

Amazing Testimonies from Amazing Facts (p. 8),  
Coming Home (p. 32), Finding Inspiration (p. 34)

January 2021

Canadian Adventist  
**Messenger**

Lost on the  
Cold Streets  
With the  
Heartbeat  
of Madness



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Love*



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heart to heart

“They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.”

—Daniel 12:3, KJV

## Let it Shine!

This is one of those sparkly verses of Scripture that radiate enduring brightness. I love the symbolism of light. The two preceding verses speak of times of difficulty and the resurrection, but the passage ends on wisdom and presents the principal goal of Christianity—turning many to righteousness.

Fascinating isn't it? The blessing of God is not mentioned for those who win Scripture debate contests. Instead, God values faith that changes people by example.

As we have just stepped through the doorway of a new year, it's a good time to pause and take stock of what we value, how we spend our time.

Faith is founded on God's words, not ours. He speaks truth that we can count on. Truth for doctrine, truth for living all week long.

The sharing of faith is a role that belongs to you and to me. God gives us a context for how we are to do that. While faith comes by the Word of God (Rom. 10:17), it is the life witness of the individual Christian that will make this faith appealing to others. This means that how you and I live this year will either turn many to righteousness or turn them away.

If we are wise, we will choose to *show* faith more than speak about it. Talk is fairly cheap. Actions are what count.

By spending time sharing with others online or in person, depending on circumstances, as a neighbour and friend, we are doing our part in God's plan of salvation.

In a moment of crisis, you, I, can be a glimmer of hope for those nearby. Why not become the preferred friend in difficult days? Listening accomplishes more than speaking.

You and I can shine brightly in our life of compassion for others.

Shall we make 2021 the year of living compassionately on our street, in our neighbourhood, among our friends?

Let it shine (Matt. 5:16)! ■

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





# One Vision

The will to do, the faith to endure

*"The best thing about Maskwacis Church is the people."*

Carmelia Soosay, MANS Alumna & Licensed Care Giver

The Maskwacis Congregation is all about people. Though they've been meeting for years, that's all the congregation has—people. There's never been an Adventist church building.

Among the MANS kids who attended was a pre-teen, Carmelia.

Now as a mother with children who look forward to Sabbath School each week, Carmelia works at the Wetaskiwin Hospital and looks forward to becoming a nurse. She wants to be part of healing her community.

Carmelia wants a place where practical as well as spiritual needs are met. A multi-use church where her neighbours can drop in for church services or health classes and feel at home.

A place where it's good to be a First Nations Adventist. That's Carmelia's dream.

**The Maskwacis  
Congregation**  
& Mamawi Atosketan  
Native School

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## January 2021



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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:** Last month I gave you the first part of the answer. In my opinion, the public health orders infringe the constitutionally guaranteed rights of freedom of religion, association, and assembly. But that's only the beginning of the analysis.

Government decisions that infringe Charter rights will be upheld if the courts find them to be reasonable limits on our rights. Courts examine government action with a goal of ensuring that Charter protections are upheld to the fullest extent possible, given sufficiently important statutory objectives. Limitations are supposed to achieve a proportionate balance when measured against Charter protections.

In assessing this proportionate balancing, courts will first look at whether the state's objective is sufficiently important. I have little doubt that, in light of a worldwide pandemic, courts will conclude that the purpose of public health orders is sufficiently important. It will not be difficult for the government to successfully argue that protecting health and lives is important enough to limit normal freedoms.

Even with a sufficiently important objective, the public health orders will be upheld if they are not rationally connected with the purpose (limiting the spread of COVID-19) or if they impair individual freedoms more than necessary. This is where things get more interesting—and difficult.

Public health orders are made by provincial authorities and differ across the country. I have to assess this in a very

general way that may not apply particularly well to the specific order that closed down your particular church.

The first issue is whether the order is rationally connected with the objective limiting the spread of the virus. Here, a court may look at the issue generally or may analyze the specific terms of an order. In a general analysis, I expect courts will find a rational connection. If the analysis is more specific, it may be possible to show that the nature of the limitations does not actually limit the spread of the virus. On balance, my view is that the government would win this point.

The trickiest part for the government is on the question of minimal impairment; can the government show that freedoms are restricted no more than necessary? A public health order that is overbroad or that could have been crafted in a way that limited religious assembly to a lesser extent could be struck out. For example, limiting gatherings to a specific number may not take into account the size of building and may be easier to attack. A limitation expressed as a percentage of the normal capacity of the room may be easier to justify. The specifics of the order matter a great deal.

The real problem with any such constitutional challenge is the time it will take to have the matter heard by a court. We can hope and pray that by then the pandemic will be over. ■

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*Kevin Boonstra is a lawyer in British Columbia. Send your religious liberty questions to [messenger@adventist.ca](mailto: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.*



# Do You Have Enough Courage to Love?

"From 3:45 until 10:00 in the morning, rain or shine, five days a week for 30 years Johnny Barnes showed up and freely shared a simple message of love."

Johnny wasn't the kind of man who could retire. Being in the habit of getting up at 2 a.m., eating his breakfast, reading his Bible, and praying for two hours, one morning Johnny asked the Lord, "What do you want me to do now? I can't sit around all day. I have to tell people about your love. I am just little Johnny Barnes, an instrument in your hands. Lord, what do you want me to do?"

Johnny says the Lord impressed him to go stand on the street corner and tell the people passing by three words: "I love you."

So, Johnny was obedient, and he went to the corner of the Crow Lane roundabout, the busiest intersection in Bermuda, and started waving to people at 3:45 a.m. that morning. It was still dark when he started, but that didn't stop Johnny. He stood there and waved at everyone passing into Hamilton on their way to work until 10 a.m. Then he visited the hospital, prayed with the sick, and tried to cheer everyone he met.

The next morning he awoke at 2 a.m., ate his breakfast, opened his Bible, prayed for God's guidance, and felt impressed to do the same thing as the day before. He made it to the corner of the Crow Lane roundabout at 3:45 a.m. and started waving to the people, telling them, "God loves you. I love you. Hope you have a good day!" From 3:45 until 10:00 in the morning, rain or shine, five days a week for 30 years Johnny Barnes showed up and freely shared a simple message of love.

One of my students at Fountainview Academy (Lillooet, B.C.) came from Bermuda, and he told me that Johnny's wife was just as loving as her husband, except she was a little more behind the scenes.

One day Johnny failed to show up at his regular spot. All over the island of Bermuda, phones at the local police department and the radio station rang off the hook: *What happened to Johnny Barnes?*

It turned out that Johnny was in the hospital—nothing serious—and soon after, he reappeared in his usual spot; however, his time off "work" had some people worrying what would happen if they had to drive to work in the morning without seeing Johnny.

The answer was to hire a local sculptor to create a life-sized bronze statue of Johnny Barnes, which they did, spending over \$70,000 to honour this amazing man.

It makes us think, *What if I didn't turn up at work one morning? Would people call the radio station or the police department to find out what happened to me? Would they raise \$70,000 to create a life-sized statue of me?*

The people of Bermuda did that for Johnny Barnes; although, Johnny wasn't doing it to attract attention to himself. He did it because God told him to do it.

Many people simply couldn't understand where this was coming from, but Johnny, a devout Seventh-day Adventist, never shied away from expressing the love of Jesus, even to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II when she visited Bermuda in 2009. After receiving a certificate of honour from the Queen, Johnny couldn't help but express the words of his heart: "I love you, and I am praying for you."

The Queen responded, "And I love you, too."

If you want to learn more about this remarkable man of God, please go to [itiswrittencanada.ca](http://itiswrittencanada.ca) or *It Is Written Canada's* YouTube videos (channel name: *IIWCanada*) and watch the story of Johnny Barnes, titled, "Do You Have Enough Courage to Love?" ■

Mike Lemon is the speaker/director for *It Is Written Canada*.



# Amazing Testimonies

## from Amazing Facts Ministries

The following testimonies are from those who are completing the Amazing Facts Bible study lessons, or those who are watching our programs on TV across Canada.

C wrote: "I have been watching Pastor Doug [Batchelor]'s broadcasts for some time now and have learned so much. I live in [city] and have been watching many of the Adventist stations, and have been blessed. See, I have been a Sunday worshipper for over 70 years now and have been asking myself and some of my colleagues the very question I saw relating to the special offer "Is Sunday really sacred?" I would like very much to have a copy, please. I pray for you all every day, especially those in the mission field in faraway places. May God continue to bless and guide you as you obey His Word."

M wrote: "I have been watching your program for a couple months ... Pastor Batchelor is the first minister that really makes sense. He speaks in understandable English and follows up with provable facts from history and, the best yet, the Bible. ... Both my mother and I, [having been] raised in another church, never felt that we could get baptized. We just weren't good enough. ... I now know that I can be baptized. I plan to do it as soon after the COVID lockdown as I can arrange it. I am especially grateful for the insight into Revelation. I could never understand it. Now I feel it makes sense. ... Thank you so much for Amazing Facts and Pastor Batchelor's seminars."

S wrote: "I have been watching your show for the last few years and I have learned so much from you. I have ordered a number of your study guides and love how they are presented. I am actually a member of another church, but you have me thinking so hard about the Sabbath and am now feeling guilty. So, it looks like I may become a Seventh-day Adventist."

B wrote: "I enjoyed the Bible study that was sent to me. I hope I did well. I am new to Christ. I only started

to study and read the Bible here in prison. Thank you for the magazine. I have shared it with other inmates; they're all asking when the next one will come."

J wrote: "Thank you for all 27 courses. I was moved very much. The course opened my eyes to being a stronger Christian. I learned so much in my walk with Christ. Be safe, everyone at Amazing Facts, during these challenging times with the COVID-19 virus. God bless you in your walk with the Lord."

J and M wrote: "We want to do God's will. I was raised in another church. So, I want to learn more of the truth. So, for 50 years we thought Sunday was Sabbath. I want to keep the Seventh-day Sabbath. Praise God it is never too late to learn and put into practice revealed truth."

D wrote: "A short note to thank you for the certificate on my completion of the Bible lessons. ... I have enjoyed very much learning more about the Bible than I ever knew before. The timing was perfect. It helped me get through the death of my son as well. When I was younger, I attended Sunday school with my family every week. I have two uncles, a cousin, and my brother [who] are all ministers, but I have learned more through your lessons, which you sent me, and I thank you and appreciate it so much."

We thank all those who support Amazing Facts Ministries with their heartfelt prayers and support. ■





# Creation Corner for Kids

*The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!*

—Matt. 6:22, 23, NKJV

## Flashlight Fish

In 2013, while studying coral in the South Pacific, a couple of divers saw an amazing sight one evening just after sunset. Hundreds of small flashlight fish, with their blue lights flashing, were pouring out of a cave. The fish were swimming together in a large school toward deeper water, where they would feed on plankton for the night. The divers were surprised. They'd never seen a school of fish at night before.

Small fish usually don't feed at night, because that's when the big fish are out hunting. In the daytime small fish often school together to protect themselves from predators, but they can't do this at night because they can't see one another. Flashlight fish are different, though. They're able to school together at night because of their light patches.

### Think about it.

The flashlight fish are single-minded. They have one purpose—to help each other get to deep water to feed. If they allowed distractions to take them from their goal, they would swim aimlessly and not get through the darkness safely together.

Our goal is to live for God's glory, and we should help others to do the same. If we allow Satan's distractions to keep us from our purpose, we will get lost in spiritual darkness and never reach our heavenly home.

### Do it!

Trust God. Ask Him to take away your selfishness so that you can live for His glory. Then shine for Him in this dark world.

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





Since moving to the Keep Girls Safe shelter, Nina has discovered a talent for Hmong embroidery.

The Keep Girls Safe shelter in Thailand is a haven for young girls. Here they are able to live in a safe, stable environment while they attend elementary and high school.

Nina\* was not born in Thailand but moved there with her mother and four younger siblings. Nina's mom had to leave her children early in the morning to work as a labourer. As the oldest child, Nina had the responsibility of getting up at 4 a.m. every day to cook breakfast for her siblings, take them to school, clean the house, and take care of the youngest child who was not yet in school. Nina did attend school, but the other children bullied her because of her poverty.

When Nina was in her early teens, her mother would force her to put on makeup, dress up, and work at a karaoke bar in the nearby town. She wanted Nina to stop going to school and marry a rich man.

Nina hated her life. One morning she decided to commit suicide. Her mother had some herbicides in the house, and Nina drank them before going to school. At school Nina was dizzy and had a terrible stomachache. Her teacher and the school headmaster took her to the hospital, where the doctors were able to save her life.

The headmaster was concerned that Nina would try to kill herself again or that her mother would force her into marriage. He went to talk to the local Seventh-day Adventist pastor. The pastor contacted the Keep Girls

Safe shelter and asked them to take Nina.

The shelter staff immediately went to visit Nina. At first, her mother refused to let her go to the shelter, but the local social workers, the headmaster, and the pastor convinced her that Nina would be able to live a better life if she went to the shelter and finished her education.

Nina has been at the shelter for two years. Her life has completely changed. She is happy and has made friends with the other girls. She has talents for drawing, Hmong embroidery, and playing the guitar. She participates in cooking classes and helps to take care of the shelter's kitchen garden. Nina will be graduating from high school soon and dreams of becoming a fashion designer. Two of Nina's siblings have been adopted by another organization.

Your support of the Keep Girls Safe shelter has helped Nina and other girls like her live free of fear. They are secure in the knowledge that the staff will care for them physically and emotionally. All of the girls at the shelter have experienced trauma, but the generosity and unfailing kindness of our supporters gives them happiness and hope. ■



*Sharmilla Reid is the supporter relations director for ADRA Canada.*

\*Name changed to protect her identity.



# FRESH FAITH

## Trusting True North

by Alannah Tjhatra



Ashley Arriola has always brought special energy into a room, and she uses this energy in her work with children and youth who have Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

Growing up in Toronto and moving frequently until settling in Oshawa at the age of 12, Ashley has always been a caring, insightful person. She realized that God was calling her to pursue a profession working with young people in her fourth year of university.

By this time, Ashley had worked several different jobs. She knew she enjoyed working with children and had been touched by the story of her cousin Anne, who had been

diagnosed with ASD and had improved greatly with the help of therapists and special education teachers. Still, Ashley wanted God's direction.

"I asked God to show me if He wanted me to get into Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA), pursue ministry full-time, or [consider becoming] a barista. By May 2018, before I even finished university, I had an interview at a children's clinic. By the end of June, I found out I got the job and started [working] the following September."

Now Ashley works with a talented, multidisciplinary team whose goal consists of helping ASD children become more independent individuals. Ashley gets to work directly with the children, breaking goals down into smaller, achievable steps.

When asked what the best thing about her career is, Ashley says she is reminded of the multiple stories of Jesus healing the sick or disabled. "I love that God helps me see His love for the children and families I get the honour of working with," she says. "Making a difference through [helping children develop] daily living skills, communication skills, and gross or fine motor skills—that's what I look forward to doing."

Ashley's patience and love for children shine through her when she works. She understands that every child, with or without an ASD diagnosis, is an individual who needs specific care and support.

"Work is not just a job to me; it's a ministry," says Ashley. "I am chosen to work where I do because God sent me there."

It was God who showed Ashley where she should be, and when. She explains that it isn't our responsibility to know what's best for us; that's God's job. Instead, we can focus on what we *can* do, and that is choosing Jesus as our True North. ■

# 35 & UNDER

In 35 words or less, what are your goals for 2021?

### Kwesi Tuffour

My goals are to be less stressed, less annoyed, and more happy.



### Enlai Wang

I would like to visit my parents or see them again; I haven't been able to see them because the borders are closed and they live in the Philippines.

### Linda Trinidad

My goal for 2021 is to be more productive and procrastinate less. I want to be more productive with school and working out, and I want to improve my mental health.



### Aidan Li

I want to get closer to God and improve myself as a person.

### Cassia Mohns

To work on my relationship with God, because I have been putting it off and am finally getting back on track with it. And to stay healthy mentally/physically and surround myself with positive friends.



### Samuel Pelobello

My goal is to get an A in all of my classes so I can eventually get into med school.





# Ask Me Anything

**Q:** My girlfriend just broke up with me. I really loved her. How can I go on without her? How do I heal my broken heart?

**A:** This will take time. Give yourself time and space to grieve. You will need to grieve the hopes and plans you had for the future and even for the habit of having a girlfriend to count on and talk to.

Time doesn't heal a broken heart; intention does. Be intentional in reaching out to people who are still a part of your life, like your parents, aunts, siblings, cousins, or close friends. I encourage you to pray through the waves of sadness and despair as they come. You may also find it helpful to journal, start a new hobby (or get back into an existing one), or learn a new skill.

It will be important to be open with at least one person about how you are doing; that way they can support you while you grieve this loss. A Bible verse I

hold dear is "He heals the broken hearted and binds up their wounds" (Psalm 147:3, NKJV). I pray God will surround you with comfort and hope.

Breakups can be terrible. They leave us feeling vulnerable, rejected, and hopeless about finding love again, and it's not easy to get past them. But you can allow your heart to heal with affirmations from God about your intrinsic value. That means regardless of who you are with or what you are going through, you are full of worth and value because God is your Creator. ■

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



# FIRST RESPONDERS

**A**fter an important meeting with the case management team at a local hospital, I strolled outside with my co-worker. We stand a few feet apart, grateful to have a cold breeze blow past us, keeping the masks covering our faces in an attempt to prevent COVID-19. As we debriefed, I noticed a man sitting on the ground through the corner of my eyes, against the wall. He looked homeless.

After finishing our conversation, we both began to walk toward our vehicles. The man in the corner started crying hysterically and moaning in distress. We both stopped and looked at the man, wondering if he was in pain. He was on a cell phone, sobbing. Then we continued to walk away. After taking a few more steps, I looked over to my colleague and said, "The pastor in me can't leave that poor guy alone. I need to check on him." She agreed and continued on her way. I turned back and walked toward the man. He had finished his phone call and was sitting slumped over, crying alone.

"Hey man," I said calmly. "You seem upset. Can I keep you company?"

He looked up at me and whimpered, "Yes." Again, he began to sob, covering his face with his hands. Even though I was wearing my best outfit for the important meeting I'd had earlier, I sat down on the cold slab of cement a couple of feet away from him. I wanted him to know that I wasn't planning on leaving anytime soon. Even though I was trying to maintain my distance and continued to wear my mask, he did not wear one over his face. I could smell the nicotine coming from his mouth, passing through the mask, into my nose. I had reason to worry.

Over the next 25 minutes, I discovered his name was Leo. He worked at a local fast-food chicken restaurant and lived on the street. He had learned that his mother had died a few minutes prior. "My mom was the only person in this world who loved me and believed in me," he cried out loud. "Now I have nobody. I'm alone." After some time, I asked him if he believed in God. "Yes," he whimpered in a weak voice.

"Can I pray with you?" I asked, hesitantly. Before Leo even finished saying yes, he had grabbed my hands and squeezed them for prayer. My initial reaction was fear. The fear of COVID was real. This strange man who had grabbed on to my hands was now sitting even closer to me. After I prayed for Leo and went on my way, I wondered about my decision to minister to this man. *Had I used poor judgment? Was I putting my family at risk? How far should we help others before considering our own safety?\**

We can debate the ethical standards of safety or even the moral argument of wearing masks. Here is what I know for sure. There are hundreds of thousands of people dying of COVID-19. Their family members are overwhelmed with grief. Your church could serve as first responders to these grieving people. ■

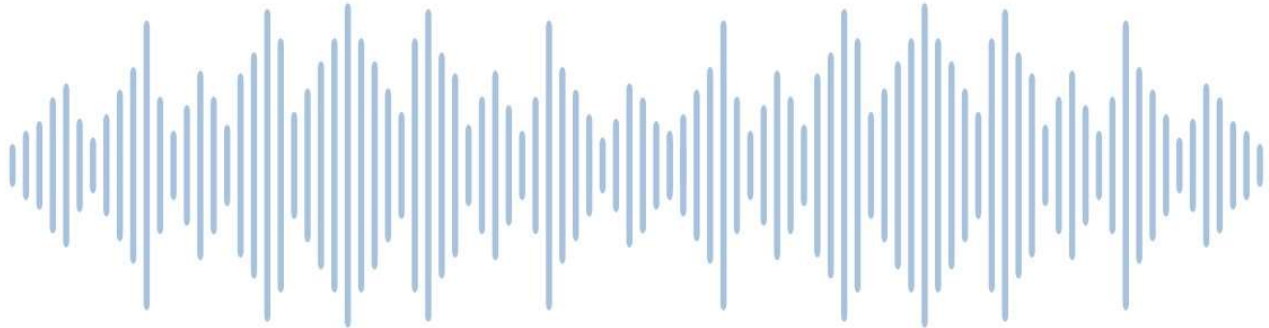
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*Kumar Dixit is the creative principal of Dixit Media Group, an organization that rebrands religious and non-profit organizations.*

\*I work at a local hospice. As a precautionary measure for the safety of our patients and their families, I am tested for COVID-19 weekly. After meeting with Leo, my results came back negative.

# Tech SAVvy

BY SANDY AUDIO VISUAL



## It's Time

Upgrades... the very word strikes fear in the hearts of the most seasoned and battle-weary deacon boards and finance committees. And while many a sermon is able to extract a blessing from even the most tenuous of circumstances, audio-visual upgrades are often viewed with trepidation bordering anathema. This fear, of course, is completely unfounded. An upgrade should be embraced as an opportunity to enhance the overall AV experience, better serve the congregation, and embrace good stewardship.

But why upgrade? First, the obvious: equipment malfunction. If your current analog gear is becoming problematic, don't wait. Consider an upgrade before it fails unexpectedly. I would suggest starting with the hub of all things audio—the console. Digital consoles are more affordable than ever and offer increasing value for money with every iteration. At this time it would also be advisable to review the entire audio system. Chances are most of the equipment was installed around the same time and thus subject to similar levels of entropy. Once one piece of aging equipment becomes erratic, others are likely to follow.

In one recent install, where the intermittent failings of the previous analog system were tolerated for far too long, a simple three-piece upgrade—a 32-channel digital console, a digital stage box, and a single ceiling-routed CAT5 cable—took the system from karaoke to concert hall in mere hours. A complement of digital wireless microphones, acquired months later when the budget allowed, created a primarily digital signal path. The clarity and headroom of the new console's preamps became even more evident. The system now sings where previously it just coughed.

Another reason to upgrade to a new digital system is the cost-savings. The initial outlay, depreciated over the life of the equipment, produces a minimal weekly cost of ownership. And depending on the current system, a digital board adds or replaces multiple pieces of outboard gear. In this particular example,

numerous compressors, effects, and graphics equalizers were made obsolete. External audio recording devices were also no longer required. Multitrack and two-track recording capabilities are available when needed—sans computer.

Adding to the savings would be the cost of volunteer training. A simplified control surface and compact footprint make for a less intimidating workspace. Once properly configured, parameters can be locked and the job of the operator becomes infinitely easier. With programmable scenes, motorized faders, and memory recall, training time and the potential for user error are both minimized.

Now you're on your way to a more enjoyable service experience, but one more critical upgrade option should not be overlooked. We've all heard comments from church visitors about things being too loud. That ringing in your ear should let you know that they're probably right. But what's the source of this problem, and how can it be solved easily?

If you don't have an acoustically treated space, adequate ceiling height, or a deep stage, you can start by taming the stage volume. The louder the stage, the louder the PA has to be. Musicians on a loud stage will fall victim to short-term hearing loss within minutes. Senses dulled, they instinctively play louder just to hear themselves better. Dispensing with the musicians' wedge monitors in favour of those of the in-ear variety will easily bring the stage volume in check. (A less cluttered stage and reduced acoustic feedback are added bonuses!) Add a Wi-Fi router, and musicians will have the app-based option of setting up their monitor mixes themselves. For them, their first taste of heaven! All made easy once you've overcome the fear of upgrades and taken the first steps to embrace the digital world. ■

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*Patrick Alexander (patrick@savweb.com) is an integration specialist for Sandy Audio Visual. Go to [www.savweb.com](http://www.savweb.com) for more about Sandy Audio Visual.*



# Growing Up Millennial

TBH

*"Improving yourself does not, and should not, only happen at the beginning of the year."*

## Why New Year's Resolutions Should Be *All Year* Resolutions

I feel the same way every New Year. That I'm supposed to make some kind of change and do something to improve myself. It's such an arbitrary time of year to pick to change oneself, but it's the same pattern every year. Personally, I think that resolutions should be constant. We should all be aware of ourselves and our actions all of the time. This way we can put in an effort to always improve ourselves.

This doesn't mean that we don't accept ourselves as we are. Sometimes we need to say "OK, that's how I am. I'm happy with how I react to this/how I feel about this/my opinion on that subject." And that's great! But being aware and taking into account ways in which we can be more compassionate, accepting, and caring is vital to living a productive life.

In order to continue to be the best we can be, we need to know ourselves well enough to be comfortable with the idea of change. No matter how old anyone is, there's always room for improvement. There's always room to become more accepting of others. There's always room to learn about other opinions and then generate your own ideas about how you react to those opinions. There's always room to learn to control your temper or suspend your point of view. And improving yourself does not, and should not, only happen at the beginning of the year.

I don't know how many people I've talked to, both young and old, who have the idea that they're good the way they are and don't need to hear any other opinions or perspectives because they're always right. I'm guilty of this idea, too, once in a while. It's easy because it's comfortable. But if

grad school has taught me anything, it's that life is so much more than just accepting who you think you are at face value. It's about acknowledging your faults, your judgments, and learning why it is you value what you value. Is it because that's what your parents have always done? Is it because you've actually thought long and hard about why you place importance on a certain topic? Is it because this is how you've personally always done it?

And asking these questions doesn't mean that a person is going to change their entire personality. In fact, doing this kind of self-reflection only allows for a person to become more aware of why they act the way that they act. In some cases, maybe you learn that you love the way you are. But it does require an honest, sometimes uncomfortable, look into oneself.

The Bible has lots of verses about self-reflection, focusing on bettering who you are and becoming a better representation of Christianity. The one that's always "struck home" for me is Matthew 7:4: "How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is a plank in your own eye?" To make any difference in the world, it's necessary to look at who you are and what you do before ever critiquing anyone else. It's vital that you look at who you are before you settle on any idea of "That's just the way I am." With God's guidance and by being truly open to change, we can learn to be the best people we can be and continue to grow throughout our entire lives. ■

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



# Looking Beyond the Horizon



## Mayagwe (He Speaks Strangely)

*Boozhoo* *Minogizhebaawagad. Cam nindizhinkaaz. Saskatchewan nindonjibaa. Netley Creek onjibaa nookomis. Waabizhishi nindoodem.*

Hello, it is a good morning (as I write). Cam is my name. Saskatchewan is where I am from originally. Netley Creek is where my grandmother is from. Marten is my clan.

I wish I could say I didn't get this passable translation from an Ojibwé site for learning this language.<sup>1</sup> *Nimayawage*, I speak strangely. But it *should* be my language, as should Cree, as should Michif. These are the languages of my Indigenous ancestors. They are full of meaning, culture, learning, history, place, and guidance from the Creator in ways that no other language can capture. They are languages stolen from me.

So many Indigenous people in Canada have a similar experience. Millions have lost so much of their identity because of intentional efforts at erasing us through those things that were and are the framework for forming who we are. There are so few fluent speakers left, and this scarcity compounds just how difficult it is to reclaim a crucial component of the healing and reconciliation process.

In Genesis 11:6, God confuses the languages of the earth. The most common interpretation people get out of this passage is that it explains how such a great variety of languages in the world came to exist. The less common reading is that God seems to have an issue with the idea of human-made empires. But I don't want to talk about either of those perspectives. I want to talk about what's *not said* in the passage.

Reticence is one of the most important tools biblical writers use to convey meaning, and what is "not said" here is speaking so loudly that it screams for us to understand.

God created different languages to prevent people from communicating with one another, but *not to prevent them from communicating with Him*. Did you get that? Not to prevent us from communicating with Him.

Think about what that means. It means that the language

of the Creator is found in every language on earth. He created them. He placed within each language the ability for that speaker to know, love, and follow their Creator. Might we go so far as to say that within each of these languages is part of the image of God, our Creator? There is a profound value within the diversity of God's creation, including the languages of the earth—a value we have yet to realize.

So, what would happen if, in trying to bring Christianity into another culture, we were to erase God's linguistic revelation of Himself in that particular language? Could we, in seeking to do good, actually be working against God and what He has already done? Intent on speaking our own language of faith into a new and different culture, we were not listening to and learning from God's linguistic revelation right there in front of us.

Wouldn't we want to fix that?

There are things God the Creator has passed on to the Indigenous Peoples of Canada through our languages, as He was speaking to us long before English and French reached our shores. As we help preserve these languages, we'll be learning about the amazing ways God has spoken to all His children all over the world, in all times. We will all become more like Jesus as we do this.

*Nindanishinaabem*, I speak Anishinaabemowin. I so desperately want to say this without an online translation. How can you, how can we, help the Indigenous Peoples of Canada preserve the over 70 Indigenous languages, and many more dialects that remain in Canada, many which are soon to be extinct. We are not extinct. We need our languages. If you want to help, please check out our website, [imsdacc.com](http://imsdacc.com), and the resources therein.

*Miigwich,*  
Campbell ■

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*Campbell Page is the Indigenous Relations director for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada.*





## New Beginnings

*"The New Year is a time of beginning again, in many ways.  
What new beginning are you asking God for?"*

I remember the first time I sang in public. I was about three or four years old and sang with my sister, who was a year younger than me. My older brother, my sister, and I learned to sing in three-part harmony when we were still very young. We sang in church, on the radio, for the elderly people we went to visit, at home, and in the car no matter where we were travelling. Wherever we went, people always asked us to sing.

Now, that might sound lovely and amazing to you, but for introverted and desperately shy me, it wasn't. For me, it was pressure, and add to that being told not to hide my light under a bushel when I sang (which for me meant that if I refused, I would be). It became a spiritual issue in my young heart. The fear and pressure I experienced in the "limelight" led to a disconnect between music and my heart. I could still sing, but music didn't move me, nor did I ever worship God through music. I didn't know back then that I could give my feelings and fears to God and let Him replace them with His peace.

It was only a few years ago that I realized I was missing something in my worship of God and that music might be the missing piece. Heaven is filled with worship in music, but if my heart didn't respond to God through it, something was desperately wrong.

God quickly showed me the root of the issue when I asked Him what it was, and then I asked for healing so that I could worship Him both in spirit and in truth. He has been doing some amazing things in that healing process, and the changes He's making in me are astonishing and rewarding. I truly had no idea how much I was missing!

The New Year is a time of beginning again, in many ways. What new beginning are you asking God for? What area of your life are you willing to surrender and see what He does to transform it? It isn't about pressuring yourself to do better or do differently. Can a leopard change its spots? Neither can we, broken as we are, do better than we do, unless the transforming power of God heals, cleanses, restores, frees, and recreates us.

It is possible to live with a less abundant life for long enough that we believe that this is all that's available, until heaven. I had no idea what I was missing until God began to heal me. Now He wakes me every morning with a song (almost without fail). Usually it is words He is singing to me, and sometimes it is words I can sing back to Him—and I love it!

After the craziness of 2020, it is easy to be uneasy about 2021, yet God desires to give us a more abundant life than we are living now. I wonder ... what is still missing for me? What transformation does He have in store for you? Let's ask Him. ■

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



# Where Are They Now



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

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



Sandra and Lloyd Steeves

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

**Lloyd Steeves:** I was born in the small village of Hillsboro, N.B., just south of Moncton. When I was still a young boy, Elder Schwartz would come to our house and talk to my parents. It was because of him and those visits that we became Seventh-day Adventist. After that I attended the Moncton Seventh-day Adventist Church with my parents and my older brother, Gary.

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

**L:** I attended public school in Hillsboro until we moved to Willowdale, Ont., when I was about 15 years old. My brother had gone to Ontario to go to Kingsway College sometime before, and then began working at Branson Hospital. Eventually, we followed his path, and both my parents went to work at Branson Hospital, too, while I attended Toronto Junior Academy (now Crawford Adventist Academy). While I was still a student, I began working at the hospital after school. I worked in the kitchen and figured out pretty quickly that I liked doing that work. It led me to later go to George Brown College in Toronto, where I trained as a professional chef and baker. I worked in food preparation and service for many, many years before I felt the call to the ministry.

Prompted by the Holy Spirit, I left my career in culinary arts and went back to school at 42 years old. By that time, I was married and had my two girls, Kim and Crystal, and all of us picked up and left the Maritimes to attend Burman University, then called Canadian Union College. I graduated from CUC in 1994 with a bachelor of arts in theology along with my youngest daughter.



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

**L:** I served the church during my first career, by being both cook and food service director in church-operated nursing homes: four years at West Park Manor in Winnipeg, Man., and 10 years at Kennebec Manor in Saint John, N.B. I was always very active in the church—as an elder, head elder, Pathfinder leader, personal ministries director, and most anything else there was a need for. I also assisted with various evangelistic meetings over the years and even helped build a church.

Later, during my second career, I started in the Dartmouth and Tantallon district, then moved to the Truro, Pugwash, and New Glasgow churches, and then moved to Cape Breton where I pastored my wife's childhood church in North Sydney. I also held occasional services in the Lake Ainsle Chapel. This congregation is the oldest continuing congregation in the Cape Breton Presbytery.

**M:** *What led you to change your career from preparing physical bread to spiritual bread later in life?*

**L:** I had felt the call to the ministry as a young boy, but I never pursued it. As I said, I stayed very active in the church and contented myself with that until our daughters started to make their own plans to attend Parkview Adventist Academy (PAA) and CUC. At that point, I thought, *Maybe the time is right*. My wife, Sandra, and I prayed about it a lot and listened for the Lord's leading. It didn't take long to hear His response, and with that, the decision was made to make the journey to Alberta and post-secondary studies a sort of family venture.

**M:** *In your time as a pastor is there a special event that stands out in your ministry?*

**L:** The thing that stands out most to me in my ministry was the evangelistic series we held at my church in Dartmouth, N.S. The church had made the decision to bring in Victor Gill to be the evangelist, and with his partnership, we baptized 12 people during the series.

In addition to that, though, the feeling of the Holy Spirit moving through the entire group was just so powerful. We had a prayer area set aside in the church that we kept active the entire time the meetings were happening, and more than once it happened that we would pray for the Spirit to bring in a particular person and then see them walk through the door a few moments later. The feeling of intervening for individuals and working with the Holy Spirit to bring them to salvation was incredibly powerful.

On a more personal or familial note, I'd also have to mention that a real stand-out to me is the fact that I got to officiate in the dedication of all four of my grandchildren. That was a special treat, I can tell you.

**M:** *What is one of your favourite texts and why?*

**L:** Ephesians 6:10–18. I really appreciate hearing exactly how I can prepare for the events that are to come by putting on the whole armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

The world has been especially unsettled lately. COVID-19 is a real reminder that we're always just a moment away from trouble, but these verses help me feel better knowing there are things I can do that will help me stand firm.

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

**L:** I've mentioned everyone a few times already, but let me go through each one briefly. Kim, our eldest daughter, is also married to a good Maritimer, Curtis Harrington. They have two girls, Joanne and Jessica. Kim teaches at Mamawi Atosketan Native School, and Curtis works at Advanced Systems, while the girls both attend school. Joanne is a student at Walla Walla University, and Jessica is finishing up at PAA.

Our younger daughter, Crystal, is happily living in Ontario with her husband, Al, and their two children, Kyle and Moira-Kelly. She works in communications and public relations, and Al is a web hosting manager for Kinsta. Kyle is a landscaper, and Moira-Kelly is attending her grandfather's first alma mater, George Brown College, to become a social worker.

My wife, Sandra, has held several positions over the years. When we were all in school at CUC, she was the glue that held the Plant Services department together, serving as their secretary during those years. Mostly, however, she spent her career as a personal care worker, tending to the elderly and special needs individuals in the community. She joined me in retirement to keep me from getting bored!

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

**L:** I took early retirement in 2013 when the Maritime Conference was experiencing some financial hardship and needed to downsize a few positions. We spent a little time in Salmon Arm, B.C., before landing back in Lacombe, Alta., where we have been and plan to stay.

We've kept ourselves busy, cooking at summer camps a few times, just as we did in the good old days. We also have helped out a little at Mamawi Atosketan Native School when there has been a need. The slower pace agrees with us, and we enjoy spending our time together going to the gym, puttering around the house, and visiting friends and family. ■





# Pumpkin French Toast

- INGREDIENTS:**
- ½ cup (125 ml) pumpkin puree
  - 1 cup (250 ml) unsweetened soy milk
  - 2 tsp (10 ml) maple syrup
  - 1 tsp (5 ml) vanilla extract
  - 8 slices whole-grain bread (preferably a bit stale)

- INSTRUCTIONS:**
- In a shallow bowl, whisk together pumpkin puree, soy milk, maple syrup, and vanilla. Dunk both sides of bread into mixture.
  - In a lightly sprayed non-stick skillet, cook each side of the bread for 3 to 5 minutes on medium heat, or until each side is golden-brown.
- Makes 4 servings.*



- NUTRITIONAL INFO:**
- Serving Size 153 g (2 slices)
  - Calories 180
  - Total Fat 2.6 g
  - Saturated Fat 0.6 g
  - Cholesterol 0 mg
  - Sodium 277 mg
  - Total Carbs 29.0 g
  - Dietary Fibre 4.8 g
  - Sugars 6.7 g
  - Protein 9.2 g

*The late Afia Donkor was a passionate health advocate. The Powerful Plate is available for purchase online at [adventistbookcenter.com](http://adventistbookcenter.com) or by phone at 800/765-6955.*



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# RAINMAK

## Labouring in the Garden of the Min

**D**r. Antoine Kanamugire is a gardener, but his labour is not among plants and weeds and fruit trees. No, he has made it his lifework to labour in the garden of the mind.

Kanamugire (pronounced Canamoo-gireh) was born in Rwanda. After high school he immigrated to the United States to study pre-med. He continued his studies in Canada, at the University of Sherbrooke and the University of Montreal, where he graduated with a specialization in psychiatry. Now, only seven years in, Dr. Kanamugire's professional practice is already thriving.

Similar to the experience of many Rwandans, the dark chapter of the 1994 genocide brought tragedy to his life. He lost his father and two sisters, and he speaks very openly about the pain of witnessing the suffering of neighbours, friends, and loved ones. But Kanamugire was fortunate, because he was in North America pursuing his studies and career. "It was a blessing, just to be away, focusing on my studies, calling back home and sharing my experiences."

So why psychiatry? "I actually didn't know much about it," he beams. "But I just fell in love with it in course rotations. As I continued to study, I became convinced that it was the best and most effective way to help people better their lives. With psychiatry, you don't only focus on patients' medical issues but also their lives, their suffering, their past, and how all those dots connect and then try to shape their future with better mental health for a better life.

"So, I think I've made a good choice. I have a full caseload with a diverse clientele.

I work as part of a team with some of the most vulnerable, intensive outpatients. These are extremely sick people, with multiple, severe diagnoses. We, as an intensive care team, will go into the community to try to touch their lives. And while family and other people may throw in the towel, we do not give up, we try new things, different approaches—and some people really manage to turn their lives around."

Dr. Kanamugire punctuates his point with a question. "Can you imagine seeing someone so desperate due to substance abuse finding a job, an apartment, getting engaged, having a family, and living a life they could not even dream about? It's very rewarding as a work.

"I have other patients who are suffering but who are not as severe. Here, we work to change the way they perceive life, perceive the future, which is often shaped by past experiences generally from childhood and teenage years. Physical abuse, sexual abuse, or bullying at school have destroyed many lives, many futures. In fact, I was surprised when I started questioning how bullying impacts lives and found that bullying at school at a young age is one of the most severe forms of abuse that brings patients into my office 20 or 30 years later."

So, what is it about bullying that is so corrosive, so deleterious to healthy growth and progression in children? Dr. Kanamugire admits that when he was studying psychiatry, bullying was not one of the traumas they were taught to identify.

"There was not enough focus on bullying in our training," says Kanamugire.

"But after a few years into my practice, I noticed a trend and realized there is more to bullying than we were taught. I noticed that a lot of my patients have experienced bullying at the elementary school or high school level. This is a time when acceptance and inclusion is important. At school there are children your age, and the expectation is that you'll find friends who will be kind and who will include you. This is also reinforced by parents who typically tell their children positive things about school and seldom warn of the dangers. If parents do not prepare their children for this unfortunate reality, the child may feel ashamed, and the parents might not discover the truth until years later.

"So being able to help patients seek out and identify those dots and connect them to their present experience is what I do every day. I also work in the ER as a consultant. When called in, I generally see acute mental health conditions."

Mental illness indirectly affects all Canadians at some time through a family member, friend, or colleague. In any given year, one in five Canadians of any age, education, income level, and culture will personally experience a mental health problem or illness according to the Mental Health Association of Canada.

With mental health as a one-in-five reality, Dr. Kanamugire describes how breakdowns and healing can occur. "I work with a young woman\* who was raised in a wonderful family with no history of abuse. When she got to high school, she had a boyfriend who activated a network of bullies when she tried to break up with him. As a result, the young



# ERS

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lady became completely dysfunctional, and the family couldn't understand where this was coming from. This went on for two years until the woman was finally hospitalized.

"With professional help, the family discovered that she had been bullied since the age of 14. As a result of the bullying, she felt like a nobody whom everyone would reject and would be against. This was what she brought into her relationships with teachers, family, and friends. With professional help, today this young lady is well. She finished her degree, is a professional, and, since having identified bullying as the cause of her issue, she has really made strides in her healing."

Additionally, Dr. Kanamugire has authored the book *Protect Our Youth: The 21 Unspoken Truths About Marijuana* and founded the BecauseWeCare initiative. "The campaign aims to promote healthy habits and raise awareness about the risks of addictions to drugs, alcohol, and screens, especially for our young people whose beautiful developing brains are at a higher risk of falling into addiction," explains Kanamugire.

Speaking pointedly about marijuana addiction, Kanamugire says, "I have a lot of young patients who use cannabis. And as it was being legalized in some American states and in Canada, I asked myself how I might best contribute to the discussion. So, I wrote this

concise little book, it is completely non-judgmental, with just the facts for young people to read.

"The fact remains that cannabis is not as benign as some people would have you think. [People assume it is] harmless because it is a naturally occurring substance, but there are many natural things that are harmful for human consumption, especially to our young people. I was happy to be a part of the discussion, bringing this message to news and media outlets in Canada and in the United States. Many responsible cannabis producers agreed with that message, and I commend them for that."



L to R: Sarah, Ange, Yana, Rica, Antoine, and Noah Kanamugire

Dr. Kanamugire's message is simple: "Your life is a fertile garden; everything you plant will grow." He emphasizes that this is especially true of the mind. The things we say and do are seeds, and they will invariably grow. We need to be careful what we plant in our lives, in the lives and minds of our children, and in the lives of others. Instead of negative things, plant good seeds of positive, loving messages and healthy habits that will grow into healthy plants, healthy gardens, healthy lives. ■

*Peggy Caesar is a communication specialist for ADRA Canada.*

*Daniel Cullen spent 9,125 days and nights locked in the solitary confinement of his own mental cell of anger and rage. Guilt and Shame were his prison guards. Guilt told him he had done wrong, and Shame told him he would amount to nothing.*



# Lost on the Cold Streets With the Heartbeat of Madness





"I never came out of this inner prison, and no one ever came in," says Daniel, describing the 25 years he spent homeless on the streets. "Alone, I cried so many tears, until I realized no one heard me. I slipped and got lost into a deeper madness."

Daniel says that in a country full of people he found himself shuffling from the west coast to the east coast. "I have lost count of the curbsides where I have sat. Faces became a blur, and voices were just a hum. I was a statistic, a number on a piece of paper, a homeless man. Twenty-five years living on the street, I was walking like a dead man on two feet."

Daniel's childhood, however, looked vastly different. He grew up in a five-bedroom house in Kelowna, B.C., with his two brothers and sisters, his father—a popular radio personality—and his mother, a real estate agent. "I was growing up in a good home, with awesome parents." He remembers his father taking him to sit in the press box at hockey games and feeling so proud to be his son. His mother's cautionary words, "Quitters don't win, and winners don't quit," made her a giant in his eyes, though she stood a mere five feet tall.

Daniel fondly recalls his weekly experiences volunteering at a hospital where he would feed a massive but calm and peaceful 30-year-old man named Aubrey, who had to use a wheelchair due to muscular dystrophy. "We would have great conversations, and I always looked forward to seeing him. One day he started to tell me he had this thing he called faith. He told me the story of Jesus and what He meant to him," says Daniel.

At 15 years of age, Daniel received a blue, leather-bound KJV Bible as a gift from Aubrey, and from that time on he started reading the Word of God. He has carried the Scriptures with him through all his travels and read it countless times because he was on a quest. "I was always looking for the God I had seen in Aubrey's eyes," shares Daniel.

Since Daniel's early years were so idyllic, one may wonder how he ended up lost on the cold streets of every major Canadian city in each province, with the heartbeat of madness throbbing through his consciousness. His explanation: "My sense of self was very low. Looking back more than 30 years, I clearly see I was struggling to find self-acceptance and a sense of who I was as a person. I knew my name was Nobody."

When his twin sister, Nancy, excelled in school and Daniel didn't, he felt inferior, especially since she passed a grade and left him behind when he failed. "It was not my parents' fault, neither was it my twin sister's fault, but the comments were always 'Why can't you be like your sister?'"

Daniel started looking for ways to get into trouble because, he explains, "To me, that was when I was noticed the most. So, I stole a gun one day from the closet of my friend's house. It was his father's gun. I was amazed

by how it felt—the weight, the coldness of the steel. I felt a sense of self-worth; I had a gun. This feeling went to my head, and I was infected with a disease I call 'big-shotitis.' The symptoms are your head gets swollen, your mouth opens wide, and your tongue becomes loose. I walked with a new sense of importance."

After it was discovered that he had stolen the gun, Daniel decided to run away from home to escape the consequences of his actions, but when he felt tired and hungry, Daniel returned home around midnight, and his parents were so relieved to have him back that they welcomed him home with open arms, and no punishment materialized. "Although the experience was over," he admits, "a seed had been planted that would follow me for 30 years. My philosophy was whenever I'm in trouble or scared, run. This was the birth of my life on the streets as a runaway. Running away became a frustrating pattern for my parents."

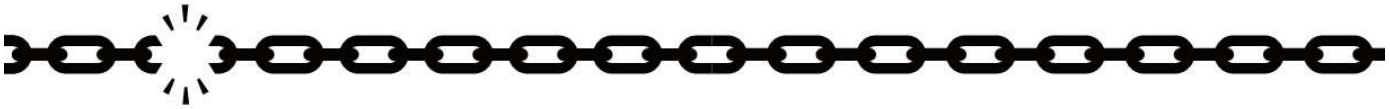
On one of Daniel's runaway experiences, acquaintances introduced him to street drugs, he took "the equivalent of five hits of acid at one time." He discloses, "On that day, I exploded into my drug habit. Now being a runaway had new meaning: drugs. I also started to break into cars, businesses, and houses to steal anything that I liked. I was a juvenile delinquent with a drug addiction."

After six months of travelling from city to city, west to east, Daniel experienced an overwhelming sense of "aloneness," as he calls it. "It is so much worse than being lonely," he explains. "For three thousand miles, aloneness travelled with me, and I wanted to change. I wanted to go home. I wanted a home-cooked meal. I wanted my own bed. I wanted my family. I did not want to do drugs anymore."

He found himself at a homeless shelter in Grande Prairie, Alta., headed for home, feeling safe. "But in reality, I was a lamb in a wolf's den," Daniel shares. It was at this homeless shelter in Grande Prairie that Daniel's innocence was violated. Over and over again, he wished he had never stopped at that homeless shelter in Grande Prairie: "I wanted to go home. I wanted to find myself back in my own bed. I wanted to go to school. I wanted to stop my addiction, but instead I got destroyed in my heart, in my mind, and in my life." For the next 25 years, Daniel admits, "I wanted to rid myself of the horrible shame that was eating at my mind like a caustic acid."

"All I ever wanted was the God I had seen in





Aubrey's eyes, but I never found Him in the churches I visited. What I did find was men and women sitting in their nice suits and dresses, driving their fine cars, sitting in their pews. And if ever I felt like sitting closer to the people, they would move away, or an usher would ask me to sit at the back. What I did find was judgment."

Although a self-described loner, Daniel found acceptance from the other men and women who lived on the streets. All of them shared painful, shameful, damaging experiences of trauma and abuse, and each one breathed the same foul air of humiliation and guilt, anger, and rage. To escape, they turned to drugs and alcohol, but when that didn't set Daniel free from his inner prison, he retreated into public libraries in search of answers in books on seven subjects: philosophy, psychology, sociology, anthropology, metaphysics, the occult, and theology. "Year after year I accumulated knowledge." With a hint of humour, Daniel adds, "I guess you could say I have a PhD from Hobo U."

After decades of living on the streets, one day Daniel "hit the wall." He explains, "I can remember the day very clearly when I could no longer hide from my pain. All of a sudden, I felt as though someone had opened a crater in the deepest part of my mind; it was the pit in an abyss—the abyss of a nervous breakdown. The crater opened, and I fell into that abyss. There was no longer enough alcohol or drugs to take away my grief. Neither were there enough books that I could run to."

Repeatedly, Daniel attempted to end his earthly existence only to awaken in an intensive care unit to discover he had failed again. He was admitted at six different psychiatric wards and six different assisted living group homes over the span of many years.

"I was diagnosed with 22 different mental disorders and was taking 3,000 mg of psychotropic meds a day," says Daniel. "During this time, I filed a lawsuit against the man who raped me, and my lawyer requested all my psychiatric records. Altogether there were more than 500 pages about me and my mental state. It was said of me, 'Long-term institutionalization with little hope of recovery.'"

After reading and rereading all the psychiatric

reports, Daniel says he "decided that this was the end of all this broken merry-go-round," adding, "I was not going to be a statistic. I was not going to spend my life like this anymore. I had what some would call an epiphany."

With all of the accumulated knowledge from reading in libraries, Daniel knew he could not heal himself, so he turned to the Bible, and it was the Word of God that formed the foundation of his recovery. At the end of the millennium, 1999, Daniel started to plan his recovery. At 12:01 a.m., when New Year's Day rolled around, he consciously and deliberately took back his life. From that moment, on the first day of the new millennium, he began to implement a model of change, a cognitive way to focus his thinking, which was inspired by God and developed by him *for* him.

From that pivotal day on, Daniel advanced from strength to strength, receiving numerous humanitarian and social justice awards for advocating on behalf of homeless people at all levels of government—local, provincial, and national. He has lectured nursing and social work students at York University for over a decade, helping them to understand how best to deal with the poor, needy, and addicted who live on the streets.

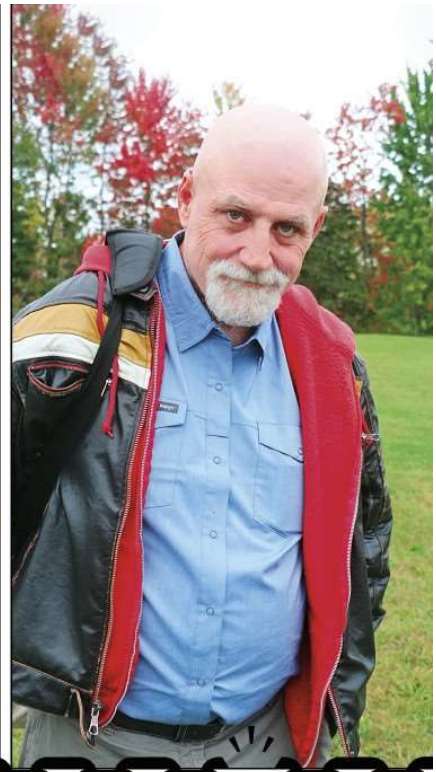
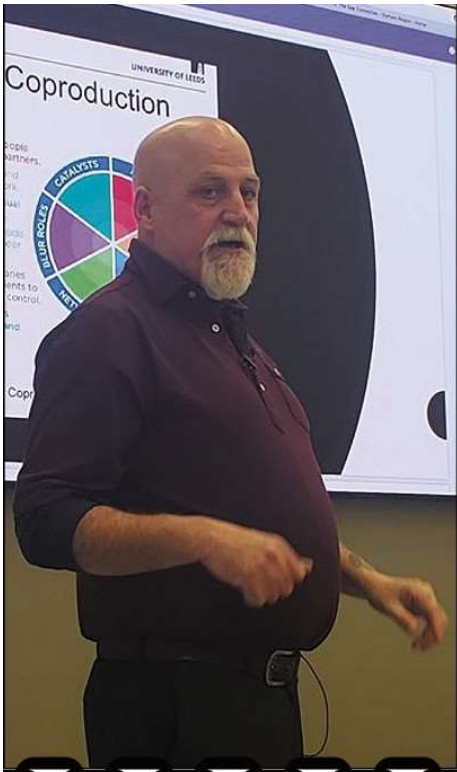
In 2009 Daniel was awarded the YMCA/GTA Peace Medallion for his humanitarian and social justice efforts, and in 2011 he was awarded Citizen of the Year from the City of Brampton, Ont., for his humanitarian efforts. In 2014 Daniel moved to Oshawa, Ont., to work specifically for the homeless and those living in poverty. Shortly thereafter, he found a community of faith who showed him the God he had seen in Aubrey's eyes, and he became a baptized member of the New Life Seventh-day Adventist Church. He now serves as the assistant director of the New Life Neighbourhood Centre. At present, he also sits on six committees that oversee how federal and provincial money will be spent to help the needy. Daniel actively works in outreach and networking with service providers to be an effective voice for those who are not heard or recognized. ■

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*Mike Lemon is the speaker director for It Is Written Canada.*







Daniel is a guest lecturer for nursing and social work students at York University in Toronto, Ont.; Daniel with Mike and René Lemon on the It Is Written Canada set; In 2014 Daniel moved to Oshawa, Ont., to work specifically for the homeless and those living in poverty.

*Daniel Cullen's story was featured on It Is Written Canada aired on CTV and can be viewed online a number of ways:*

- **It Is Written Canada website**  
[itiswrittencanada.ca](http://itiswrittencanada.ca)
- **YouTube channel**  
[youtube.com/user/IIWCanada](https://youtube.com/user/IIWCanada)
- **Facebook**  
[facebook.com/ItsWrittenCanada](https://facebook.com/ItsWrittenCanada)
- **Podcasts**  
[Anchor.fm](https://Anchor.fm) and [Apple Podcasts](https://Apple.com)





# Angel Money

*“Clearly, Jason’s friend reasoned that if the money had come from God and dropped from the sky, the best option was to return it to His messenger.”*

**T**he Bible encourages us to be hospitable. Hebrews 13:2 even says, “Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels” (NKJV).

As literature evangelists go door-to-door, residents often refer to them as “angels”—probably because of the compassion shown and prayers offered. Of course, missionaries are not angels who currently dwell in heaven, but since *angel* means “messenger,” they could technically carry that name. Regardless of what they are called, genuine missionaries are given the promise that angels will keep them company, go before them, and prepare hearts to receive the truth:

*Every canvasser has positive and constant need of the angelic ministration; for he has an important work to do, a work that he cannot do in his own strength. Those who are born again, who are willing to be guided by the Holy Spirit, doing in Christ’s way that which they can do, those who will work as if they could see the heavenly universe watching them, will be accompanied and instructed by holy angels, who will go before them to the dwellings of the people, preparing the way for them.<sup>1</sup>*

If you spend time in communities doing missionary work, you’ll quickly realize that angels don’t specialize in surprise visits that are visible to the naked eye. What they do specialize in, however, is creatively setting up divine appointments so that people have a greater chance of encountering Christ’s love and truth. By the time the missionary knocks on the door, certain extraordinary events may have already happened. Jason’s story is a good example:

Jason shares: “I knocked on the door of a gentleman

who happened to be eating. He could have easily dismissed me, but he took the time to listen to what I had to say. He told me upfront that he was of the Baptist faith but that he didn’t have anything against other religions.

“After I finished showing him the books, he told me that he had a total of \$50 that he was more than prepared to give. He took a few books, including *God’s Answers to Your Questions* and *The Great Controversy*. He then proceeded to tell me the story behind the \$50 he had.

“Up to a few days prior, he had owed someone \$50 and finally repaid the debt; he gave the person two \$20 bills and two \$5 dollar bills. A few days later while walking through the neighbourhood, he found two \$20 bills and two \$5 bills on the sidewalk. He inquired with neighbours to see if anyone had lost the bills—including the person to whom he had just repaid the debt—but no one claimed it. He even took the cash to the police station, but they told him that it was too small of an amount to file a report on. So, he kept it in his wallet not knowing what to do; all he knew was it wasn’t his.

“Then, when I showed him *God’s Answers to Your Questions*, he remembered the money and concluded that it must belong to me.”

Clearly, Jason’s friend reasoned that if the money had come from God and dropped from the sky, the best option was to return it to His messenger. Although the man thought he was doing Jason a favour, we know that if he reads the books, the blessings contained therein will amount to something infinitely greater. ■

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*Jason Williams shared his story with Lifestyle Canada while serving as a Canada Youth Challenge (CYC) literature evangelist. Lifestyle Canada is Canada’s literature evangelism ministry. To learn more about the ministry, visit [lifestylecanada.org](http://lifestylecanada.org).*





# Jewels of Adventist Education

**A**dventist education has always been known for its exceptional teachers. Let me share with you a few—ones whose purpose, drive, compassion, and faithfulness have especially impacted my life.

I am sure Mrs. Westhaver was a wrangler before becoming a teacher! She was small but mighty, and as she eloquently taught 10 different grades, her quiet but firm countenance was a guiding force for an eclectic group of students at the Barnesville Seventh-day Adventist School in New Brunswick. Her days were replete with questions from curious students, and she moved about us with grace and efficiency, imparting knowledge and understanding.

Mrs. Bacchus was tough, but I thrived under her teaching style of no guff, strive to do your best, and always seek Jesus. That year we were challenged with spelling, baseball, designing storyboards, intricate science experiments, and behaving like respectable children with proper manners—as no one wanted “the talk.” A pivotal experience for me in Grade 6 was memorizing the poem “One Solitary Life.”

Energy, science, and grace-oriented discipline stands at the heart of Mr. Bayer’s teaching. His fast-paced style pushed you to keep up, while his philosophy allowed opportunities to work one-on-one so as not to leave anyone behind. He had high expectations that everyone could, would, and *should* love the sciences. His class was science on steroids with a whole lot of vitamin Jesus!

At Southern Adventist University (SAU), I sat in Dr. Haluska’s Ancient Classics class, impressed with his militaristic, organized approach that allowed for nothing but the best. I was even more impressed by the contrast of the Greek philosophy of *carpe diem* found in Homer’s *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* with the triumph of life and hope found in the ancient biblical book of Job. It was revolutionary teaching filtered through a comparative lens that exclaimed, “Choose life, choose hope, choose Christianity.”

Dr. Byrd came in like a whirlwind, as if she’d been running a marathon and just decided to pop in to teach a class at SAU. Her thoughtful countenance and faithful advice was infused into every English class she taught. With a keen eye for writing talent and an intellectual capacity that challenged the compromise of modern culture, she was reflective, she was faithful, she was Adventist. Oodles of journaling caused us to reevaluate life and examine the spiritual using pen and paper or computer.

Christian Ethics and Last Day Events were taught by Drs. Jack Blanco and Norman Gulley, respectively. Both are prominent leaders in the Adventist Church but took time to labour with university kids. Ethical foundations in complex scenarios and eschatological prophecy unfolded before me and I was hooked, convinced, and convicted of my beliefs—this was no longer my parents’ faith, but mine!

Philosophy of Worldviews with Dr. Matthews at Andrews University caused me to ask, “Do I know my worldview?” By providing context, challenging thoughts, core values, world perspective, and honest conversation, he dared to take us deeper in an effort to find answers. He remained foundationally Adventist, beckoning us to hold fast to a theistic God who loves us infinitely.

These brief interpersonal story blurbs are only a few of the significant moments, memories, experiences, and teachers in my Adventist educational journey.

God has called teachers for your children, and He is equipping them just as He did mine. Why would we not want to give our children every opportunity to say yes to Jesus? Adventist education is just one factor, but a crucial one, in the impact it can have on that spiritual journey. Let our Adventist teachers shine brightly; they truly are the jewels of Adventist education. ■

*Teresa Ferreira is superintendent of education for the Maritime Conference.*

# THE BURMAN EFFECT

BURMAN ALUMNI  
IMPACTING THEIR COMMUNITIES

## Walking in Uncharted Territory

Royce Odiyar had learned that pastoring could be hard on maintaining healthy family relationships. So before starting work at his new posting, he laid careful plans. He would work with his congregation one-on-one. A great plan, it would allow him to minister and still maintain a balanced approach to life. But even great plans can be derailed. The COVID-19 pandemic hit six weeks after he arrived in the Salmon Arm, B.C., district.

Royce writes, “Six weeks is hardly enough time to move into a new district, never mind settling into a new home and then being stopped in your tracks by an invisible enemy. This was completely new territory for me. I didn’t know the area. I didn’t know the church or its culture. I hardly knew the members.”

It meant he could not implement his visitation plan, which called for bringing anyone who wanted to come along and then teaching them by example. New regulations prohibited close contact with others. It was no longer possible to even “do church” as usual.

Royce could have panicked. Instead, he determined to find new ways of ministering. He first met with his church leaders. They stepped out in faith despite their district’s very small size and their lack of resources and expertise. They would produce an online church service—not to compete with other media ministries, but to stay connected with the local congregations and their specific needs and prayer requests.

In hindsight, Royce saw that God had already prepared the way for this bold move. While at Andrews University, he had completed two graduate degrees. His second degree, a master’s in communications, included several classes on film production, so he had learned some basic technical skills.

Some of the teenagers at the Salmon Arm church were excited to learn how to edit videos. Organizing and training them took a lot of work, but he was amazed at how quickly they caught on. He says, “The kids were a lot of fun to work with and were a big help.”

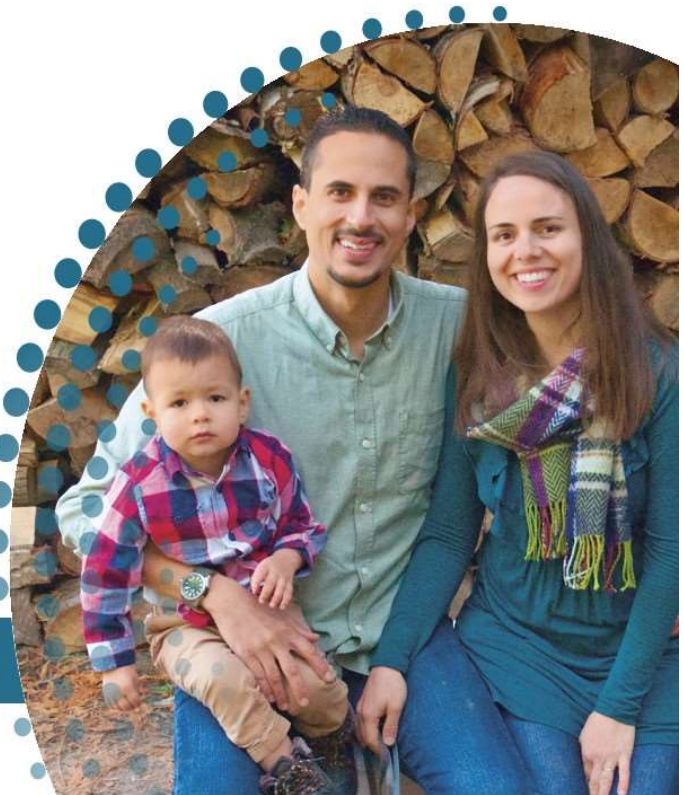
There were numerous other challenges that ranged from helping members who didn’t have internet access for watching

the church series, to figuring out how to host a Zoom memorial service, to assisting the Bible worker with changing from door-to-door ministry to ministry through social media, to finding solutions for families in need or for people who had lost their jobs.

At times, it seemed that progress consisted of two steps forward and one step backward. But with God’s help, the church family stayed connected. Another huge blessing, giving everyone a much-needed boost, was seeing the Bible worker’s social media efforts miraculously bring results.

Odiyar reflects, “We have had challenging times and walked in uncharted territory, but we have learned that we can work together to support and serve one another and those around us—including our own families.” ■

*Royce Odiyar is a pastor in Salmon Arm, B.C., and Renate Krause is the editor of Burman University Magazine.*



The Odiyar family. Royce graduated with a religious studies degree from Burman in 2005.

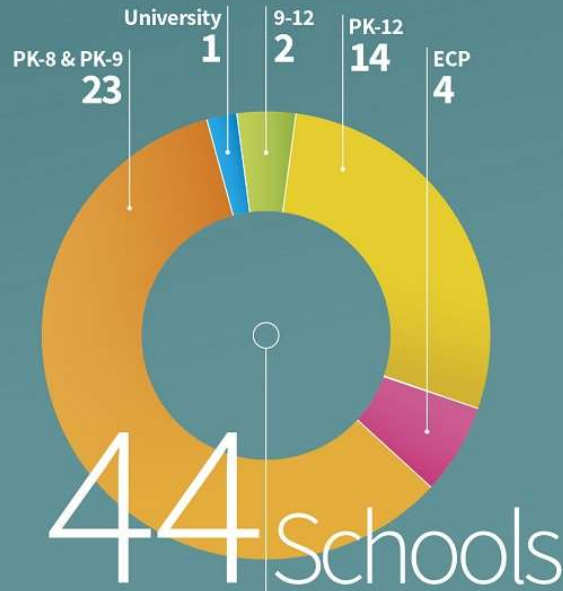






**NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION MISSION**

To enable learners to develop a life of faith in God, and to use their knowledge, skills, and understandings to serve God and humanity.



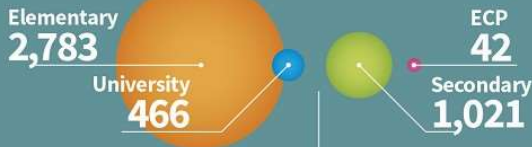
**PK-12 SCHOOLS**

by size



by conference

11	Alberta Conference
12	British Columbia Conference
4	Manitoba-Saskatchewan Conf.
1	Maritime Conference
8	Ontario Conference
2	Quebec Conference
1	SDACC



**4,312** Students



**389** Teachers



# Coming home



The Cadoo family.

*"I continued using God as my vending machine, going to Him only when I thought I needed Him or when things got so hard that my innate being would cry out to God."*

**M**y name is Sharda Cadoo. I'm 36 years old. I've been married to my amazing husband, Samuel, for 16 years, and we have four children ranging from three to 16 years of age.

Growing up I knew about Jesus, but I didn't have a relationship with him. I grew up in a household where God was not spoken about in a deep sense. In my teenage years I tried to find a religion. I looked into

Islam, Buddhism, and Rastafarianism. I was lost, trying to find solace, peace, and faith in something, someone. I believed in Jesus, but I did not show Him that.

I was introduced to the Seventh-day Adventist faith 17 years ago, when I met my husband. We were married at 19, and by the time we were both 22 years old, we had two children. We had a lot of family support. My husband juggled two or three jobs, and I started





nursing school. That was a very stressful and challenging time. I had many bouts of depression over the years, and I became unkind and unloving toward my husband. I wasn't in a good mental state. I had no coping mechanisms. Our relationship came to a tipping point.

Within the last two years I came to a point where I knew I couldn't go on with those dark feelings anymore. I did not want to give up on life, my marriage, or my children, as I had too much to live for. I finally turned to the Almighty and He saved me! He has filled my void, helped me to cope with my anxieties, softened my heart, and showed me how to demonstrate true love not only to my loved ones but also to humanity as well.

I needed to show my children, loved ones, and friends that having faith and loving Jesus is powerful and that He will see you through anything. We just have to believe and put Him first.

About one year ago I approached Pastor Glenn DeSilva after his sermon, in tears, and expressed my wish to be baptized. The tears were a mix of emotions. It was sadness, anger, and guilt for not taking that step many years ago. I started a Bible study class by myself, and Pastor DeSilva asked if Samuel would join. He hesitantly agreed.

By God's grace, my husband and I got baptized on Oct. 10, 2020, marking one of the most powerful decisions of my life. Pastor DeSilva has taught me that the most important part of living a life for Christ is to live as Christ did, and, when you aren't sure about a decision, to pray about it; God will convict your heart.

Galatians 5:6b says, "The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love" (NIV). As we remember that Christ expressed His unending love for us by sacrificing Himself on the cross, that should strengthen our love and faith for God and humankind. These are the reasons that I have chosen to give my life to our amazing heavenly Father.

### Reclaiming My Birthright

Hello, my name is Samuel. I'm 36 years old and grew up as a Seventh-day Adventist. I was actually baptized at eight years of age during a series in Trinidad and Tobago, where I was born. I practised my faith based on the regulations and instructions from my loved ones. There was no watching television on Sabbath, no pepperoni on pizza, no Timmy's coffee, no earrings or tattoos, and no alcohol. I maintained my religion as best I could, but I never developed a personal relationship with God.

As I became more independent, the choice also increasingly became mine on how I would live. I idolized what society and culture presented as living my best life: money, riches, weed, alcohol, and having a good time. I traded in my soul for unhappiness, a broken

marriage, debt, frustration, confusion, and a general lack of peace. Lost in my ideas of "living my best life," I disconnected from the promise of having everlasting life.

I continued using God as my vending machine, going to Him only when I thought I needed Him or when things got so hard that my innate being would cry out to God. I put on the show by bringing my kids to church, praying once in a while, and reading the Bible every now and then. God's love for me was always evident in my life. He blessed me with life, wife, children, friends, job, and basic necessities.

For some reason, though, I still had no peace and was not grateful. In my heart I knew something was missing. A friend sent me a message about a year ago with a link to a pastor whom I identified with, and his messages were so powerful. I started to fall back in love with Jesus, my Creator, and my Saviour. I realized that the devil had me tricked in believing I was no longer a child of God. I had given up my birthright.

With our marriage being broken and hope lost, my wife, Sharda, sought the Lord for a better life. We were in debt, living paycheque to paycheque. A miracle happened when my wife suggested that we start paying tithes even though we couldn't really afford to. I saw the power of God at work. Within a few months of returning to God a small portion of what was His, we were able to change the trajectory of our financial future. This miracle accelerated my faith and desire to grow closer to God.

Sharda shared her spiritual interest with Pastor DeSilva and inquired about getting baptized. My wife advised that the pastor wanted me to be a part of their Bible studies. At first, I was reluctant to join their studies because I knew my heart was not there. But I was impressed by my wife's willingness to learn more about God, and I also wanted to be there to support her decision to get baptized.

During the meetings my heart was being touched and transformed, and I felt a growing desire to give my life to Jesus. Session after session, sermon after sermon, I grew closer to wanting a genuine relationship with God. I realized God's grace and mercy. Now I finally see God for the loving Creator and Father that He is. I almost got tricked by Satan into believing that God is just waiting to punish us when we do wrong.

I finally understood the meaning of the cross and the sacrifice that was made on our behalf. God is just and righteous, so we had to pay for the havoc that we caused in our relationships with humanity and the earth. I am publicly making a stand for God and trying to live my best life for Jesus. ■

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*Samuel and Sharda Cadoo write from Oshawa, Ont.*





# Finding Inspiration

**W**hen my family took the repatriation flight (due to COVID-19) back to Canada in July 2020, I knew that the coming months without them would

be rough for me. Living alone and managing the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) in Uganda is not easy: working with donors on accountability reports; fundraising; inspiring 637 ADRA employees to focus on the organization's mission; working with church leaders and monitoring the security situation that had already taken more than 45 civilian lives in just one day of election-related civil unrest.

At one point, my blood pressure was so high that it clouded my ability to make rational decisions. I had to delegate the decision-making to my Humanitarian Program Director.

From July 1 to November 25, I lived alone for the sake of the church's mission. I was away from family and in a foreign country that had closed its borders. In addition, COVID-19 was spreading in the community, infecting people every single day.

So, how did I cope? To keep my sanity (and my blood pressure normal), I had to find inspiration.

I found inspiration by learning about new ideas from a variety of books—everything from Jewish authors to design thinking.

I found inspiration in gardening (I started a hydroponic garden system).

I found inspiration in reading the Bible every day.

I found inspiration in music—Kirk Franklin, Take 6, Lauren Daigle, Sia, Hillsong, Phil Collins, U2, Pentatonix.

But most of all, I found inspiration in stories of resilience—the experiences shared by refugees and vulnerable, poverty-afflicted people whom ADRA continues to serve.

Take Sidoniya, for example. This mother of eight was forced to sell her only remaining source of livelihood, a piece of land, as a ransom for her son's life.

"I had to beg for my son's life when armed militias kidnapped one of my boys. I told them that I would raise money in exchange for my son's life," said Sidoniya, adding, "I thanked God when I saw my son alive. I gathered my entire family and told them they need to move to Uganda for safety; all but one of my adult children decided to flee to Uganda for safety."

Sidoniya arrived in Uganda in August 2019. Because of her disability, her journey to Uganda took longer than the rest of the villagers who also took the



Thanks to ADRA, Sidoniya will soon replace her mud-grass hut with a better home.

same trip. Her son also arrived in Uganda much earlier than she did. She was resettled in Kyaka II Refugee Settlement and in different zone than where her son was designated (because of their different arrival times).

As a person with a specific need (PSN), and being alone, she struggled with basic tasks like accessing water and medication. She would ask young children passing by to help her collect water; however, she was rarely able to get them to help her carry even a five-litre jerrycan.

For her condition, the medical facility was too far of a walk. When she was sick, she would spend two days in her house without medication.

Whenever it rained, "Water would enter my house as if it was a drainage system channelling water; it gets very cold. My house doesn't have a permanent door. Often, thieves enter and take my belongings, leaving me with nothing."

Pointing to a section of her house, she said, "I often get bitten by insects, especially red ants, that come through this section."

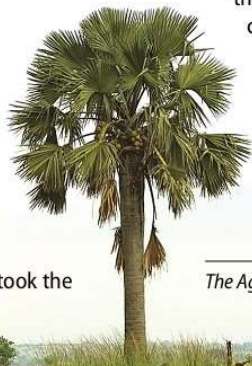
Sidoniya said that when she arrived in Kyaka II, she built the mud house herself because she couldn't get anyone to help her.

As I was looking at Sidoniya's mud-grass hut that she calls home, I thought to myself: *My house in Kampala doesn't leak when it rains. I have safe drinking water. I have a sustainable hydroponic garden. I have several security guards. Food is readily accessible. And the medical facility is just a few metres away from my house. Basically, I have nothing to complain about but thank God for life and good health.*

Sidoniya had put up with her mud-grass hut for more than 12 months, but there was no reason she had to continue living like that. ADRA raised the funds to build a better home for Sidoniya so she can live a dignified life. ADRA is hoping to build 50 more homes so people like Sidoniya can live life to the fullest.

"A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed" (Prov. 11:25, NIV). ■

*The Aguilars are a missionary family from beautiful British Columbia.*





# Orange Shirt Day: Creative Use of Cree Engages Learners



Warm fall weather provided a chance for students to get a hands-on Cree grammar lesson: trees are animate nouns, but leaves are inanimate nouns—an important distinction in Cree thought.



Teachers sport orange shirts on Sept. 30 (Suzann Self, second from right, front row).

Orange Shirt Day has special meaning on reserves. It's not usually a happy celebration. So many who suffered abuse in residential schools would rather forget the humiliation and pain that speaking Cree or any other First Nations language would incur. Only recently have many of the descendants of these survivors discovered that their grandparents suffered. So, especially on that day, MANS teachers try to fill in some of the history gaps and go above and beyond their usual day-to-day incorporation of Cree language and culture.

This fall, as Grade 5 teacher Suzann Self thought about Orange Shirt Day, she got an idea that's become part of every day. After reading *I Am Not a Number*, a short book, with her class, Suzann proposed an experiment: the class would simulate the banning experience on a small scale for an extended time. Few of Suzann's students spoke any Cree; what if they banned two English words a week and "forced" everyone to use the Cree words?

The students were enthusiastic, and Suzann began researching Cree words to substitute. It was the beginning of rewarding journey. Suzann discovered perspectives on the world she'd not

realized until she investigated the Cree language. "The language has so much depth," says Suzann. "In Cree, the word for 'child' translates as 'On loan from the Creator.' Isn't that beautiful? And so meaningful!"

Students not only wanted to know more of their language but also became teachers themselves, correcting each other and Suzann when slips were made. As the tables turned and roles switched, Suzann was kindly corrected when she mispronounced a Cree word or slipped in an English word that had been banned. The language of her students came alive for all as they shared its meaning and the cultural ideas behind it. On spelling tests, the bonus point words are the Cree words—an incentive to write as well as speak their language.

By being open to the experience of her students and their culture, both Suzann and her students are learning more in so many areas, including the priceless value of each child as a gift belonging to the Creator. ■

*Lynn McDowell is director of planned giving/philanthropy at the Alberta Conference. Myken McDowell is a communications specialist living in Edmonton, Alta.*

September 30 is Orange Shirt Day—an event inspired by the story of residential school survivor Phyllis Jack Webstad, who as a six-year-old girl was gifted an orange shirt by her grandmother before being taken away to a B.C. residential school. On the first day of class the orange shirt was confiscated and destroyed by her teacher. Orange Shirt Day acknowledges Phyllis's story as well as the colonial assimilation goals of residential schools and their lasting impact on Indigenous communities nationwide.

Established in 2013, the date was selected because it was the time of year when children were taken from their homes to residential schools, and "because it sets the stage for anti-racism and anti-bullying policies for the coming school year."<sup>1</sup> It is an opportunity for communities to come together, listen, and remember those who did not make it home.

1 "About Us," *Orange Shirt Day: Every Child Matters*, 2013, [www.orangeshirtday.org/about-us.html](http://www.orangeshirtday.org/about-us.html).





## Supporting a Teenager's Dream Leads to Great Dividends in the Operating Room



Dr. Victor Oteki (left) discusses ABW's surgical program with ABW co-founder Eric Rajah.



Faith awake in the recovery room after surgery on her leg.

**D**r. Victor Misiani Oteki is living his dream to treat less fortunate people in the operating room. His practice is based in Kisii, a major urban centre in southwestern Kenya, where he performs up to five to seven orthopedic surgeries each month for A Better World Canada. He treats patients with broken bones, even fire victims who need this specialized care.

"I am working with ABW, as they can lessen the suffering of people," says Oteki. "Back home, there are lots of people living in poverty, and they can barely afford anything to eat—so how could they possibly afford medical assistance?"

Oteki first met ABW co-founder Eric Rajah when they had supper together at a restaurant across from the Nairobi city hall. Their connection grew and solidified from there. Back then Oteki was in his teens.

Rajah says the organization took a special interest in the teenager, who regularly accompanied his father—owner of a water drilling company—on jobs to build water wells for ABW. The youth updated ABW leaders on all that he was doing, and sometimes he met physicians that ABW was involved with.

"For more than 10 years, we kept in touch with Victor and included him in viewing our project work," says Rajah. "And now he's doing our orthopedic surgeries as a volunteer, and he's a local Kenyan."

Rajah added that Oteki's story is all about encouraging him and others at a young age to pursue their dreams of giving back to their country.

ABW aims to empower individuals through education, training, and direct investment. That way, Rajah says, they are better equipped to take care of their own country.

"True success for development comes when local people have or obtain the skill and training and take the initiative to do that," he says. "We, ourselves, didn't really do all that much for Oteki—except include him in our mission." Involving and encouraging Oteki years ago sparked a passion in him, which led to establishing a volunteer surgical program that serves people year-round.

Rajah says that Oteki's involvement made a huge difference during the lockdown and throughout the COVID-19 pandemic overall. Volunteers from Canada and elsewhere haven't been able to travel to support ABW's surgical program. "We've especially seen the value [of Oteki's efforts] here," says Rajah.

ABW funds surgeries for children in Kenya. Oteki tells of an orphaned teenager named Faith who came in for a surgery last August. Faith sustained a broken femur after relatives assaulted her. She couldn't afford any medical care, so ABW stepped in. It provided the funds to buy an intramedullary nail that was used to stabilize Faith's leg. Oteki performed the surgery, and now the 16-year-old can walk.

Oteki has a new vision and hope for southwestern Kenya. He would like to equip the dispensary in his parents' region of Nyamusi so that residents have safe baby deliveries and access to child immunizations. Oteki would also like to "build up a great surgical facility here in Kisii so that those with financial difficulties can get world-class health care (surgical care)." ■

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





# What's in Store for 2021?

**Earlier** in the fall, even when the year 2021 was still somewhat far off in the distance, thoughts about what 2021 would bring generated a great deal of discussion. Some have been talking about the first robot pharmacist that's expected to start "working" in the United States, while others talked about translation earbuds hitting the market. Many people are also having conversations about worries and concerns for the future.

Some people fear an increase in natural disasters. Others are talking about how COVID-19 will be an ongoing challenge in the backdrop of 2021. Of course, one doesn't need to be a prophet to see these and many other trends unfolding and gradually changing life as we know it.

Bible-believing Christians in general and Seventh-day Adventists in particular can add to this conversation from a prophetic perspective. The Bible does not provide us with punctual events or dates. It does, however, underline the major trends from what Adventists have come to call a "great controversy" perspective, and, most important of all, it assures God's children that even though they will have to face difficult time in a world that has distanced itself from the biblical message, God's kingdom founded on love and justice will ultimately prevail. Isn't that wonderful?

As students of prophecy, we have engaged in an ongoing pursuit to decipher the unfolding of history. The book of Revelation indicates that one of the main developments just before the coming of Jesus will be the erosion of religious liberty for individuals (see Rev. 13:15–17). Many of us are likely wondering how this will come about.

Many hypothetical scenarios are being circulated. But while we analyze these scenarios, let's always keep in mind that just

about every warning or prophetic fulfillment comes with an element of surprise, some detail or reality we didn't anticipate. For example, Adam and Eve had been warned about the fallen angel that would approach them and challenge their allegiance to their Creator. I'm sure they must have thought about what to expect and had a scenario or two in mind. They must have pictured how they were going to respond to the fallen angel's attempts to convince them to disobey God. But had they anticipated encountering a talking serpent?

Prophecy warns us about major trends in the world, but just as in the case of Adam and Eve, we may have blind spots that could cause us to miss the actual fulfillment of prophecy. Rather than discourage us, this realization should compel us to derive safety and strength not from postulating plausible end-time scenarios but from our relationship with our Creator. This relationship is developed in worship, the study of the Scriptures, and a Christlike ministry.

It is impossible to predict in detail what 2021 will bring. Even with the most solid biblical understanding of prophecy, God's children should prepare for more surprising and even disturbing events. But as these unfold, let us heed the counsel of our Lord: "Stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near" (Luke 21:28, NIV).

The best 2021 scenario for God's people is for them to be found worshipping the Creator, studying the Scriptures, praying for the infilling of the Spirit, and ministering to all people while waiting for the blessed assurance. This way, whatever 2021 may bring, it will be a blessed year. Have a blessed 2021! ■

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*Lucian Stefanescu is the executive secretary for the Quebec Conference.*

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## Ontario

### Ontario Adventists Dedicate Cessna 185 for Mission to Northwestern Ontario



**L to R: Mansfield Edwards, Ontario Conference president; Brian Koldyk, AWA pilot; Ray Young, AWA's Canada project manager/global operations manager; and Jakov Bibulovic, Ontario Conference executive secretary.**

This past Thanksgiving, Seventh-day Adventists in Ontario had a lot to be thankful for, despite a challenging 2020. The biggest blessing is that a Cessna 185 aircraft was obtained in collaboration with Adventist World Aviation (AWA) which arrived at Oshawa Executive Airport from the USA. The Cessna represents a new chapter in the Ontario Adventist history. It was acquired to support the health and humanitarian needs of remote/isolated Indigenous communities in Northwestern Ontario. In public health reports, they are disproportionately represented as being at highest risk for lifestyle diseases.

On Friday, Oct. 9, 2020, a dedication ceremony for the Cessna and its mission

was held at the Oshawa Executive Airport. Participants included Ontario Seventh-day Adventist Church President Mansfield Edwards; Executive Secretary Jakov Bibulovic; Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada President Mark Johnson; Ray Young, AWA's Canada project manager/global operations manager; and Brian Koldyk, the Cessna's pilot/manager. A small gathering of Ontario Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church directors, support staff, some of their family members, and a few other supporters were present, adhering to health and safety protocols.

Dr. Edwards highlighted that Ontario Adventist leaders became aware

of the dismal public health records for Indigenous communities in the North six or seven years ago. Their rates of suicide, cancer, circulatory and other diseases far exceeded the average in Ontario; their lifespans were also four to five years shorter than the average. Ontario Adventists leaders found this to be unacceptable and unfair to this community, and therefore, moved to this initiative. The anticipation is that this project will facilitate health training, agricultural projects and other humanitarian services. ■

— *Christelle Agboka,*  
communication director,  
Ontario Conference



## Alberta

# Ongoing Ministry at the Red Deer Soup Kitchen



Martha Boehner mixing up egg salad for sandwiches, Brooke Boehner on salad prep, and Dennis Rondael and Elena Vasquez filling containers with salad.



Socrates and Jennifer Somigao on quality control and cutlery kits, and Medi Caponpon and Nemia Barnedo serving as supervisors extraordinaire.

The days are getting shorter and our line-ups for food packages at the door are getting longer. We average about 170 meals each time we serve. Every group from the various churches has their own menu plan and assembly line techniques. A round of applause is sent out to you co-ordinators and volunteers for the amazing meals you prepare. Thank you! Thank You! And to those who send food of all kinds to help us, and for the financial support that is sent our way, we thank you and praise the Lord for all of your generosity.

Our outreach vision continues to

evolve. Since we no longer serve meals in the dining area, much of our supplies and resources are at hand on the main floor, including winter wear, jeans, shoes, and boots, as well as the ever-needed socks, underwear, and simple toiletries to hand out.

Half of our dining room space has been cordoned off to create a drop-in meeting place on Sabbath morning, not for a meal, but for a hot drink and an opportunity to share life, to pray, to encourage one another, and to speak of the goodness of the Lord.

Darby Nielsen, our outreach

co-ordinator continues to do his walk-about to invite the street population in. We pray that those who come will find not only a warm welcome but an encounter with God, who loves them.

Please continue to support these efforts to minister to body, mind, and spirit. Help us reach our goal of creating Christian community in the heart of Red Deer. ■

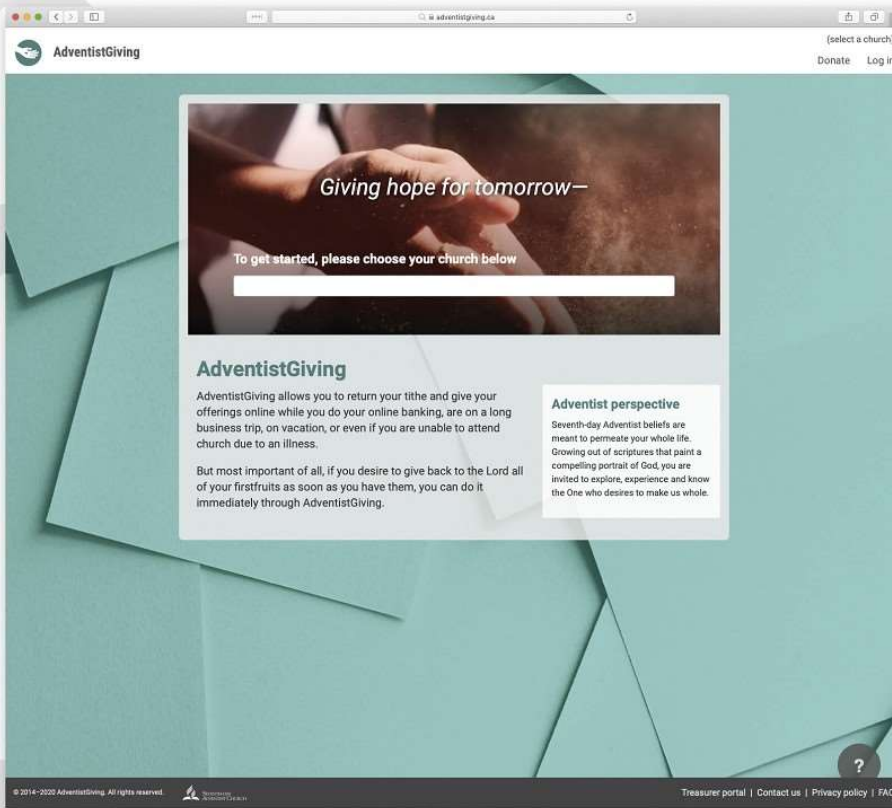
— Jane Holmes, Red Deer Seventh-day Adventist Church

**>> SDACC REVOLVING FUND REPORT:** As of Nov. 30, 2020, there were 388 depositors with a total deposit of \$31,829,381. There were 92 loans with a value of \$29,301,496.

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

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- Every individual named in the announcement must be aware of the submission and have granted the submitter approval for printing.
- Obituaries *must* be submitted on the appropriate form, completed and/or approved by a family member of the deceased. The forms (both printable and electronically submittable) are available at [www.adventist.ca/messenger](http://www.adventist.ca/messenger).
- The *Messenger* assumes no liability for typographical errors or responsibility for inaccuracies originating in submitted material.

**Wesley Blair Jones** was born on Jun. 2, 1933, near Kinistino, Sask., and died Sept. 26, 2020, in Sundre, Alta. Blair, as a man after God's own heart, was constantly witnessing for Jesus through the distribution of Adventist literature. He loved and enthusiastically served the church as a literature evangelist, elder, deacon, Sabbath school teacher, and various other church offices. Predeceased: parents, Harvey and Vera; brother, Gordon; and sisters, Marion Evans and Beryl Cherepushak. Surviving: spouse, Judy Anne; sons, Harvey Roy and Kelly Blair; daughters, Daisy Jean Watts, Linda Joyce Dunbrack, and Gladys Irene Neumann; brother, Vernon; 19 grandchildren, 42 great-grandchildren, and nine great-great-grandchildren.

**Robert Haney Pittman** was born Feb. 5, 1931, in Rimby, Alta., and died Sept. 18, 2020, in Burns Lake, B.C. Robert served his church as a deacon in Rimby; Fairview, Alta.; and Clearwater, B.C. Predeceased: son, Kelly Pittman; parents, Robert McKinley and Iva Violet; brothers, Lenard and Arland; and sisters, Virginia Schram, Elaine Poffenroth, and Eleanor Hirschkom. Surviving: spouse, Juanita; sons, Rocky, Shawn, Shane,

Doug, Darrel, and Cliff; daughters, Stacey, Merna Mills, Cherie Skibinsky; sister, Verna Woods; 32 grandchildren and 25 great-grandchildren.

**Aylmer Toop** was born July 3, 1929, in Almonte, Ont., and died Oct. 12, 2020, in Carleton Place, Ont. Aylmer served as church treasurer for 49 years. Predeceased: spouse, Madella. Surviving: son, Charles (Loralee) of Edmonton, Alta.; daughter, Jo-Ann (George Gref) Toop of Cornwall, Ont.; and four grandchildren.

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■ **Obituaries**

**John A. Adeogun** was born Aug. 28, 1946, in Ipoti Ekiti, Nigeria, West Africa, and died Sept. 4, 2020, in Windsor, Ont. John loved Christian education and teaching. He was a principal and teacher working in Belleville, Ont., and Windsor, as well as in Alberta; Buffalo, N.Y.; and Flint, Mich. He also served in his church as an elder. Predeceased: parents, J. A. and Comfort Adeogun; brothers, C. O. and Titus Adeogun; and sisters, Elizabeth Fakeye and Dorcas Omolabi. Surviving: spouse, Gloria (née Cheeseman); sons, Donald Edward and Daniel Joseph; daughter, Donna Kaye Turner; brother, Joshua; and five grandchildren.

**Nina Olivia (née Chapman) Gillan** was born July 21, 1918, in North Sydney, N.S., and died Sept. 10, 2020, in Brantford, Ont. Nina was always active in her church, serving as church clerk for many years, and was a Sabbath school teacher into her 90s. Predeceased: spouse, Tom; parents, Enoch and Melissa Chapman; brothers, Wassal and Bill Chapman; sisters, Melissa Dana, Susan Stanley, Esther Price, Elsie McLellan, and Winnifred Bisson. Surviving: son, Thom (Marlene) of Hamilton, Ont.; daughters, Cathy (Robb) Burns of Pickering, Ont., and Margaret of Brantford; and one grandchild.

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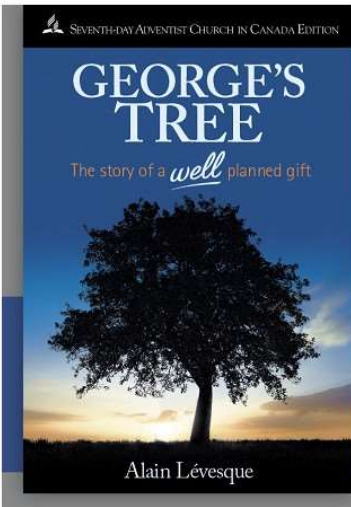
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# 2021 OFFERING SCHEDULE

## JANUARY

Local Church Budget ..... January 02  
Conference Advance ..... January 09  
Local Church Budget ..... January 16  
Religious Liberty\* ..... January 23  
Local Church Budget ..... January 30

## FEBRUARY

Local Church Budget ..... February 06  
It is Written Canada\* ..... February 13  
Local Church Budget ..... February 20  
Conference Advance ..... February 27

\*Special materials provided.



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Statistics from the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada showed that in 2020, tithes through online giving was almost double the amount from the previous year, and tithing overall was nearly the same as in 2019.<sup>2</sup> Due to church closures for most of 2020, a significant decrease in tithes and offerings was expected, but that has not been the case. Even though our members have not been able to attend church in person, they have maintained their faithfulness to return their tithe. This is amazing!

I still remember visiting people when I served as a trust officer for the British Columbia Conference. Often I would ask about their spiritual journey over the years. More than once I was told of rough financial times and that some days they would go with no or very little food. And yet, the temptation to “borrow” from the Lord’s tithe was never a consideration. Their resilience and commitment were an inspiration to me.

I am ashamed to admit that there was a time when I struggled with this challenge as well; it turns out I was not alone. To me, it seemed wiser to help people through other ministries—be it home or abroad—but it caused a lack of peace from not giving to my local church.

As we start the new year, I challenge you to commit to faithfully returning your tithe. Most Canadian churches have the ability to give tithe and offering on their website, but if not, go to [adventistgiving.ca](http://adventistgiving.ca). Expect the blessing and send me your story. ■

from the editor

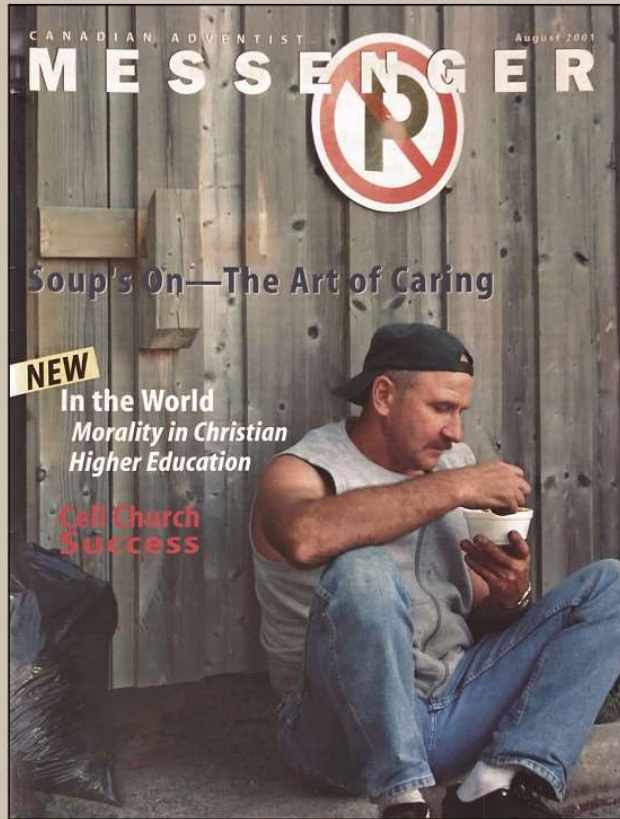
## Peace in Faithfulness

<sup>1</sup> AdventistGiving is available online at [adventistgiving.ca](http://adventistgiving.ca) and also on mobile devices through the Apple App Store and Google Play Store.

<sup>2</sup> 2020 statistics are as of the time of press.




**IN THIS ISSUE** *Canadian Adventist Messenger*, A Backward Glance has found some stellar examples of how Community Services, the church, and members have reached out to help the homeless and others in need. We hope that, some day, your inspiring story of how you helped meet the need will be included here.



Photos above and right: The early days of the Bread of Life soup kitchen in Terrace, B.C. August 2001—*Canadian Adventist Messenger*, Vol. 70, No. 8.

## Soups On The Art of Caring

*By Delphine Dame*



*The Bread of Life soup kitchen is a growing ministry of the Terrace Seventh-day Adventist Church. At the suggestion and urging of friends, this article is written with a desire to help anyone else who may be interested in starting a similar ministry in their area.*



## Pulling for the Homeless



Controller, Ralph Wagner arranged the use of a 17.5 ton Convair 5800 craft to be pulled 100 meters within their safe zone. The publicity event for promoting their pulling for the homeless was apparently covered by the local CHBC-TV station. Sponsors were able to pledge a specified sum per metre or a fixed amount for the 100 metres. All proceeds raised go to provide meals for the area homeless. To date \$1,760 has come in with the total growing daily.

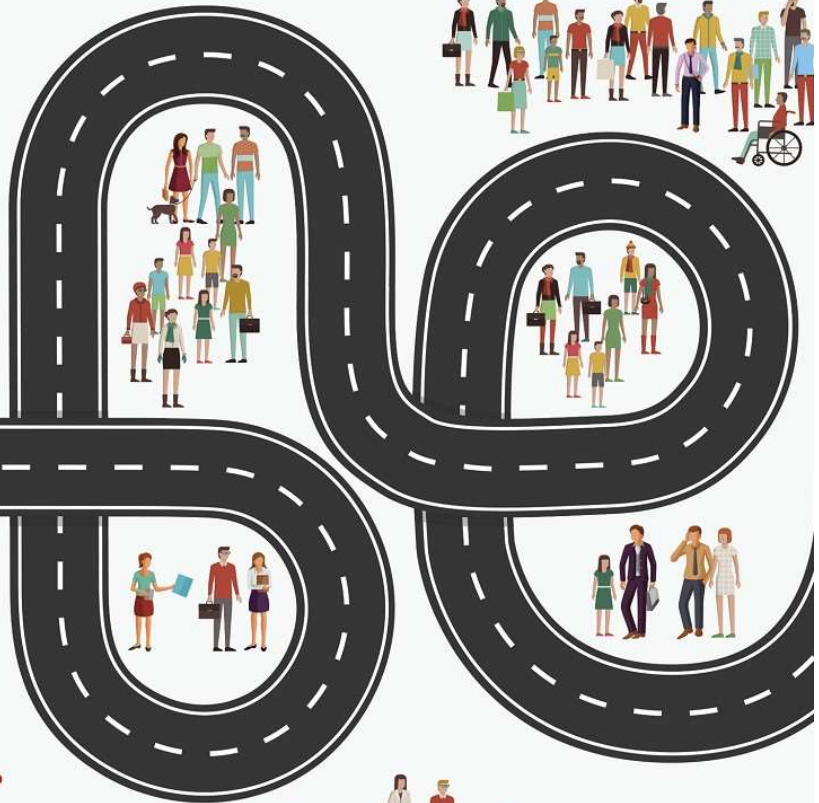
Large grocery stores are providing help in addition. The students and other church members hope to establish a regular soup kitchen for the area.

*Edwin Appudoray, Principal  
Westbank Adventist School*

Students of Westbank Adventist School in B.C. certainly found a most creative way to raise funds for the homeless. January 1996—*Canadian Adventist Messenger*, Vol. 65, No. 1.

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