and was permitted to invigilate the exam for me on Friday [a day before the official exam date]. Once I was through, he and his wife whisked me away to their home, where I was quarantined until Saturday evening so that I had no contact with other students [who had yet to write the same exam].

"Well, that was the worst exam I ever took," David continues. "I said, 'God, what's going on? I've stood up for you, I've kept the Sabbath?' How could you do this to me? But later in my third and final year, I received one of the highest grades of that graduating class. It taught me that God doesn't always give you a straight course to where you want to go. His path can take many twists and turns.

"After my B.Sc., I applied to the University of Birmingham, in my hometown [in the U.K.], to do a M.Sc. in immunology. The school responded by asking me if I wanted to do a PhD!"

There is a heavy pause. Then, breaking the silence, Dr. Burt laughs as he recalls, "I said, 'Lord, I just wanted to do my master's!' I went straight into the PhD program and completed it. And this

has been the pattern throughout my life. God seems to give me more than I ask and even more than I expect."

Following a few years of academic research studying how the influenza virus evades recognition by the immune system, David wanted to apply his experience to developing life-saving vaccines. This desire led to a research scientist position with a vaccine company in Toronto. But moving to Canada was not easy.

"Ahead of me was a great career opportunity, but for Paulette, my wife, it meant putting her work in scientific publishing and her pursuit of a degree in political science on hold," says Dr. Burt. "However, she fully supported our move to Canada for my opportunity at the expense of delaying her own. Still, thankfully, she was able to transfer her credits to York University, where she later graduated. ... Eight years past, and while in Toronto, I received an offer in Montreal as vice-president of research for a new company."

At this point, Dr. Burt seems at a loss, struggling to put into words what he felt that day. "I mean, for me, this was huge. I didn't expect this to be my career path. It was shortly following the 1995 Quebec independence referendum when few people moved to Quebec. Here I was, relocating my family on a three-year contract with a startup company in Montreal. Most startup companies rarely survive more than three years, so we thought this would be a short assignment, and then I would come back with an impressive resumé. But the company ended up being so successful that we stayed in Montreal for 17 years! The chief scientific officer of the company,

ERS

an orthodox Jew, would say that the company's success was because two people in management kept the Sabbath!

"After a number of mergers and acquisitions, I became director of vaccine R&D for GlaxoSmithKline North America, responsible for teams in Montreal as well as in the state of Montana developing vaccines for infectious diseases, allergy, and cancer."

And that has been Dr. David Burt's life trajectory—from someone who "wasn't destined to become anything" to a publisher of more than 40 scientific research manuscripts, inventor/co-inventor on seven patents, and the recipient of the Harry Jerome Award in Health Sciences.

"Since 2015 I have been a semi-retired consultant, but when COVID-19 surfaced, I expressed to my wife that I would have loved to be part of the search for a vaccine against this new coronavirus." For Dr. Burt, this was a plausible wish, since in the early 2000s, Dr. Burt's team had worked on an intranasal vaccine for SARS. "My wife said that God must have heard me 'complaining' because subsequently I was invited to be the immunology consultant on a Canadian COVID-19 intranasal vaccine," he adds.

"While I have always been associated with the Adventist Church, as a youth I struggled with trying to be a perfect Christian. It was during a lecture series

by a visiting preacher from Australia that, as a young man, I learned about righteousness by faith. The fact is that God loves us just as we are. This was the 'aha' moment that transformed my whole philosophy of what it means to be a Christian. It gave me the freedom to focus on my relationship with Jesus, spending time with God, studying the Bible, and trying to get to know God rather than focusing on my performance. This led me to write a song about the experience, titled 'By His Life.'

"God has a path for all of us. Due to COVID-19, young people are especially uncertain about their short-term and

long-term plans, but I want to encourage them to put God first. Irrespective of the circumstances they find themselves in, He will take them to places they could never imagine."

Concluding his story, Dr. Burt remarks, "In Psalm 16:11, the psalmist David says, 'Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.' This is my mantra, and this has been my life experience." ■

Peggy Caesar is a project manager with ADRA Canada.



L to R: Kayla, David, Paulette, and Jenine Burt



cover story

Broken and Healed at Christmas

by Grant Williams



It was the first Sabbath of December, many years ago. I would turn 31 in a few weeks, and a week later it would be Christmas. After almost five years of marriage, my wife and I were expecting our first child in January. We lived in a small town, had a tight-knit little Adventist community, and attended a small Adventist church. It was the second service, my wife and I were singing the special music, “C” is for the Christ Child born upon this day. ‘H’ for herald angels in the night. ‘R’ means our Redeemer. ‘I’ means Israel. ‘S’ is for the star that shone so bright. . . .” It was an older song not too commonly known, but it had been sung in our family and extended family for many years.

My wife was playing the piano, and I was sitting on the piano bench beside her. We were sharing some handwritten words with chords scrawled around them. The song we were singing is short, and our backs were toward the congregation as we sang through the song twice—or were supposed to.

We almost got through the second time, with only three or four more lines to go: “T” is for three wisemen, they who travelled far. ‘M’ is for the mang—” and I stopped singing. A huge lump arose in my throat and my voice abruptly died. All of a sudden my emotions as a result of my parents splitting up just a few months prior, resurfaced, blindsiding me. *Why now?* The idea or thought of this happening that day at that particular time and during that song had not once occurred to me.

I had only ever experienced happy Christmases, and this was a song from previous, happy Christmas days.

Tears appeared out of nowhere and trickled down my cheeks. I was powerless to stop them. I could no longer sing, or make any noise related to the song. My wife bravely finished the song, playing and singing solo. Though our backs were to the congregation, it still felt like all the eyes behind us could see right through me at what was happening. Very embarrassed, with the song now over, I had to walk the microphone back up to the platform and reattach it to the pulpit. Through blurred vision, trying to keep my face looking over my shoulder so as not to be visible to the audience, and looking down to avoid eye contact with those on the platform, I replaced the mic and then exited hurriedly through the side door. Then I went straight out the back to the outside, where my wave of emotions could subside in the fresh, chilly December air.

I almost made it unnoticed. But one of the elders, a caring friend, saw something amiss and left his spot up front and followed me outside, where his calming, encouraging words helped ease the moment. I will never forget that act of compassion.

Two months earlier, I was awakened by a 7 a.m.

phone call from my father. He was very emotional. Crying, and with a barely intelligible voice, he told me that he was leaving my mom. I had never heard him sound like this before. I had never even seen or heard him shed a tear. Dad just didn’t do that. He was always the stalwart, stereotypical man of the house, and to hear and feel his emotion now was a little unnerving—and I was unprepared for it. It felt like a nightmare, actually, but unfortunately this was not something I could wake up from. I was awake; the phone had brought us to consciousness. I forget how many years my folks had been married up to that point, but it was well past their 30th anniversary. A few missteps off the straight and narrow walk of life, and my father had made a mistake that many people have made.

I have often heard it said that the devil works hard to break up families. Well, he must have been smiling and wringing his hands in glee when all this went down. Guilt and misery became closest friends with my dad, while the shock of rejection and now an uncertain future (and retirement) became my mom’s unwanted companions. I can only imagine the drama and trauma that were happening in my childhood home before he had to call

us kids and break the news. It was a huge shock. I would say it’s on par with getting a call and finding out a loved one has died.

I never once thought my parents were unhappy. It never

crossed my mind. I never once thought there was (or could be) an issue. I had never really thought about it. My parents had always been my parents. We were a family, a unit, a team. We had done life together through thick and through thin, from being babies through to our college lives, to each of us getting married. That is just the way it was. This family was my life. Does that make sense?

Growing up, we were the house where many friends would always gather on Sabbath afternoons as we figured out what we would do or where to go for a hike. We were a pretty tight family. Both my parents were hard working and devoted, determined that Christian education was a priority. There were not many extras, and our house was not huge or fancy in any way; in fact, we were renters and we never even owned the house, but it was the only family home I remember. There was something there that drew people to us.

After we hung up, I was in complete shock, and I remember sitting on the steps inside our house sobbing. I was married, did not live at home, did not yet have kids, but this hit me hard, and it was the same for my siblings. My wife sat beside me on the step, trying to console me.

My siblings and I soon contacted each other and, in short order, decided we all needed to head “home” and

*“A huge lump arose in my throat
and my voice abruptly died.”*





"I couldn't help but wonder if there might have been something I could have done before everything broke down, or something more after it all broke open."

put everything back together. We thought we could bring sense to this situation and make things right. We were all married and in our own homes, but this was too wrong. It was change and bad change at that. This couldn't really be true. It felt like a bad dream we expected to wake up from at any time.

We dropped everything and, within a day, arrived at our childhood home and tried to help our parents come to a resolution. Details here would not be helpful, but suffice it to say our efforts were to no avail, and slowly but surely we were able to make out the lines that had been "drawn in the sand"—and that is where they stayed. Prayers, though sincere and plentiful, with a very specific request and timeline, did not bring about the desired outcome. *Why were they not getting answered? Where was that needed peace?*

A few days later we all headed for home, defeated and sad. Decisions had been made. The point of no return had come and gone, and the new reality was going to be that my parents were separated, never to be together again. It was difficult to leave my mom alone in what was now an empty house.

The journey home was slower, quieter, and more mechanical than the urgent trip there. I don't remember every little detail, but as I played and replayed events in my mind, I couldn't help but wonder if there might have been something I could have done before everything broke down, or something more after it all broke open. There was one thought that plagued me then, knowing we would have our first child within a month or so, and it still haunts me today nearly 30 years later. *My kids will never know my parents the way I knew them for all early years. They will only see it in still pictures, but never in real life.*

A few more weeks passed, and then Christmas came along. *What are we to do now? How do we do Christmas?*

Do we have to choose where to spend it? Though I was filled with emotional anger for my father, he was my still my father and he had worked hard to raise us, support us, put us through Adventist schools. All those things. We had camped, travelled, celebrated birthdays and baptisms, gone to church, learned to tell time and to skate, and watched Hockey Night in Canada. We had done all the family stuff. Much more than a few sentences now can make mention. But suddenly I had to wonder, *How do we handle Christmas?* The happiest time of the year, "the most wonderful time of the year," was quickly being overtaken by the possibility of becoming the complete opposite. We would not be together as an unbroken family again. Christmases would never be the same. . . . Change happens.

And this is what caused my emotions to re-emerge during our special music that fateful Sabbath in December. "M' is for the manger where He lay. 'A' is for all He stands for. 'S' means shepherds came, and that's why there's a Christmas Day."

That first Christmas was the roughest for all of us: for my mother, putting on a brave face, trying to keep family traditions for our sake, imagining my father sitting alone, unsure where he actually was, while we were in the family home and all celebrating together *minus one*. We experienced some festive joy, but not far below the surface each one of us felt our individual anger, hurt, sympathy, and sadness, a simmering potpourri of emotions.

I remember late one night sitting on the couch all alone in my childhood home. Everyone else had gone to bed. The festivities were largely over, and soon we would go our separate ways, back to our own homes. The room was dark except for gentle colours bathing it from old strings of coloured lights on the Christmas tree. The same decorations used year after year. A familiar-ness



"The prayers for peace, healing, and restitution that felt as if they had not been answered were answered, just in different ways (and in a different time frame) than anticipated."

with memories all around me, like gift-wrapped packages waiting to be opened. I stared long and hard at the fireplace, the furniture, the curtains, the pictures, the piano. And lastly, I gazed at the Christmas tree, willing myself to always remember this place and this time. To always have it to come back to, to play over and over if necessary.

The emotional seesaw would continue into the following years, but eventually the new normal largely erased the old normal as babies arrived, kids grew up, and new memories were made. As time slowly healed the wounds, and love and relationships were reaffirmed with us kids, Dad was able to rejoin the family a couple of times on Christmas Day. But it was strange; it wasn't the same.

The prayers for peace, healing, and restitution that felt as if they had not been answered *were* answered, just in different ways (and in a different time frame) than anticipated. My mom is happily remarried to a wonderful

man, and they are steadfast in our faith. My dad was rebaptized and is passionate about his relationship with Jesus, and he shares that love with me often.

My mom, eventually bouncing back, is our loving nurturing matriarch, and her home is still the central family gathering place for Christmas. Forgiveness has been granted and my heart goes out to Dad, aware that he is mostly alone and knows what he is missing out on. Perhaps that is how God, our Father, feels: hurting, sad, missing us, anticipating that day when we will all be together at last, in heaven.

"C" is for the Christ Child born upon this day ... and that's why there's a Christmas Day." Yes, Christmas is for family togetherness, but the real reason for the season is the celebration of the birth of our Saviour. ■

Grant Williams is a pseudonym.





Cheering the Faint and Raising the Fallen

“Someone once said that a missionary is someone who leaves their family for a short time so that others can be with theirs for eternity.”

This was not Kevin’s first summer going door-to-door. He knew the words to his presentation. He knew the different books and what each of them were about. He knew the schedule, the financial plan, and how to connect with the community. What he didn’t know—and could never know—were the challenges and struggles that go on behind each door. That’s why he needed the Holy Spirit and prayed to God for help the day he met Clarissa. Here is Kevin’s missionary experience in his own words:

When Clarissa came to the door, I immediately asked her if she was OK. The Holy Spirit showed me that this woman was troubled. Although she quickly answered that she was fine, I knew that something was wrong. I could see it on her face.

I proceeded with my presentation but stopped in the middle and asked her once again if she was all right. This time Clarissa struggled before telling me that things were not OK. She told me that she was worried about something. I did not pry into her life but simply asked if she would like me to pray for her. She hesitated but then invited me in and brought me in front of a picture of Jesus before which she knelt and did the sign of the cross. She then said I could go ahead and pray. I simply knelt down beside her and prayed for her that the Lord would take over her life and remove the fear and anxiety. After the prayer, Clarissa gladly took literature about God and promised to read it. As I left her home, she expressed great joy that I had passed by!

Not too long afterwards, Valmy had a similar experience

to that of Kevin. This is how he shared his story with us:

It was already late in the evening when I knocked on my last door. I met this man who almost broke into tears as I shared my presentation. He explained to me that he was grieving the death of his son. I offered to pray for him, and he accepted my offer. After the prayer, I really wanted to give him a book called Peace Above the Storm, but I had previously sold it to another family.

I left the home and walked toward the street all the while praying that my supervisor would show up. Sure enough, as I finished my prayer, my supervisor drove up. I quickly grabbed the book from the van and ran back to the house. The man came out, and I gave him Peace Above the Storm; in response, he proceeded to give me a big hug and said that I was like an angel sent from God.

As I left that home, the words of a hymn came to mind, “Seeking the lost . . . cheering the faint and raising the fallen, pointing the lost to Jesus, the Way.”

Someone once said that a missionary is someone who leaves their family for a short time so that others can be with theirs for eternity. So whether it’s “souls who are weak and hearts that are sore,” like Clarissa, or “cheering the faint and raising the fallen,” like Valmy’s contact, missionaries are called to point all to Jesus, the Way. Let’s be missionaries today. ■

Kevin Johnson and Valmy Karemera shared their story with us while serving as CYC literature evangelists. Lifestyle Canada is Canada’s literature evangelism ministry.

My Journey

in Adventist Education

If

someone were to ask me to name one thing that has made me into the woman I am today, I would have to credit God's ministry within our Adventist schools.

Joining the Adventist Church when I was about five years old meant the timing was perfect for my parents to enrol me for Grade 1 in our local church school. Before they became Adventist, my parents had journeyed through several religions, searching for God's chosen church. It didn't take them long to realize that there was something special about the family of Christ and the faith of the Adventist Church.

There were sacrifices to be made from the beginning in order to have my siblings and I attend the school, but we had an abundance of support from the church family. Members even took us under their wings financially. In addition to being given the opportunity to attend an Adventist school, I was extremely blessed with a second family—people who would become instrumental to my upbringing.

During my middle two years in the public

school system, where I let myself of my faith and surrounded who wanted nothing to do with God. I praise God for the compassionate Father He is and that He pulled on my heartstrings continually.

When it was time to decide what I would do for high school, I decided to attend the only Adventist school in the

Maritimes, which was in another province. I moved into the school's dormitory and spent the next four years developing friendships and growing my relationship with Christ. I had no idea that God would give me the added blessing of finding the man I will marry in a few weeks.

During my time in high school, I developed my passion for music through the incredible music program. Also, the natural leader in me was nurtured through opportunities such as the Student Association, Yearbook, and praise team. At the start of Grade 9 I struggled both personally and academically, but as the years went by, the teachers helped me recognize my true potential and Christ's goal for my life. I was extremely blessed to have teachers who loved and cared for me enough to motivate me to succeed. I am forever indebted to them.

There's something very special about being in a learning environment where you can be proud of your faith and let your light shine for Christ. Having small class sizes allowed me to get to know my teachers and classmates on a profound level and develop relationships that will last a lifetime. Of course, we will always encounter challenges when we decide to put Jesus first, but I have absolutely no regrets about the choices I made to spend my educational journey in the Adventist system.

After graduating from high school, I continued my journey by attending Burman University, where I completed my bachelor of education. I was given so many amazing opportunities to grow in my spiritual walk during my four years on campus. Being a part of the Choral Union and working as a resident assistant made my time there unforgettable. I couldn't have asked for better professors and practicum experiences during my degree program, and I feel well equipped to enter my field as an educator.

Over the years, I have seen God working in my life in ways I could never have imagined, and I know that God has a plan for me. Adventist education is most certainly the cornerstone of my faith and relationship with my friend Jesus. I have seen God's hand at work, and I pray that His ministry within our schools will influence the lives of many more young people. ■

Isabelle Goguen graduated in 2020 from Burman University. She looks forward to serving and educating the children in her future classroom.



THE BURMAN EFFECT

BURMAN ALUMNI
IMPACTING THEIR COMMUNITIES

A Matter of Conscience

Tears rolled down Grandpa Peter's checks as he turned to his son and choked out, "Wins, is this how we raised you? To leave your people?" As Winston trudged home, he was deeply troubled by what his father had said. When he invited his parents to his baptism, he had anticipated some mild hesitation. He hadn't anticipated his father's pain at a son leaving the family's faith tradition.

In Newfoundland, families congregated in religious communities: Catholics lived in some harbours; Protestants, in others. Religion was at the foundation of everyday life. It formed one's identity and provided a sense of belonging, of community.

Winston understood. Seventh-day Adventists were "outsiders." Unlike other Protestant groups that had made their homes in Newfoundland for generations, this new religion had "come from away." Most of his five brothers and three sisters attended the Anglican church—when they *did* choose to go. Winston's own son, Barry, was an altar boy. Conversations at family potlucks swirled around religion and politics (one of Winston's brothers had become active in provincial affairs).

Weighing all this against freedom of conscience, Winston had made his decision by the time he arrived at his house. He would proceed with his baptism. Freedom of conscience was more important than tradition. He was convicted of principle and was willing to pay the price.

Twelve-year-old Barry watched his father's baptism with great interest. His grandfather wasn't present. In fact, Grandpa Peter wouldn't speak to Winston for weeks. But eventually, barriers came down. After all, Winston was still Winston; he was part of the family—and family debates about religious beliefs assumed an even greater fervor than before.

No one was too surprised when, after high school graduation, Barry chose to study political science at Memorial University of Newfoundland and then decided to transfer to Canadian Union College (now Burman University) to earn a degree in theology. Throughout his life, religion, politics, and law pulled at Barry equally. Most recently he earned a doctoral degree in law at Leiden University in the Netherlands.

As Director of Legal Affairs at the Canadian Centre for Christian Charities, Barry's responsibilities include interpreting

legal and regulatory environments and representing Christian charities. In the past, he also represented the Seventh-day Adventist Church at the U.S. Congress in Washington, D.C., and the International Religious Liberty Association at the United Nations in New York and Geneva.

Barry points out that the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects religious pluralism. Canadians may worship in various ways as their faith dictates. Yet, he believes, our media, legal and academic professionals are proponents of secularism. They expect religious communities to conform to the moral norms of society. So, Barry, an advocate for freedom of conscience, defines himself as "the other voice"—one that crosses the boundaries between secularism and traditional religious pluralism.

Barry has defended religious freedom throughout his career in court and in his writings. In 2012, he was recognized with the Diamond Jubilee Medal of religious freedom work in Canada and abroad. His life's work is evidence that God prepares His people "for such a time as this." ■

Renate Krause is the editor of Burman University Magazine.



Barry with Grandma and Grandpa Peter.



What will their
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Seventh-day
Adventist[®] Church

feature

The Most *Unlikely* Man

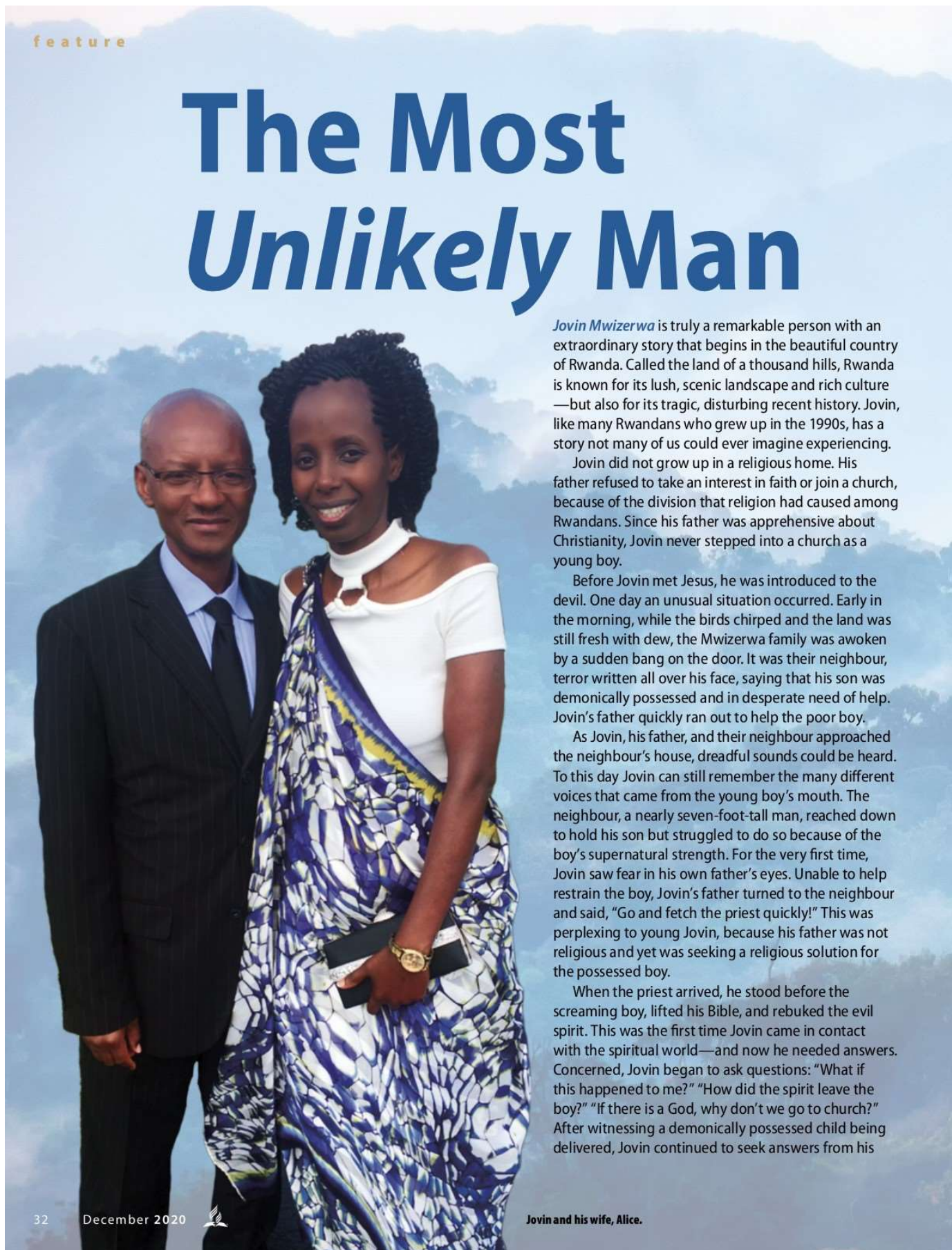
Jovin Mwizerwa is truly a remarkable person with an extraordinary story that begins in the beautiful country of Rwanda. Called the land of a thousand hills, Rwanda is known for its lush, scenic landscape and rich culture—but also for its tragic, disturbing recent history. Jovin, like many Rwandans who grew up in the 1990s, has a story not many of us could ever imagine experiencing.

Jovin did not grow up in a religious home. His father refused to take an interest in faith or join a church, because of the division that religion had caused among Rwandans. Since his father was apprehensive about Christianity, Jovin never stepped into a church as a young boy.

Before Jovin met Jesus, he was introduced to the devil. One day an unusual situation occurred. Early in the morning, while the birds chirped and the land was still fresh with dew, the Mwizerwa family was awoken by a sudden bang on the door. It was their neighbour, terror written all over his face, saying that his son was demonically possessed and in desperate need of help. Jovin's father quickly ran out to help the poor boy.

As Jovin, his father, and their neighbour approached the neighbour's house, dreadful sounds could be heard. To this day Jovin can still remember the many different voices that came from the young boy's mouth. The neighbour, a nearly seven-foot-tall man, reached down to hold his son but struggled to do so because of the boy's supernatural strength. For the very first time, Jovin saw fear in his own father's eyes. Unable to help restrain the boy, Jovin's father turned to the neighbour and said, "Go and fetch the priest quickly!" This was perplexing to young Jovin, because his father was not religious and yet was seeking a religious solution for the possessed boy.

When the priest arrived, he stood before the screaming boy, lifted his Bible, and rebuked the evil spirit. This was the first time Jovin came in contact with the spiritual world—and now he needed answers. Concerned, Jovin began to ask questions: "What if this happened to me?" "How did the spirit leave the boy?" "If there is a God, why don't we go to church?" After witnessing a demonically possessed child being delivered, Jovin continued to seek answers from his



Jovin and his wife, Alice.



father but was given half-baked responses that left him uncertain.

As Jovin earnestly searched for truth, God began to orchestrate things in his life. A Catholic family friend petitioned his father to send Jovin to an Adventist school. He told him that going to an Adventist school would position and prepare Jovin for higher education. Having been rejected from a public high school because of tribalism, Jovin and his father, who were gravely disappointed, were indeed looking for a school that would accept him. Little did they know that God had bigger and better plans for Jovin that would ultimately save his life.

At the Adventist academy Jovin worked hard to succeed and to transition from elementary to high school. He passed his national test with flying colours and was the only person in his region to succeed at his level. More importantly, during his studies at the Adventist school, Jovin's questions about God and the Bible were finally answered.

It turned out, however, that attending the Adventist school in Rwanda would save Jovin not only spiritually but also from likely death. Through the school he met Adventist missionaries who were willing to sponsor him to go to school in the United States. Jovin's encounter with these missionaries gave him the opportunity to leave his country before his government sought to murder his people. Over 800,000 people were killed during the genocide—a catastrophic event that changed the lives of millions of people in Rwanda, including Jovin's. "I'm alive today because of Christian education," Jovin affirms.

Today Jovin lives in the beautiful suburbs of Windsor, Ont. He is married to his wonderful wife, Alice Murebwayire, and they have five children and three grandchildren. "I am immensely blessed," he exclaims. While juggling being a father, an engineer, a church elder, and chairperson of the Windsor Seventh-day Adventist School Board, he spends most of his time doing ministry.

Jovin's pastor, Alex Golovenko, expresses what an immense contribution Jovin makes to their church. "He is a very sincere, spiritual man. To him, the church and spirituality are not a production; he lives it." For Jovin, there is no reason or excuse to be inactive in ministry. To waste the blessings and story God has given him would be a grave sin.

Passionate about Christian education, Jovin believes that giving young people the opportunity to go to an Adventist school is extremely beneficial and will prepare them not just for their future on earth but for eternity. One might say that a boy from

Rwanda who grew up in a non-religious home was the least likely person to become a powerful agent for God. But Christian education gave him the tools to withstand great adversities in life.

Jovin has supported a significant number of young people through school and university, especially those who have lost their families to the genocide. "He is a father figure," says Golovenko, speaking about the impact Jovin has had on the young people in their community. Even though Jovin has five children of his own, he has made countless young people feel as if they're part of his family. By following Christ's example and using relationship as a means for ministry, Jovin has changed many lives. He is a leader in the Windsor community, where he spends time counselling church friends and families, sometimes doing 10 to 12 visitations a week. "He is a bridge to other cultures," adds Golovenko.

When Jovin looks back on the horrific realities of the genocide, he often contemplates what would have happened had he not become a Christian. He remembers the incredible pain he felt but also the hope he had in Jesus. He now travels around to various churches within Canada sharing his personal story, the message of forgiveness, and the importance of Christian education.

The realization that God was with him, the powerful impact of knowing Him, and the joy of salvation completely changed his life. Jovin reminds us, "To live a life without God is, really, to have no life at all." He believes that God can reach deep within our soul and recreate us. A man who lost his entire family in Rwanda, today harbours no anger, animosity, or hatred in his heart toward those who thoughtlessly murdered them. The unlikely little boy who saw evil, met God, and became his servant is now a beacon of hope to young people in Canada. His story demonstrates the changing power of Jesus and the importance of true Christian education. ■

Elijah Ramjattan, a recent graduate from Weimar College with a degree in religious studies, is a rising speaker and writer with a sincere passion to understand the Scriptures and share its message with others. He currently resides in Beeton, Ont.



How Family Honours a Legacy of Service



Photo above: The Professor Hill Rehabilitation Centre construction in progress. **Inset:** Norm and Fran How on their 70th wedding anniversary.

Norm How has always been fond of sweets. So when he saw a young woman selling candy to raise money for the YWCA, he struck up a conversation with her. That initial meeting with Fran would lead to a marriage that lasted nearly 75 years. Their partnership was one enriched with service, and it still continues to this day.

Norm and Fran were well-known for their involvement and service in the Seventh-day Adventist Church and in the several communities where they resided throughout the course of their lives together.

Settling in Lacombe, Alta., in 1993, the couple became actively involved with the College Heights Seventh-day Adventist Church (CHSDAC), where Norm eventually became a board member. This sowed the seeds for a great connection with Eric Rajah, co-founder of A Better World Canada.

Eric knew Norm as a well-respected minister, as the secretary of the Canadian Union Conference (now Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada), and even as editor of the *Canadian Adventist Messenger*. Norm's role as a board member, however, is what really allowed the two men to connect. When ABW first started, the College Heights church board oversaw the organization.

Today Eric remembers his friendship with Norm and Fran with gratitude and admiration. "They lived their faith through serving others," says Rajah. "He was very passionate about service,"

Eric remembers first-hand. "They regularly contributed to projects when they were alive—they gave their money to building schools and water wells."

This introduction to ABW began a lasting legacy of support, which also inspired their family members to get involved. The couple had two sons, four grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren. Robyn, one of their granddaughters, volunteered on physiotherapy trips to Kenya with the ABW Rehab Team.

Norm and Fran lived a life full of love and service that took them, too, outside of Canada. After their retirement, they volunteered with a charity called Seniors Over Seas, spending nearly two years in a suburb of Cairo, Egypt. Norm passed away in June 2011 at the age of 95, while Fran died two days short of her 106th birthday in May 2018.

This long legacy of service inspired their son David and his family to leave a financial gift in honour of Norm and Fran in support of the construction of the Professor Hill Rehabilitation Centre at the Kendu Adventist Hospital in Kenya. Ron Sydenham, ABW Board Chair (and former pastor of CHSDAC), and Eric are grateful to the Hows for making a lasting difference in the lives of many young people in Kendu Bay. ■

Laura Tester travels with A Better World and is a freelance writer for newspapers. Edited by Jacqui McCarty.

Light:

The Reason for the Season

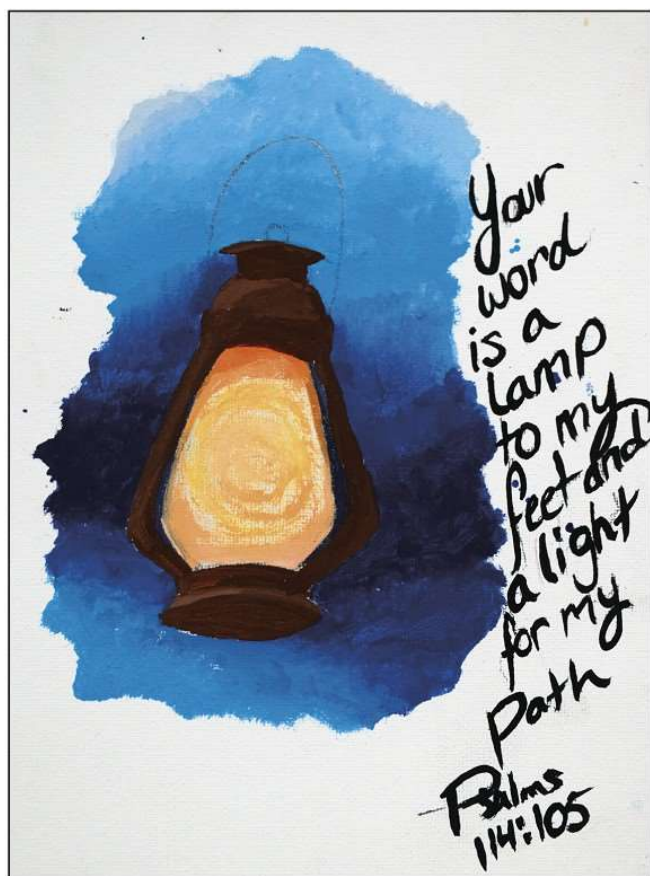


Illustration: Psalm 114, by Jersey Threefingers

In dark December, we crave more light. As we gravitate toward Christmas lights, we are reminded of our deep need for light, an intense craving invoked by the Apostle John in the powerful opening of his gospel: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ... *That* was the true Light,

which lighteth every man that cometh into the world” (John 1:1–9, KJV).

The teachers of MANS have a passion for sharing the Light and the Word. They do it, in part, by sharing what’s meaningful to them. Pattie Reasor, who teaches math, sciences, and religious studies in the junior and senior high school, loves to make God’s Word real and personal by connecting it to the highly individual gifts for artistic expression evident in her students.

“The students in [the class] RS 15 were each required to paint a Bible promise that meant something to them,” explains Pattie. “Since most of the students have not grown up with the Bible, I bring in several samples of famous Bible promises.”

Pattie shares one of her students’ examples. “Jersey Threefingers chose Psalm 114:105 and painted a piece of artwork,” she says. “Through her upbeat personality and compassionate nature, Jersey brings joy to all those around her. The verse she chose represents not only God’s light for us but also the light she shares with others.”

Jersey, who has many talents, is a member of Total Praise, a group that performed at the General Conference and North American Division’s

2015 year-end meetings¹ and at Alberta’s 2020 Virtual Campmeeting.² Pattie says Jersey is on track to graduate from Mamawi this coming spring. ■

Lynn McDowell is director of Planned Giving/Philanthropy at the Alberta Conference. She is privileged to have seen Jersey and other students grow as they move through MANS.

¹ See the MANS website, www.mans1.ca, and search the video section.

² See July 18 Sabbath morning program, and the MANS video section of www.albertaadventist.ca.



You can follow school life and activities at MANS at www.facebook.com/mamawiatosketan.



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IF you were asked to share your personal testimony in five minutes or less, what would you say?

The Personal Ministries team at Bowmanville Seventh-day Adventist Church asked themselves this question. Since COVID-19 put some ministry plans on hold, new ideas were needed for the upcoming months. After much prayer and discussion, we decided to begin inviting all members to engage in ministry personally by exploring and articulating their own reasons for being disciples of Jesus.

Incorporating personal testimonies into the church service was the first practical initiative. Not only would this be an opportunity for members to connect with one another in a more meaningful way, but more importantly it would bring honour to God by proclaiming His love and grace in our lives.

Ellen White says, "Our confession of His faithfulness is Heaven's chosen agency for revealing Christ to the world. We are to acknowledge His grace as made known through the holy men of old; but that which will be most effectual is the testimony of our own experience. We are witnesses for God as we reveal in ourselves the working of a power that is divine."¹ She also states, "The preaching at our Sabbath meeting should generally be short. Opportunity should be given for those who love God to express their gratitude and adoration."²

Does your church service match this description? If it does, that's encouraging! There might be places, however, where this may not be the case. To some, testimony time has a bad reputation for being

awkward—either because of the uncomfortable silence or because some members speak too long or without focus. We concluded that this tends to occur when people are asked to share a testimony on the spot. To avoid this, the Bowmanville ministry team decided to provide a framework when inviting all members to participate, so that the testimonies would bring glory to God and be a blessing to all.

Each Sabbath a time slot would be designated for one person to share their testimony. This segment would occur between Sabbath school and the divine service, and the individual would have three to five minutes to share. All members were invited to select a date ahead of time and prepare a personal testimony. The organized signup schedule and predefined time parameters were designed to give everyone a chance to formulate their thoughts in a concise manner.

Preparing a personal testimony not only blesses and enhances the church service but also encourages us to really think about what we would say if we had only a few minutes to share with someone what Jesus has done in our lives. Sometimes we really do only have a few moments to be witnesses for Jesus, and often it's to a person we may not cross paths with again. It could be a short conversation with a stranger while standing in a line, sitting on a bus, or visiting a park or store. The opportunity to share God's love may be very brief because of time constraints, the situation

THE POWER OF A TESTIMONY

you find yourself in, or simply because a conversation may shift elsewhere. At Bowmanville, the question we asked ourselves was “Would people want to know more about Christ after just three minutes with us?”

In addition to challenging ourselves with a time frame, we also considered what the content of the testimony should be. When Jesus healed the demon-possessed man, He sent him away saying, “Return to your own house and tell what great things God has done for you” (Luke 8:39, NKJV). Jesus told him to go and give a testimony to everyone he knew about how God had impacted his life. Note, the testimony was not to be about what he had seen Jesus do for his friends or what he is now doing for God. Our personal testimony is the story of how we have experienced God’s grace in *our* lives. The focus is on Jesus, and He receives all the honour and praise.

The experience of incorporating personal testimonies into our worship services has been truly uplifting. It points everyone to the love of God and highlights how He is working in people’s lives—and we are learning more about one another. A visible joy emanates from each person as he or she shares, which then brings joy to others who get to see and hear first-hand why this individual loves and trusts Jesus. Another benefit is that when we know more about another person’s story, it builds meaningful connections within the church family.

One day soon we hope to hear how people have had the opportunity to share their three-minute personal testimony

to someone outside the church building. I remember having this opportunity when I was stuck in a long line of traffic waiting for a landslide to be cleared from the highway. As I wandered up the road, I met a newly retired couple with their son and started a conversation. After they learned that I was a teacher in a Christian school, the retired gentleman spent the next hour explaining how my belief system was wrong.

At the end, when the cars began to move, I had only a short time to share my experience. All I said was, “So as an atheist, you do not believe in anything greater than this life?”

His response was, “I guess I don’t.”

I only had a moment left, so I said, “Well, I do. I believe in a God who has a personal interest in our lives and loves us. I believe we can be with Him for eternity.”

My prayer is that a seed was planted that day.

Everyone who is a follower of Jesus has a story tell. All disciples can testify how He has impacted their lives and why they follow Him. I believe Jesus wants us to go and tell others this story and how they, too, can find a personal relationship with Him. Maybe you would like to take some time to formulate your three-minute testimony too. You never know when the opportunity may arise to share it. ■

Shad Lehmann is the associate director of education for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada.

We want to hear what you have to say! Send a letter to the editor at messenger@adventist.ca.



December 2020

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news

of Canadian Adventist members and churches in action

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Ontario

Ontario Pathfinders Celebrate 45 Years in Style



Screenshot of a panel discussion with Mansfield Edwards, Chester Lewis, John Scott, Olivia Pryce, and Jenai Wilson.

Did you know that 45 years ago, there were only four Ontario Pathfinder clubs—Harvie (now Toronto West), Mississauga, Perth, and Toronto East? And that today there are 70 official clubs and 1,200 pathfinders?

There was much to celebrate on Sept. 19, the 45th anniversary of Ontario Pathfinders and 70th anniversary of the worldwide Pathfinder ministry. Thus, in June, when Ontario Conference's Pathfinder director, Edwin Martin, and lay leaders realized COVID-19 would halt their planned in-person Pathfinder campmeeting, they shifted to a virtual event.

Thankfully, the pieces fell into place as former pathfinders and current leaders Akeem and Deandra Favorite wrote a script for an ambitious three-part news-style program, and participants were recruited. The planning committee met weekly, interviewing and recording almost

daily from the beginning of September.

Campmeeting speakers were Andrés Peralta, General Conference associate youth director and world Pathfinder leader; Nyjel Camanzo, a Hamilton Hylanders pathfinder who spoke at the 2019 Oshkosh Camporee; and Jordane Smith, former pathfinder who is now the young adult pastor at College Heights Church (on the campus of Burman University). An intended fourth speaker, Frankie Lazarus, pastor of Mount Olive Seventh-day Adventist Church and our former youth director, was shown a few weeks later due to technical difficulties on the day of the virtual event.

The event encompassed segments on the past, present, and future of Pathfinder ministry, with presentations titled "Connected—What's Your Story?" "Connected—Where Do I Belong?" and "The Connection Continued." Viewers

enjoyed powerful messages, engaging testimonies, panels, music, and more.

Despite some technical glitches, the on-air and behind-the-scenes team presented an excellent program. Their work yielded an average 300 live YouTube viewers, from Ontario, the United Kingdom, Brazil, Mexico, and other countries, and 415 live viewers in the morning. There are now 2,400 views for the morning, 1,200, for the afternoon, and 816 for the evening.

Here are a few of the day's highlights:

Pathfinders Got Talent

The Ontario Pathfinder Drum Corps—first-prize winners at the 2019 Oshkosh Camporee—kick-started the day with a literal bang. Pathfinders were also featured prominently as speakers, hosts, panel facilitators, interviewers, and musicians. Ruth Weidner (former

Pathfinder secretary) commented, “It was exciting to see so many Pathfinders—and the talents and skills they have that can be used for God.”

Honouring Pioneers

The campmeeting featured several of the lay leaders, pastors, conference directors, and support staff who contributed to Ontario Pathfinders. Viewers were thrilled to see former leaders, including Lazarus and his successor, Cyril Millett, and Janice Maitland, former Education director and Pathfinder lay leader.

A highlight was the panel of Ena Dawn Edwards, Letitia Osborne, and David Clarke, who played a pivotal role from Ontario Pathfinders’ inception. They shared memories and words of wisdom for the next generation of leaders, including this gem from Osborne: “Be authentic. Be the same person in the club, at home, at church. And above all, let Jesus be your guide in leading young people.”

One of the many viewers expressing love for these pioneers was Maurice Rose, who wrote, “Good to see Brother Clarke.



Andrés Peralta

I remember seeing him way back when I started Pathfinders at age 10.”

Inspiring Messages

Andrés Peralta preached live in the morning. Focusing on the parable of the prodigal son, he admonished pathfinders to stay connected to the Father. He assured them that God’s eyes are upon all pathfinders, even those who strayed,

even during a pandemic. And like the prodigal son, we are never too far from the Father’s embrace. Nyjel Camanzo and Smith’s messages, combined, taught that as we stay in the will and Word of God, He’ll give us the strength to do whatever He is calling us to do.

A Bright Future

Finally, a panel including Mansfield Edwards, John Scott (youth director), Chester Lewis (OCPC executive co-ordinator), Martin, and local church leaders, Olivia Pryce and Jenai Wilson, named a few of the things we anticipate with Pathfinders: (1) increased community engagement, (2) more joint projects with Ontario Conference’s youth department, (3) collaboration between clubs, (4) a greater emphasis on spiritual grounding for Pathfinders, and (5) adaptability and preparedness to do ministry in any situation as we ultimately prepare to go home. ■

—Christelle Agboka,
communication director,
Ontario Conference

British Columbia

VGH Workers Receive Free Lunch From Oakridge Adventist Church



Lotus Seed Vegan Restaurant in Vancouver provides over 100 meals to Vancouver General Hospital staff.

In just a couple of hours, over 300 hot drinks were served to Vancouver General Hospital’s workers, paid for by Oakridge Adventist Church (OAC), to recognize Tuesday, April 7, as Health Care Appreciation Day. “They disappeared quite quickly; by 11:30 a.m. the whole credit was claimed,” explained the manager of Café Ami, Rosalind Coulson.

A total of 323 hot drinks were distributed among hospital staff, who sincerely appreciated the gesture. “They were happy and very grateful, but the demand was high, especially in the morning hours, so many who came later did not get one,” explained the manager. “Not only OAC, but other organizations have been reaching out with similar offers to recognize and help those who are exposing



news



Oakridge Adventist Church has installed lawn signs to show support for health care workers.

their lives to save others,” she commented.

Lunches are ready!

With a tray full of soup containers in his hands, his face hidden behind them, the owner of Lotus Seed Vegan Restaurant, Van Nguyen, explains he is in a hurry. “We must deliver orders right away, it is lunchtime, and we want to distribute at

least 100 meals today.”

Outside, the restaurant’s front window displays large letters that read, “Free food for health workers.” It is part of the restaurant’s shift in strategy while being closed to the public to make meals, instead, exclusively for the front-line hospital staff. OAC’s sponsorship of this program is expected to stretch this offer

by an additional five days as they seek other donors to keep this initiative going.

“We are delivering, but some people are coming to the store to pick up their orders and thank us for this act of solidarity that is very significant for them at this time,” he said.

Motivation

Rhoda Klein Miller, lead pastor at OAC, explained this initiative has only one goal: to recognize, support, and thank the front-line health workers for their brave service during this health crisis. “VGH is our region’s hot zone leading the fight against this pandemic,” she emphasized.

Miller said this is part of a broader strategy OAC developed to boost morale of those workers. “We have made lawn signs for neighbourhood yards to express support for everyone in health care, and remind them we are praying for them and their families daily.” ■

— Robert Bestwick, reprinted with permission from BC REACH magazine

SDACC

Employee Appreciation Program Recognizes Longtime Employees



Marilyn Pazitka, 45 years of service

A new employee appreciation program has been implemented at the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada (SDACC). This appreciation program will recognize full-time employees every five years for their continued years of service to the SDACC. We want our employees to know that we appreciate them and their commitment to the SDACC.

This year we honoured five employees, each of whom received a framed certificate and a small monetary gift. Verbal recognition of these employees was presented by their department co-workers and other employees, followed by prayer.

Marilyn Pazitka has worked at the

SDACC for 45 years. She is serving as the Canadian Retirement Plan Director. She started as receptionist/switchboard operator. As the years passed, she worked for various other departments such as Publishing, Treasury, Secretariat, and Presidential. These experiences prepared her for her current duties. She has steered the Retirement Plan through plan amendments, a major registered and health plan update, the implementation of a web-based program (from a floppy disk program), and the implementation of a new administrative program. Her knowledge and attention to detail is appreciated.

Brandy Perkins has worked for the SDACC for 20 years. She is serving as



Brandy Perkins, 20 years of service



Cathy Anderson, 15 years of service



Mark Johnson, 10 years of service



Paul Han, 5 years of service

the Education Specialist. Brandy provides administrative support to the department director and the associate director. She also acts as the Certification Registrar for education personnel in Canada. She is instrumental in the planning and implementation of various education meetings. Brandy is the glue that holds the Education department together, we appreciate all that she does for the SDACC.

Cathy Anderson has worked for the SDACC for 15 years. She is serving as the Executive Assistant to the President and other officers. She attends and maintains minutes for various committees. She is also instrumental in the planning process for these committees. Cathy does so much to keep the SDACC running smoothly.

We appreciate her positive attitude and her willingness to take on additional duties as needed.

Mark Johnson was appointed President of the SDACC 10 years ago. Prior to his employment with the SDACC, he served as the president of Alberta Conference and the vice-president of administration for the British Columbia Conference. His pastoral experience in Canada includes churches in the Manitoba-Saskatchewan and Ontario Conferences. He has also served as a pastor in the United States and the Philippines. The leadership that Mark provides to our office and across Canada to the various entities is greatly appreciated.

Paul Han has worked for the SDACC

for five years. He is serving as the IT Support Specialist. He provides computer support to all the SDACC staff and assists the IT manager in maintaining the computer infrastructure. We rely heavily on computers at the SDACC to complete our work. We are thankful for Paul and appreciate his assistance when we need it.

We value each and every one of our employees at the SDACC. My hope is that we are able to celebrate many more employment milestones in the future. ■

—Rose Jacinto with files from Charisma Hodgins, Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada

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>> SDACC REVOLVING FUND REPORT: As of Oct. 31, 2020, there were 391 depositors with a total deposit of \$31,780,766. There were 93 loans with a value of \$29,495,114.

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

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- The *Messenger* assumes no liability for typographical errors or responsibility for inaccuracies originating in submitted material.

Birthdays

Thelma (née Olafson) Johnson



of Kelowna, B.C., celebrated her 100th birthday on Sept. 3, 2020, with children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. She received phone calls, greeting cards, flowers, and visits from friends. The highlight for her was blowing out 100 candles without setting off the smoke alarm!

Weddings

Teresa Gayan and Clint Cleverley were married on Aug. 30, 2020, in Lumby, B.C., by Steve Little, and are making their home in Lumby. Teresa is the daughter of Bev Gayan, of Vernon, B.C., and John Gayan, of Burns Lake, B.C., and Clint is the son of Tim and Carol Cleverley, of Lumby.

Breanna Booth and Shayne Groeneveld were married on Aug. 8, 2020, in Armstrong, B.C., by Steve Little and Kim Wigley, and are making their home in Armstrong. Breanna is the daughter of Bruce and Alisa Booth, of Armstrong, and

Shayne is the son of John and Mary Groeneveld, of Armstrong.

Announcements

Cornerstone Seventh-day

Adventist Church is looking for the following missing members: David B. Barreno, Maria Barreno, Bernice Bergey, Andre Bock, Stephanie Kira Butler, Karina Byrne, Paul Byrne, Kathleen Chitombo, Steven Comm, Samantha Cross, Anna Cullingworth, Russell Cullingworth, Jim Donnett, Jasmine Ghala, Shawn Ghala, Hirod Gill, Lorretta Harris, Nicki Harris, Qi Xu Hu, Bonnie Huber, Helen Jackson, Anthony Johnson, Donna C. Jordan, Keith W. Jordan, Mary Lou Jordan, Louisa Ketece, Elizabeth Kremer, Laura Kruzick, Leona Kruzick, Angela Lungy, Oleg Lungy, Monica Martinez, Yvonne Matabela, John Lyam McGann, Leona McVicker, Vera Morgan, Chris Morrison, Gerard O. Obery, Marianne Obery, Andrea Parkerson, Ellen Parkerson, Michael Don Parkerson, Michael J. Parkerson, Florence Price, Arlene Ricard, Michelle Ricard, Melissa Tinoco Sanchez, Kathy Schulenburg, Doria Silvana, Adrian Small, Anthony (Rickey) Small, Larry Small, Andrea Stanhope, Todd Stanhope, Dan Stevenson, Tia Stevenson, Kara Straub, Anna Marie Suchy, Allen U. Upton, Lorna Upton, Amber V. Van Dun, Kristina Cathleen Van Dun, and Xiaomei Wang. If you have a current phone number, address, or email for any of these people, please contact Norman Cote at pastornormcote@mail.com.

Obituaries

Raven Herbert Hockley was born on Feb. 16, 1946, in Halifax, N.S., and died on Aug. 7, 2020, in Osoyoos, B.C. Raven loved the Lord and served Him faithfully in various church positions. He also loved writing poetry and playing guitar. Raven is predeceased by his father, Douglas Hockley; mother, Gwendoline Sands; brothers, David Hockley and Glenn Hockley; and sister, Sheila Hockley. Surviving: spouse, Donna Marie Hockley; sons, Christopher Hockley of Guangzhou, Guangdong, China, Steven (Tara-Lynn) Hockley of Moose Jaw, Sask., and Rodney (Bella) Hockley of Victoria, B.C.; stepson, Jason Van Buskirk of Victoria; daughter, Julie (Lee) Tiller of Salmon Arm, B.C.; stepdaughter, Amanda Van Buskirk of Victoria; sisters, Nancy (Ken) Weber of Biggar, Sask., and Mary Evans of Squamish, B.C.; half-sister, Elizabeth Ann (Peter) Keefe of Halifax; and nine grandchildren.

Wilfred Michaels was born on Oct.



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23, 1938, in Yarmouth, N.S., and died on June 9, 2020, in Regina, Sask. He pastored in five provinces of Canada. Pastor Wilfred is predeceased by his daughter, Barbara Clark; father, Ernest Michaels; mother, Martha (née Surette) Michaels; brothers, Jack Michaels, Ernest Michaels Jr., and George Michaels; and grandsons, Coury Michaels and Jeremy Sinclair. Surviving: spouse, Helen (née Muike) Michaels; sons, Wilfred "Sam" (Andrea) Michaels and Shawn T. (Beata) Michaels; daughters, Karen (Wayne) Bogdon and Lucinda (Pieter) Borma; 13 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

Marnon Wilde was born on Oct. 21, 1921, in Ribstone, Alta., and died on Oct. 16, 2019, in Victoria, B.C. Marnon funded certified reading therapist education for his wife, Bonnie, which evolved into an ADRA project to help students overcome dyslexia and also provide training materials for teachers and paraprofessionals, resulting in hundreds of students being rehabilitated in Canada. Marnon is predeceased by his parents, Norman and Elsie Wilde; brother, Gordon Wilde; and sisters, Jackie Wilde and Doris Wilde. Surviving: spouse, Bonnie (née Stansal) Wilde; sons, Dean Wilde and Doug Wilde; brother, Murry Wilde; sister, Lee Wilde; and four grandchildren.

Tributes

It is with great sadness that the family of William George Soloniuk



announces his passing on Aug. 4, 2020,

at the age of 99. He was born in Battleford, Sask., to George Eli Soloniuk and Ana Samograd. He had two older siblings that predeceased him: Dr. Victor Soloniuk and Mrs. Jeannette Weis.

William married Clayoma Finney in 1949, and prior to her passing on May 4, 2016, they shared great love and commitment for 68 years. He leaves to celebrate and honour his legacy: three daughters and sons-in-law, Gytha and Tom Mannen, Dr. Gaylene Soloniuk-Tays and Robert Tays, and Glenda and Dudley Spangler; two grandchildren and their spouses, Tynan and Alexandra Lesser, and Dr. Lexine Yurcho and Mike Yurcho; and three great-grandchildren, Lukas Lesser, Alexei Yurcho, and Saverine Yurcho.

William was a man full of energy, vision, and a remarkable zest for life without bounds. He grew up in Toronto, then attended Canadian Junior College (now Burman University), graduating in theology. He began his ministry in Terrace, B.C., and continued to serve his Lord in the Seventh-day Adventist Church around the globe throughout his career and past retirement.

William and Clayoma retired to Loma Linda in 1996, where they continued to minister to their community. When asked about his crowning achievement, he would reference dismantling the geodesic dome gymnasium in Loma Linda.

The love for Jesus Christ, his family, and his fellow man was evident in all aspects of his life. There were no strangers with William; he was a blessing to everyone.

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from the editor



GROWING UP IN a small town in western Canada left me ill-equipped to connect with those who differed from me in race, religion, and culture. The first two towns I lived in became ghost towns shortly after we moved. Both were Alberta oil towns, Royalties and Windfall.

In the early 1970s Canada opened its borders to people from all corners of the earth. It was a blessing not only to the Canadian economy but also to our culture.

Around the same time, I began exploring other faith groups and ended up becoming a Seventh-day Adventist. The first Adventist church I joined was the Bridgeland church in Calgary, which, at the time, had a majority-German membership but began welcoming families who had recently emigrated from the West Indies. The cultural differences at church arrested my attention but enriched my perspectives, and it was there that I experienced an incredible culture of hospitality, singing, laughter, friendship, and, best of all, mouthwatering potlucks.

Then Canada received another influx of new residents we formerly described as East Indians but now more appropriately refer to as South Asian. Perhaps due to my small-town upbringing, I saw more differences than similarities, focusing on clothing, food, and accents and being surprised by their lack of knowledge of my Baby Jesus. Eventually, I did meet more South Asians and made lasting friendships. Not only did I come to love those differences, but I quickly learned that those differences weren't so different.

Today almost 6 percent of Canadians are of South Asian descent, but only a fraction of them are seen in our churches. In an effort to understand our South Asian neighbours, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada launched a new bimonthly magazine, *Adventist Messenger: South Asian Edition*.

The magazine includes tips and tools for building friendships, conversation starters, testimonies of changed lives, mission reports, questions and answers about various South Asian religions, mouthwatering recipes, and more.

This Canadian-based magazine is now being used worldwide in the Adventist Church to help members connect with their South Asian friends and neighbours. To find out more or subscribe, email messengerSA@adventist.ca. Start off your new year by starting a subscription today. Some back issues are still available.

Had the *Adventist Messenger: South Asian Edition* been available to me back then, I would have made new friends sooner. If I knew then what I know now, my life would have been even richer. If I knew then what I know now, I would proudly proclaim that I was part of a church that embraced souls from every tribe, tongue, and nation. ■

from the editor

If I Knew Then What I Know Now

P.S.: We are also starting another outreach magazine called *Adventist Messenger: Adventist-Muslim Relations*. For more information, contact Megan Mootoo at resources@gcamr.org.



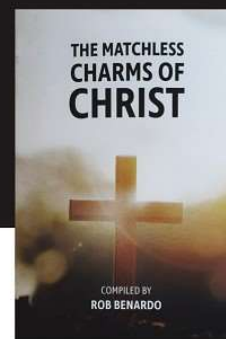
2020 has been a most unusual year with the virus and all the other happenings in North America and around the world. But God is using these events! People are searching; they want to know what is really happening and are looking to the Bible for answers.

As we survey what God has done in 2020, we stand in awe at God's compassion and mercy in providing the means to keep this ministry sounding across Canada!

- Mass mailouts of Bible school enrollment cards and other material
- Bible school enrollments have more than doubled
- The Great Controversy books are going out by the thousands
- 4 new TV stations across Canada
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