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heart to heart

“When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.”

—Deuteronomy 24:19, ESV

How Is My Neighbour?

Throughout the fabric of Scripture, God’s care for the disadvantaged appears repeatedly. When a need shows up, the Christian moves closer to the need (the story of a traveller from Samaria).

Jesus’ life was filled with continual concern for those around Him. Don’t you think that could be the reason why crowds followed the Messiah? Those who truly follow Jesus show compassion, mercy, and attention to need.

How we respond to difficulty shows how genuine we are. Embodied in the hungry, the homeless, the hurting, Jesus stands before us. A genuine Christian will not exploit someone who is weak, wounded, or weary. To the extent of our ability, we can show His compassion without expecting anything in return.

In another part of the Bible, I read: “Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me. ... As you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me” (Matt. 25:34–36, 40, ESV).

Through ministries such as ADRA Canada, those around us in need, both in Canada and abroad may sense the touch of Christ in our time.

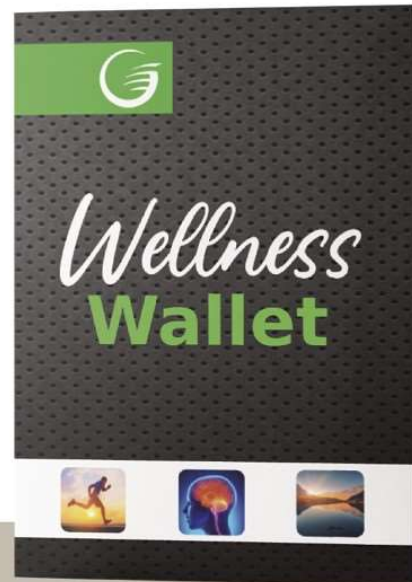
Will you be known for your care for others? ■

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



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WHAT'S INSIDE

April 2021



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WHAT'S COMING In our next issue read about a Sabbath school class in Alberta that wanted to sponsor refugees, a refugee family's dream of immigrating to Canada, and how God led both parties to find one another.

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FREEDOM OF RELIGION



Q: *I work in a small retail store and am a faithful Seventh-day Adventist. My employer has always been good about scheduling so that I don't have to work on Sabbath. I have been witnessing to some of my co-workers, and now some of them have joined the church and no longer want to work on Sabbath either. My boss is getting upset and he has asked me not to convert any more employees. What should I do?*

A: First, let me say that this is a great witnessing success story! But to answer your question, as I've written on this page before, employers are legally obligated to accommodate the religious beliefs and practices of employees. Your boss has been meeting his obligation under human rights legislation by accommodating your Sabbath observance. He now has that same obligation to your co-workers who have now accepted the Sabbath, provided that their beliefs are sincerely held.

The employer's obligation is not without limits. He has to accommodate you and your co-workers to the point of undue hardship. That's a high standard. If he believes that he cannot accommodate everyone's Sabbath in scheduling work, he is required to show that he has taken all reasonable steps to find other ways to fill the gaps in the schedule on Friday evenings and Saturdays.

If your witnessing is really successful and it leaves no one available to work on Sabbaths, then the employer may have grounds to say that accommodating everyone is undue hardship, since it would force his business to close every Saturday. Even then, I would expect him to consider whether he could hire part-time staff for Friday evenings and Saturdays (assuming he hasn't yet decided that he needs to study this himself and simply close during Sabbath).

His request that you stop sharing your beliefs is an

interesting one. The employer has potentially competing obligations in this regard. He has to continue to accommodate your beliefs and practices, but he also has a duty to all of his employees to maintain a work environment that is free of harassment. Additionally, you have a general duty to your employer to follow his directions and to put in a good day's work. This means that your witnessing must be done in a way that respects your employer and your fellow workers.

For example, doing Bible studies on work time would be inappropriate. So would sharing your faith with co-workers after they have made it clear to you that they are not interested. If a co-worker viewed your witnessing as harassment, the employer will be legally able to step in and force you to stop.

However, if you are engaging with co-workers about the Bible and sharing your faith during non-work hours, and they are interested and welcome the discussion, there is nothing that the boss can do. He is not entitled to interfere in the non-work lives of his employees.

I'm proud of how bold you have been in sharing the gospel. Just make sure that you continue to be respectful of your boss and fellow employees in doing so. ■

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

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



Hold Fast Till

I Come!

"He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne."—Rev. 3:21, NASB

As I write this morning, the sky is blue and the sun is bright, but the early morning temperature here in my part of the Prairies was around -36 °C. In fact, for about two weeks running, both our daytime highs and nighttime lows have been between -40 and -20 °C, despite earlier predictions that we could anticipate a warmer winter than usual. So much for wishful thinking!

Surviving Canadian winters requires at least two things: a certain degree of preparation and patient endurance. This kind of reminds me of the situation we're still in right now. Who would have really thought a year ago that many, if not most, of the doors to our churches would *still* be closed to the public due to COVID-19? There was no real warning about this pandemic (at least not one that the majority of us noticed or took seriously). But we have certainly been educated by experience on what to do now, haven't we? (It helped somewhat to be prepared once toilet paper and disinfectants finally became available again.)

We've been implored to be patient, to endure what seemed like endless difficulties in our efforts both to keep the rate of daily infections down and, now, to increase the rate of vaccinating the population. And just when we were seeing a light at the end of the tunnel, new strains of the virus began to spread, making that light appear suddenly distant.

One positive thing this pandemic has done is cause many people to consider, or reconsider, what the future holds, and if there actually might be a God who cares about them and has a plan for their lives. People are certainly more open now to consider the answers that God has entrusted to us in His Word. And so, while we ourselves must patiently endure the

same difficult conditions that also afflict our neighbours, we also ought to keep an eye out for opportunities to connect with people whom God has placed all around us—people who have yet to learn the glorious news that He cares and is sending His Son Jesus to rescue us soon!

God is not pleased to see the suffering and death that has taken place over this past year through a pandemic caused by the enemy, but He certainly is willing to use it as a means to wake us up out of sleep. Like our Canadian winters, and much like this pandemic, so is the patient endurance required during these twilight hours of earth's history. It is now time for us to be making preparation (or finalizing preparations some of us may have begun years ago) for the return of our beloved Saviour. And while we wait with patient endurance, let us "do the work ... so long as it is day! Night is coming when no one can work" (John 9:4, TLV).

Brothers and sisters, as we daily draw near to Christ, He will draw near to us and, through His grace and the agency of the Holy Spirit, prepare and equip us for whatever we may face ahead. I'm reminded of the words of the old hymn "Hold Fast Till I Come," by Franklin E. Beldin, based loosely on Revelation 2:25. The first verse concludes with these important words, "Sleep not as do others; be watchful, and wait." ■

Michael Collins is president of the Manitoba-Saskatchewan Conference.





Elvin Saruk and Grace Fedak present an opportunity to double every gift in 2021 toward the construction of a new library at Burman University. They believe that success often comes from valuing what is close at hand.

Grace, an alumna from both the high school and Burman University (then CUC), is an avid horticulturalist and knows the importance of fertile soil for fostering an abundant harvest. For Elvin, an oil company executive, the earth also yields a valuable harvest.

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Grace and Elvin



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- President Loren Agrey: 403-782-3381, ext. 4147. Email: president@burmanu.ca
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Creation Corner for Kids

You will face all kinds of trouble. ... Your faith will be tested. ... when this happens it will produce in you the strength to continue. And you must allow this strength to finish its work. Then you will be all you should be.

—James 1:2–4, NIRV

Jade

The road to our camping spot in the South Chilcotin Mountains (Pavilion, B.C.) was rough and steep, and it took several hours to get there. Long ago gold miners had explored this area, and we were excited about doing some exploring of our own. Maybe we'd find a little nugget the miners had left behind! But we didn't find any gold. Instead, we found jade! The mountains were green with the beautiful, glassy stone.

Jade is used for making jewelry and carvings. In Imperial China, jade was valued more highly than gold or even diamonds and has been called the "Stone of Heaven." Jade is not only beautiful but very strong, too, and was used for making tools like axes and knives before people learned how to make hard metal.

Think about it.

Jade formed deep in the earth during Noah's flood. Lots of pressure and heat squeezed and melted the rock until it turned beautiful—glassy and green. God wants to make our characters strong and beautiful like jade. But that can only happen if we cling to Him through times of trial and pain.

Do it!

When you face challenges, cling to God and trust Him. He is making your character strong and beautiful. (Note: A "challenge" is different from pain and suffering. If someone is hurting you, ask God for strength to stand up for yourself. Speak up and get help immediately.)



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



April 2021

9



A young volunteer delivers groceries in Montreal.

It has been more than a year now since the first confirmed Canadian case of COVID-19 was reported by Health Canada on Jan. 25, 2020, and words like *lockdown, isolation, and quarantine* have become commonplace. We complain about the things we miss: the restaurants, hair appointments, shopping—and, yes, church gatherings. But for many Canadians the effects of COVID-19 were far more severe.

For Mathias Kunuk,* life became much harder. Mathias lives in Igloolik in the territory of Nunavut. Igloolik has a population of 1,6822, a median age of 20 years, a boil water advisory, and only two retail/grocery stores. Non-perishable food supplies arrive by cargo ship once a year. All other supplies must be flown in, an expensive proposition that takes weeks—and that was *before* COVID-19.

Unable to afford repairs to his home, Mathias has been living without running water for five years. One winter he was unable to pay for fuel to heat the house. Many homeowners in Igloolik have similar problems. The high costs of food, fuel, and electricity make it difficult to keep up.

Partnering with the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada (SDACC) and Adventist Community Services (ACS) – North American Division, ADRA began a response immediately after the start of the first lockdown. In Igloolik, nine ADRA volunteers provided bags of frozen berries, soap, and \$100 food vouchers to 50 needy families in Igloolik, including Mathias. He also received a refrigerator, as he didn't have one.

Mathias has started attending church programs. "I didn't know that this was happening in Igloolik," he says. "I really

enjoy the singing. It really brings me happiness. One day I would like to visit the church down south."

Almost 2,700 kilometres due south, another team works to fill and deliver grocery orders. As part of their COVID-19 response project, the Montreal Luso-Brazilian Seventh-day Adventist Church designed an online form to reach the vulnerable within their community. Little did they know that their efforts would reach halfway around the world.

Rodrigo Schammass, the volunteer project manager for the team, wrote: "We had a family from São Paulo, Brazil, contact us after we published an advertisement on Facebook. The woman thought our project was to assist families in Brazil and filled our web form. Once we realized that she lived in Brazil, we contacted the local pastor near her home to attend to her request (emotional support). We talked to him, and he was so glad to help."

Because of a simple act of kindness, one lonely woman is now connected to a church and a community. She attends services and is engaged in Bible study. Across Canada, 9,132 volunteers undertook 33 projects involving 43 churches and organizations and touched almost 35,000 lives.

As COVID-19 continues to negatively affect Canada, there is still much work to do. Thankfully, the Spirit of God is always working, moving on hearts to meet needs and answer prayers. ■

Peggy Caesar is a communications specialist for ADRA Canada.



FRESH FAITH

Finding God's Purpose

by Alannah Tjhatra



It was 2013, and Ashia Lennon was struggling with her purpose in life. Having graduated from Mohawk College with a degree in biotechnology and working a steady, successful job, Ashia couldn't shake the feeling that it wasn't enough. Her life was missing something.

After spending a year praying about the situation and asking God to open a door for her, Ashia's answer came at the Canadian Youth Summit in June 2014. God was calling her to pastoral ministry.

"I had absolutely no interest in being in ministry," said Ashia. "But it came in response to an honest heart prayer of doing whatever

God desired for my life."

She was doubtful at first, wondering about the validity of the answer. She wanted to be sure that it was really God calling her and not just her own voice. Ashia wanted to let God lead, letting His thoughts, instead of her own, guide her actions. And sure enough, the Lord began opening doors for her. Ashia ended up attending Burman University to complete an undergraduate degree in theology. There were some challenges along the way, and Ashia learned that instead of trying to plan everything out on your own, sometimes you just have to let go and let God do His work.

Ashia is currently the interim head pastor at the Pinehouse Drive Seventh-day Adventist Church in Saskatoon. She's also completing the final year of her MA in pastoral ministry from Andrews University. In her free time, however, Ashia loves listening to audiobooks or podcasts and sending memes to her friends. She is also a self-declared chicken connoisseur. But whatever she is doing, Ashia emphasizes the importance of empathetic listening and helping people find healing in the Lord.

When asked if she has any advice for other women who feel the call to ministry but may be reluctant to answer, Ashia said, "I have struggled profusely with my call to ministry, and my obedience has come with a lot of doubt, anxiety, anger, and pain. But it has [also] come with peace. It doesn't mean it is going to be easy or comfortable. ... However, your purpose and the joy you desire is on the other side of obedience."

No matter where or when, Pastor Ashia's goal is simple: to practically equip God's people to share their faith experiences, supporting and growing with one another in the love of Christ. ■

35 & UNDER

In 35 words or less, who is your role model and why?

Davia Johnson

My role model is Maya Angelou because she used her words to address societal injustices and to lift up the oppressed.



Kayla-Hope Bruno

My mother, because she sacrificed a lot for me and my education. She believes that knowledge is important.

Samuel Pelobello

I look up to my grandpa because he worked hard.



Nora Martin

I really respect my English teacher from high school because he knew what it meant to be respectful even when other people didn't agree with him.

Kiana Kapiniak

My role model is my dad because he inspires me to work hard, stay healthy, and draw closer to God daily.



Selena Ly

I would say my role model would be Ate Mel at Burman. She's shown me how to think for myself and grow on my own, independent of what others may think of me.



Ask Me Anything

Q: Why is high school so awful?

A: High school can be the best of times and the worst of times. High school coincides with a time of major development biologically, emotionally, and mentally into adulthood. Unfortunately, it often feels as though it prioritizes academic learning above everything, where we may feel as though there's a huge disconnect with the classes that dominate our days and "real world problems." In this season of muted independence and increasing responsibility it can be frustrating and challenging.

With God nothing is wasted, not even our years of seemingly meaningless gym classes or learning the Pythagoras theorem. High school is the building block for adulthood, like communicating with people we don't agree with, working on group projects, learning stress management, and navigating relationships—family, friends, even romantic. This is a time when we develop our voices, feed our curiosities, and grow our strengths and talents.

High school prepares us for the discipline needed to navigate life and opens our eyes to the unfairness, injustice, and heartbreak of adulthood. We learn the biggest life lesson: asking for help when struggling. Our

high school years allow us to develop and practise skills like creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration. We may begin to discover our passions while seeking meaning and acting with purpose to achieve what we desire in our own and others' lives.

In Philippians 3:12, the Apostle Paul says, "Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me" (NKJV). Paul challenges us in this verse to press on, to keep growing. I believe one of the greatest advantages in life that you and I have is the capacity to grow and change. We have the capacity to press on. The first step in our growth is recognizing that there is further to go and more to learn and experience. We see that Paul acknowledged he had further to go. He said, "Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected." Paul understood that he had a lot of room for growth. And if he did, so do we.

High school for us is a growth opportunity. May you rise to the challenge graciously and prayerfully. ■

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

Growing Up

Millennial

TBH

"With time, you discover that there were reasons a relationship wasn't going to work, and there were reasons that your heart broke."

Change From Heartbreak

A few months ago I conducted an "Ask me anything" type of poll on Instagram Stories inviting the IG community to ask me any personal or burning questions they might have. People asked me typical questions, like "What's your favourite part of grad school?" "How's your boyfriend?" etc. But my favourite was "How did your first heartbreak change you?"

I hadn't even thought about it. It was when I was 17, so it's been a while. What I ended up saying was: "More than anything, [my first heartbreak] changed me by showing me that just because you love somebody, it doesn't mean that it's meant to be. It taught me that nobody is responsible for my happiness but me; others can only contribute to it. It also made me see the importance of close relationships with family and friends, and why everyone tells you to maintain those relationships, even while you're dating. And finally, I was changed by being more open to other people, new relationships, and I became more independent in general. For a while I struggled because I felt lonely and like I'd never love again, and feeling that pain is necessary for healing for a time. But eventually, I was changed in that I was able to acknowledge the pain, accept it, and respect my own life and choices. I learned that I couldn't change the past, but I could control my choices in the future."

Heartbreak is one of those things that lots of people go through but few talk about. It's one of those things that feels inevitable and simply part of the experience of being a young adult—and to some extent, it is.

Honestly, I wouldn't change the heartbreaks I've had. My

worst one was when I was 20, and after the relationship ended, I was almost devastated. I loved him, but as I said earlier, I learned that just because I loved him didn't mean that the relationship was destined to work. Love isn't enough to keep a relationship going. It takes time and commitment.

Obviously, it wasn't meant to be, but I don't regret it. I made a conscious decision after my first heartbreak to *not* regret my decisions—because whenever I started to regret my past, I would beat myself up for it. Beating oneself up for past choices does no good. It's totally great to accept mistakes and feel their consequences, but that can only last for so long before choosing to move on.

I'll be the first to admit that moving on is brutal. It takes time. And a lot of energy. But eventually, things really do get easier. With time, you discover that there were reasons a relationship wasn't going to work, and there were reasons that your heart broke. Sometimes the reason is just to learn more about life. Sometimes it's to learn about what one really wants in a partner. But God doesn't put people in our lives without some sort of reason.

So yes, heartbreak hurts. It's extremely painful. But I think that it does provide a lot of learning and opportunities to grow. And with God's help, I think that anyone can grow during such an emotional time. Heartbreak doesn't have to be the be-all and end-all of your life. In fact, heartbreak can sometimes be the beginning of the next step. ■

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





Tech SAVvy

BY SANDY AUDIO VISUAL

Smartphones in the Church and Ministry (Part 3): Smartphones in Worship Services

Depending on whom you talk to, smartphones have either brought additional blessings to a worship service or become downright disruptive. While attending a service, we can quickly and easily look up a Bible passage and then instantly compare that same passage across multiple translations. Most of us don't carry a stack of Bibles with us, so this feature alone can greatly enhance one's understanding of the passage and the message being presented. But how good are we at listening to the service, researching, and reading passages all at the same time?

This month we examine some of the other potential ways that mobile devices (smartphones, tablets) can become part of the service.

Hymnals and Song Lyrics

Complete hymnals have been converted into apps for smartphones/tablets, giving people access to the words faster than printed books. This could also allow a choir or worship group to keep lyrics discreetly in the palms of their hands. Some apps may provide accompanying music so that home worship or simply learning a new tune doesn't require a musician's talents.

Internal Sound Distribution

In the past, many churches were outfitted with listening devices for attendees who are hard of hearing. They may have been corded systems with headphones or may have been radio devices (some theatres offer them too). Many have since fallen out of use and may be in disrepair.

Today's smartphones support audio-sharing capabilities through built-in features like "party mode" or added apps like AmpMe or SoundWire. A smartphone can easily become a wireless receiver. Or the service could be extended to a difficult section or separate rooms instead of wired speaker systems. Another thought, perhaps a wishlist idea: what about translation into multiple languages or speech-to-text services for deaf members so they can enjoy a live service more easily? (Try the Google Live Transcribe app; it's like live closed captioning.)

Paging System for Parents

Does your assembly or gathering offer childcare services or children's church? How do you reach parents when they're needed? Use mobile messaging to link parents/guardians back to a child, allowing caregivers to find a parent quickly, quietly, and without leaving the other children unattended. No app needed; just text their number.

Remote Camera

If you have webcasting capabilities already, today's smartphones can usually be tied in as another input using a system called NDI. With video up to 2K and 4K, a smartphone may be better than some aging cameras that cost thousands of dollars. In these times of social distancing, a remote but live camera could allow people to stay in separate rooms while contributing to a unified service.

Remote Viewing Screens

Again, if your church already has webcasting capabilities, then the idea of using a phone/tablet for viewing the service is not a stretch. The small screen may not suit a whole room, but for people with eyesight issues a handheld device could bring them into a more active viewing experience.

Even without webcasting there are apps that allow for video sharing between phones or "casting" to a large screen TV equipped with applicable features or an added device like AppleTV, Roku, or Chromecast.

Today's smartphones and tablets offer advanced and enhanced options for both sound and video and more inclusive service options. Our three-part article series has given brief ideas on how to make use of these handheld devices. If you want to explore these and other options further, please contact us at SAV, as we may have more ideas to share. ■

Craig Snow attends College Park Church in Oshawa, Ont., and can be reached at craig@savweb.com. For more about Sandy Audio Visual (SAV), go to www.savweb.com.

CONVERSATIONS WITH AN

ATHEIST

I have been having regular conversations with an atheist. Jason* started dating Jessica,* who grew up in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. As a goodwill gesture, he agreed to begin meeting with me to learn about her faith and ask questions he may have about God.

Regular meetings with Jason and Jessica have been filled with passionate discussion and mutual learning. Here are a few tips I think are essential to consider when discussing religion with an atheist.

1. You must have mutual interest and respect for their point of view.

Many Christians join the conversation to fight, disrupt, and argue. You must have a genuine interest in their point of view. What is their story, and how did they evolve to their assumption?

2. Don't start with the Bible.

The Bible is the Word of God—for those who believe in the Bible. However, your holy book isn't the other person's authority. So it would help if you started the conversation by discussing worldviews, philosophy, and ethics.

3. Ask them questions.

Rather than assuming you have all of the answers, ask them where they find goodness, how they determine what is right and wrong, and whether they believe in an afterlife. The more questions you ask, the more introspection they will gain and, perhaps, ask you what you think.

4. Be prepared to answer the most challenging question, "Why would a loving God misbehave?"

In a recent conversation, Jason said, "From what I read about God, he seems pretty impatient, callous, and mean spirited. If any parent behaved like him, we would call that child abuse." How can you justify the jealous, wrath-filled God often portrayed in the Old Testament?

5. Admit you don't have all of the answers.

After our first meeting, Jason said, "I appreciate you don't claim to have all of the answers." In other words, we must display a spirit of humility and admit that we are also learning and growing.

6. Finally, please don't assume it is your job to convert them.

You are God's vessel. Only God can transform someone's life. The responsibility doesn't fall upon you solely. Wouldn't it be wonderful to tell you in a future article that I baptized Jason into the family of God? Perhaps. But just as wonderful would be portraying a loving, compassionate picture of God. ■

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

*Names have been changed to protect privacy.



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In the Midst of Desolation, Trust God!

"God's rescue [is] not about avoiding the bad stuff. God's rescue is about deliverance from sin and death, protection from losing our salvation."

It is one year later, and we are still in the grip of COVID. God's precious children have been praying throughout the year. Some are questioning if God is there, if He hears, if He cares, because the infection and deaths continue along with the devastating impact on mental health and finances.

Some are mourning the loss of loved ones and don't understand why God didn't keep His promise that "If you say, 'the LORD is my refuge,' and you make the Most High your dwelling, no harm will overtake you, no disaster will come near your tent" (Psalm 91:9, 10, NIV). Psalm 91 also tells us in verse 15, "He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him." We ask, "Lord, why aren't we seeing the fulfillment of this promise?"

I believe we *are* seeing the fulfillment of this promise; it just looks a little different than what many expect. We want deliverance and protection from disease and persecution. God wants deliverance from sin and death and protection from sin and Satan. The Apostle Paul helps us get perspective. "You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings—what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them" (2 Tim. 3:10, 11, NIV).

In 2 Corinthians 11:23–28, we are told that Paul was beaten with the 39 lashes five times, beaten with rods three times, stoned and left for dead plus many other dreadful things. And yet Paul's perspective is that the Lord *rescued him* from *all* these things. The bad stuff happened to him. God's rescue was not about avoiding the bad stuff. God's rescue is about deliverance from sin and death, protection from losing our salvation.

When Jesus was on earth, He, too, suffered greatly. His understanding of Psalm 91 was not that He would get to avoid pain and suffering. Jesus cried out in anguish, an anguish of soul that was approaching death. "Then he said to them, 'My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me'" (Matt. 26:38, NIV). Then He prayed three times for His Daddy to take the pain and suffering away. Each time He ended with "Not my will, but as You will." He trusted God the Father.

On the cross Jesus was so overwhelmed with our sin that He lost sight of God the Father, and, feeling desolate and alone, He cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me" (Matt. 27:46, NIV). In that moment He could have come down from the cross and saved Himself. In that moment He did not see the resurrection as part of his future, because He felt forsaken of God—which meant no resurrection. In the midst of that desolation and forsakenness He stayed on the cross, trusting that God the Father would be faithful to the plan and that His death would effect deliverance and protection from sin and death and Satan.

In the midst of our hardship, disease, and persecution, do we continue to trust that God loves us, is there, and is keeping His promise of deliverance and protection from sin and death, holding us tight in salvation? The cross of Christ is our assurance that no matter what is happening to us and around us, God's got us. God rescues us from sin and eternal death. Make time to read the Gospel accounts about the death and resurrection of Jesus, and be in awe of our God who rescues us for eternity. ■

Honey Todd is the director of prayer ministries for the Alberta Conference.



Where Are They Now



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

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



Dave and Yvonne Higgins

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

Dave Higgins: I was born in Smithfield District in the Parish of South Manchester, Jamaica. I am the last of eight children. There were seven of us brothers and one sister.

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

D: My early primary school education began at the one-room church school at Grove Town. After spending one full school year at West Indies College (now Northern Caribbean University), I went to Manitoba-Saskatchewan Conference to canvass for the summer. Having the desire to stay in Canada, I attended and graduated from Kingsway College. I then went to Atlantic Union College, where I obtained a B.Sc. degree.

After spending one year in the East Caribbean Conference teaching at Christiansted Junior Academy in St. Croix, US Virgin Islands, I went to Loma Linda University and graduated with an MPH with emphasis in health education. My doctoral degree in educational administration and leadership was obtained from Andrews University.

M: When and what were the circumstances that brought you to Canada?

D: I went to Canada, specifically the Manitoba-Saskatchewan Conference, in 1964 as a colporteur to earn money for a scholarship to further my education. This I did every year until I graduated from Loma Linda.

M: Where and in what capacity have you served the church?

D: I served in Ontario as a teacher/principal in one of the three satellite schools in the Toronto and District

School System before serving as associate superintendent of Education, Health Ministries, and Children's Ministries director in the Ontario Conference.

The first defining moment came when my wife, Yvonne, and I decided to leave our three children and accepted a General Conference (GC) call to serve at the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (AIAS), in the Philippines. Our five-year contract was extended to eight years. I taught in the graduate school, and Yvonne served as director of the Instructional Media Research Center.

The second defining moment came when we had to choose between two options to teach at Andrews University or at Northern Caribbean University (NCU). Because my wife's mother had died, leaving behind her father who was 101, we accepted the GC call to NCU in Jamaica so that Yvonne would have the opportunity to take care of her father. He died three years later.

M: *What did you enjoy most about overseas mission service?*

D: Although Yvonne's and my responses to this question may differ slightly, what we enjoyed most about overseas mission service can be summed up in seven words: joy, relationships, anxiety, passion, excitement, uncertainty, and trust. To elaborate on each word would overwhelm you and the reader. ... There are, however, two stories we will share.

First, the following happens to all of us: we see a homeless person, come upon the scene of an accident, or hear of a family in need of food and/or money. These situations call us to think and pray, "Lord, please help that person. Send someone to meet that need!"

One Sabbath morning Yvonne was impressed to put some extra cash in an envelope and take it to church. She didn't know why she was moved to do what she did. This is not something that she normally does.

After the worship service, as is our custom, we visit and greet many of the church family before going home for lunch. Before going home, however, Yvonne was impressed to give the envelope to a student who was a member of the small group Sabbath school class we usually attend.

After lunch we received a call from the student telling us that they had no food in their house for the next meal. They had prayed to God to send someone to help them. After receiving the envelope, they went to town and bought food for their whole family of six.

We believe that our Father wanted us to learn how to be the hands and feet of His Son to hurting students or families needing help.

Being the answer to the prayers of others is one way to be used by God. Being the answer to our own prayers is an astonishingly powerful privilege.

Second, in spite of the fact that we were provided with a well-furnished three-bedroom house on the AIAS

campus, we had a custom bed made with specific guidelines given to the maker. The bed in the master bedroom that the university had provided was relatively comfortable, but it was very low, too close to the floor. Snakes are one of the deadliest animals in the Philippines. Having heard stories of how some individuals on the campus had encounters with snakes, Yvonne and I wanted to be able to do an inspection of what reptile might be lying underneath the bed before we went to sleep. So we decided to get a bed made high enough so that such an inspection could easily be carried out.

We're not sure, but we believe that bed was the highest bed on campus. Having that special bed gave us "some" comfort. However, that comfort was thwarted when one day we found a snake coiled up by our bedroom window. Thank God it was outside. We did not waste time in sounding our voice alarm, and one of the faithful guards on the campus killed it and removed it.

M: *Tell me about your family.*

D: We have three adult children. Trisha, our first daughter, who currently teaches at Greaves Academy is married, and she and her husband (Gilmore) and their three children (two girls, one boy) live in Montreal. Our grandchildren attend Greaves Academy.

Talina, our second daughter, is a registered nurse living and working in Toronto.

Kevin, the youngest of the three, works for the Toronto Transit Commission. He and his four-year-old daughter live in Toronto.

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

D: We built our retirement home in Jamaica but spend time yearly with our children and grandchildren in Canada. Yvonne is very busy growing flowering plants and shrubs and different colours of sun vanda orchids.

I am busy with gardening. We have an orchard with tangerines and three kinds of oranges. Tomatoes, sweet peppers, string beans, pineapples, sweet corn, scallion, thyme, scotch bonnet peppers, and chocho (chayote) are among the things growing in the garden.

After we eat a well-ripened, juicy, delicious mango, Yvonne washes the seeds and takes them to the greenhouse, and puts them in potting soil. When the mango trees are ready to make their transition to the field, yours truly takes over and digs the holes, adds the fertilizer to the soil, and plants them.

In addition to gardening, I am serving as an adjunct professor in the Department of Graduate Education and Leadership at NCU teaching two graduate courses. The following quotation written by an unknown author succinctly summarizes this interview: "Retirement is not the end of the road. It is the beginning of the open highway." ■





In the middle of a pandemic, finding ways to reach out and help others has been difficult. But as Christians, one of the most fundamental values we hold is the importance of serving others. We believe that just as Christ came to this earth not to be served but to serve, we must live a life of continual service as well.

One of the central messages of the gospel is love for others. Jesus said, "Love your neighbor as yourself." There is no commandment greater than these" (Mark 12:31, NIV). We cannot forget this message, not even amid a pandemic.

This is a story of a carpenter who has followed the message of Jesus and is using his hands for others.

Let's go to the east coast of Canada, where the sun greets the ocean in the morning and the colonial-styled homes match the colours of the rainbow. The province of Nova Scotia is known for more than its beautifully coloured homes and eclectic lighthouses. It is also known for the friendly Canadians who live there. One Nova Scotian has decided to be more than a nice Canadian but rather a true Christian.

Kelly McCann is an Alberta native but has lived in Nova Scotia for more than 30 years. He is the oldest of five children and was raised on a little farm just north of Edmonton, Alta. McCann was raised in an Adventist home, where he learned the importance of Christian education, service, and hard work. Because of a great work ethic and family support, he was able to complete a degree at Canadian Union College (now Burman University) and become an elementary teacher for several Adventist schools. But even though McCann was an excellent teacher, God had even greater plans for him.

Kelly had a passion for working with young people in education but also had a passion for working with his hands. This passion led him to take up the art and trade of carpentry. At first he had no intention of making a career out of carpentry, but it turned out to be something he was very good at. After much deliberation, as well as support from his wife, Erna, he decided to leave his secure career as a teacher and pursue carpentry full-time.

The journey from teaching to carpentry has not been an easy one for Kelly and Erna. They have three children to care for, and somehow God has provided for McCann and his family.

Today Kelly is a grandfather to five children and continues to work as a carpenter. He has become a master staircase builder, a specialty that's in high demand in the industry right now. However, building a business and doing what he loved most was not enough for Kelly McCann. Although his career resembled what Jesus did (carpentry and teaching), he decided to make his Christianity practical and serve others.

Jane McClair is a long-time friend of the McCanns. They attend the same church in Nova Scotia and have developed a relationship since the McCanns settled in Nova Scotia. Jane was widowed several decades ago and left to raise her children on her own. Jane is an important member of their small community and evidently a strong lady who has worked extremely hard for her kids and others. She works as a teacher's assistant and volunteers at the food bank, which has placed her in constant contact with their local community.

McCann has done many repairs on her house, but one afternoon while inspecting her deck, he realized that her house was literally falling apart. Her tiny little cottage-style home had not been built to last; the foundation was weak and the lumber was rotting.

Jane was well aware of the state of her home but was never



Volunteers (L to R): Kevin McKay, Ron Scott, Jacob Slaunwhite, David Slaunwhite, Ron Pierce, Sash Zebeljan, and Kelly McCann. Services rendered include framing, drywall, electrical, plumbing, roofing, excavation, ICF, foundation, concrete, and general labour.

able to fully repair it because of the associated costs. Working as a teaching assistant does not pay well, and being on a tight budget meant she had to prioritize other expenses.

At first Kelly thought that it would be best to renovate her home, but he soon realized that it needed to be completely torn down and redone. McCann helped organize a committee at church to consider taking on this community project for one of their church members. Kelly had the skills to rebuild her home, but he didn't have the funds. The church committee put together a flyer and started vigorously handing them out in the community. They put the flyers up in the post office, in grocery stores, and at local businesses.

After they posted the flyer on social media, thousands of people began to reach out. A Halifax company donated \$30,000 worth of plumbing to the project. Several other companies donated dry wall, siding, and even an excavator. People began to donate online and volunteer their time to build Jane's new home. Her story became so popular that it was even featured on CBC. All this help came because of one man's willingness to serve his neighbour.

Kelly McCann not only mobilized a community into action but also inspired thousands to dedicate their work for others. Every Sunday, volunteers from the church and the community come together to help build Jane's home.

Kelly has devoted most of his time to working on this project

and has put his personal business on hold. He has not taken any stipends or donations for his work. McCann believes that if God is running this project, He will not need to worry about money. And God truly has provided; He has not only provided funds for Jane's home but also sustained McCann's personal income. He has been faithful to God, and God has been faithful to him.

While you are reading this article, Kelly McCann will most likely be working on Jane's house. He is committed to using the talents God has given him to help his friend and neighbour. McCann has enjoyed working with his community and church on this project. When asked what one message *he* would share with all Canadians, he said, "Take care of others, and take time for others."

Jane's house is well underway, and it is all thanks to God and the love and care from her community. Christ has called you to service today, and it's your job to recognize the needs of your community and meet them. Let the hands of a carpenter inspire you to take care of others regardless of the amount of money, time, and resources you have at this time. If you are faithful to God in service to others, He will always provide. ■

Elijah Ramjattan is a speaker and writer who currently resides in Beeton, Ont. For more information about this project, please email janeshome2020@gmail.com.



RAINMAK

Love Lives Here

Reg and Judy Demitor are two of the warmest people you will ever meet. “God has really blessed us in our fostering journey,” Judy begins.

“Reg and I started fostering in Yorkton, Saskatchewan in 1978. We went directly into Emergency Receiving, providing 24-hour emergency placement for children 6 to 16 years of age. These short-term placements were children and teenagers picked up off the streets or removed from abusive situations and brought directly to our home. In three years, 264 children came through our doors, and we never knew from day to day how many would be at our dinner table or how many would remain in the morning.”

In April 1983, the Demitors decided to move back to Alberta to give their three children an Adventist education. “Reg was leaving his native Saskatchewan, but I was coming home to central Alberta,” Judy shared.

“We were burnt out after three years of 24/7 fostering. So I worked in the optical business, and Reg farmed until 1989, then went back to school and got certified as a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN). Then the optical lab closed down in 1994. After much prayer and debate about what to do, Reg suggested we return to fostering, and I agreed. Within three weeks of submitting our application, we had a five-week-old baby girl whom we were blessed to raise to adulthood.”

But the girl struggled and, after some time, became pregnant and knew she couldn’t raise her baby independently.

“So,” Judy continues, “we invited her to move back home. She is still with us, with her little girl, who is now three. We also have a boy [with disabilities] we were given at 17 months. He is now 22 [years old] and will also remain with us. And of course, we continue to foster.”

But the story of these children is of brokenness.

“We had a sweet little 16-year-old girl,” Judy reminisces. And after just a few days, she revealed she had a two-year-old daughter. The child was living with her grandmother on a reserve in Saskatchewan. She also confided that the situation was unhealthy, and she was concerned. “So one evening my sister-in-law and I went with her to the reserve to pick up her little girl,” says Judy.

The girl and her baby stayed with the Demitors for about two months.

“Then,” Judy continues, “she decided she wanted to go back to school, get an education, and adopt her child into a Seventh-day Adventist home. Pastor Don McIver, the Manitoba-Saskatchewan Conference president at the time, was instrumental in finding the child a loving home. The little girl’s name was Jaime, and she remained in her adopted home until she was 13.”

Judy pauses, turning the narration over to Jaime.

“I was adopted when I was two years old,” Jaime says. “Judy shared that my grandmother was an alcoholic and incapable of taking care of me. But when they tried to take me, my grandmother resisted. So the three of them went to a local coffee shop and shared the story with two police officers who

happened to be in that day. Hearing the story of the at-risk child, the officers agreed to help.”

“I think this is an essential part of my story,” Jaime continues. “To see how God puts people in places at certain times, and I’m convinced that these officers were provided by God to remove me from that home.”

In her adopted Seventh-day Adventist home, Jaime was introduced to God. “I was taught everything about God. I was homeschooled, then went to a Christian school in Saskatchewan. I had an excellent upbringing. But when I was 13, my parents thought it might be beneficial for me to live with my birth mother. They thought I might learn more about my heritage and gave me that option.”

Jaime chose to live with her birth mother. “I can’t say it was a wrong choice; looking back now, I would have made a different choice. I would have stayed in the Christian home.

Three months after moving in with her birth mother, Jaime was in foster care. Shortly after that, she was living on the streets. Everything changed for Jaime. “I turned away from God. There was no more church, no more praying. It was my first public school in Grade 8.”

While statistics report a significant decrease in Canada’s teenage pregnancy rate, Jaime, like her mother before her, became one of almost 40,000 teen pregnancies in Canada each year. “I got pregnant at 17 and had my daughter at 18. I was addicted to drugs and alcohol and was a terrible mother. I made every mistake that you could possibly make—

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so many bad choices in every aspect of my life. But I never forgot God, never forgot how to pray."

As she tells it, slowly, God began putting good people in her life again.

Jaime was accepted into the First Nations University of Canada at the University of Regina. "There were only three degrees offered, and the only one I was interested in was social work. It was a life-changer. It taught me a lot about myself, my culture. They focused on the need to heal yourself before trying to help others. I ended up moving a few places, got pregnant and had a son in 2012."

When Jaime's son was three, she had a desire to teach him about God. So she began attending church. "We went to all kinds of churches, and we also went on Sundays. But it's amazing how God works. I took a job cleaning [and] would listen to sermons."

Jaime started going to all the Adventist churches in her area until she found one that felt like home, and stayed. Inside of a year she was baptized and became a member of the praise team. This helped her get reacquainted with her childhood hymns.

"I used to go over to the pianist's house to practise. I told her about the loving Adventist couple my mother told me we had stayed with when I was two." Jaime had always regretted not staying with Reg and Judy.



Judy and Reg Demitor

The pianist revealed that she knew Reg and Judy; they lived close-by and had their telephone number! "Here's the number," she said to Jaime, "phone them!"

So Jaime did. "I picked up the phone and heard Judy's voice. She knew who I was, had so many memories of me, and was in tears."

Judy invited Jaime out for Sabbath dinner and greeted her warmly. "It was like coming home," says Jaime. "It's incredible how God has prepared this family for me, at the perfect time, in the ideal place. That was two years ago, and this is my family. I can't even say she's

my mom; she has enough kids." Jaime and Judy both break into laughter at this joke—so very much like mother and daughter.

"We have happy endings, and we have had sad endings," says Judy. "We go on praying for these children, and our hope is that someday we will see them all in the kingdom." ■

Peggy Caesar is a communication specialist for ADRA Canada.





Disturbingly, the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) advises that hurricanes are increasing in frequency and intensity worldwide. Whether known as a hurricane, a typhoon, or a cyclone, these storms are some of nature's most powerful weather events. They form over warm ocean waters, gaining power and speed until they reach land. Once a hurricane loses contact with the warm ocean water, it will weaken. But this, of course, is relative. For people in the path of an oncoming storm, the effects can be catastrophic, and recovery efforts, including rebuilding, can take years.

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) is no stranger to the devastation caused by these vast and perilous storms, which affect millions each year.

Mozambique

For the people of Mozambique, cyclones Idai and Kenneth were two of the top five worst storms to ever hit their southern African nation. When it made landfall on March 14, 2019, Cyclone Idai was a category 3, 209–251 km/h (130–156 mph) windstorm that destroyed 90 percent of the coastal city of Beira and left hundreds dead. Idai's storm surge waters were up to six metres deep, leaving more than 1,200 square kilometres underwater, and creating an "inland ocean" that could be seen from space.

Less than six weeks later, Kenneth, a category 4 storm, slammed into another region of the country. Kenneth dumped several feet of rain inland, marking the first time in recorded history that two intense tropical cyclones have hit Mozambique in the same season.

For evacuees, fleeing an oncoming calamity means often leaving everything behind. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported 1.85 million needy people in Mozambique alone. Thanks to our supporters, the ADRA network and our partners were able to provide food assistance, temporary shelter, emergency medical aid, clean water, sanitation facilities, hygiene promotion, and assistance to students needing to return to their classrooms.

Philippines

In 2020, Super Typhoon Goni became the fourth storm to hit the Philippines within three weeks, and it triggered the evacuation of almost one million people. Goni made landfall at 4:50 a.m. on Nov. 1, 2020, with winds gusting in excess of 310 km/h,



*Photo above: Typhoon Damage in the Philippines.
Photo below: Aerial view of a flooded village in Mozambique.*



TYPHOONS,

and it caused catastrophic damage, flooding, and loss of life.

Florence Milago¹ is from barangay² San Francisco in the municipality of Guinobatan, Albay, Philippines. Her home was situated at the foot of the majestic Mayon Volcano. After Goni, it was buried under the floodwater, debris, and rocks that barrelled down the mountain during those early hours of Nov. 1. Florence shared that a few hours before Super Typhoon Goni made landfall, barangay officials went around the subdivision pleading with residents to evacuate. Many of her neighbours refused to leave.

Despite their region never having flooded, Florence and her husband left rather than take the risk. Returning the next morning, she was shocked by what she saw. She had heard rumours in the evacuation centre that their subdivision had flooded. Still, she never expected to find everything under mud and dirt.

Arriving home, they found many of their neighbours, along with the search and rescue officials, digging into their homes. Everyone was dreading and praying that their missing loved ones wouldn't be found underneath the rubble. She could only watch helplessly, knowing that this nightmare from Super Typhoon Goni was far from over.

ADRA and several ADRA volunteers responded in Florence's community, providing hope and help to many in the ways that we could.

One volunteer shared her experience at an ADRA distribution site at San Isidro Adventist Church, Malilipot, Albay, Philippines, where food, hygiene supplies, and personal protective equipment were distributed to families. "How sweet to hear

the acknowledgement from the lips of recipients and see their smiling faces as they left with the relief packages," she writes.

"Maraming salamat po sainyo at sa ADRA sa daming tulong na relief sa aming barangay. Pagpalain po kayo ng Diyos." (Translation: "Thank you so much to you and to ADRA for the great help you brought to us. May God bless you.")

"We have served communities in Bicol Region long before the typhoons struck, and we will continue our work alongside them long after they have passed," says Tom Pignon, the country director of ADRA Philippines. "Access to health and nutrition has always been a challenge in this region. COVID-19 has threatened the communities, and then these typhoons have ripped apart homes and livelihoods. ADRA responds with food, shelter, hygiene items, psychosocial support, and cash to meet families' basic needs. However, a full recovery for families is still a long way off. We are committed to stand alongside these communities and serve those families affected in their greatest hour of need."

Bahamas

In the Bahamas, Hurricane Dorian was another extreme disaster. Survivors of Sept. 1, 2019, describe the hurricane's sound as like a freight train over the island of Grand Bahama. The damage caused by Dorian was extensive. Heavy rainfall, a storm surge greater than five metres (18 feet), a 36- to 40-hour stalled eyewall, and more than 290 km/h (180 mph)³ sustained high winds caused massive infrastructure damage.

Although 77 people were reported dead, Dorian's actual death toll may never be known, as many people were lost to



AND CYCLONES

By Peggy Caesar



the flood waters. What we do know is that the psychological toll on residents, many of whom witnessed loved ones and belongings washed out to sea, is often greater than the loss of their material possessions.

The situation for the communities on Grand Bahama was truly dire, as their freshwater supply was contaminated by the flooding saltwater and was no longer safe to use. In partnership with ADRA International and Water Mission, a non-profit Christian engineering organization, ADRA Canada worked to bring clean water to school children and communities in Grand Bahama. A reverse osmosis water purification system was installed to remove the sediment and salt in the water, ensuring over 20 schools and communities had safe drinking water.

Wayne Hall lost his livelihood in the aftermath of Hurricane Dorian. But he did not allow the tragedy to discourage him. Wayne decided to give back, volunteering as an operator for ADRA's water facility. "Dorian affected me as it affected everybody else," says Wayne. "Personally, I was fine. However, my business went six feet under water. ... Lost all of my stock, my fish, my growing beds. So it was catastrophic for me. But you know, we're in the process of rebuilding."

Mario Olivera, ADRA International's Director for Emergency Management, led a team to survey the efficacy of ADRA's initial response in the Bahamas, assess the damage, and weigh the next steps.

"The first emergency, [Dorian], is already passed," says Mario. "The lifesaving activities with water, food, and shelter [are] already passed. We're now in the second phase with recovery, [and] with reconstruction. The goal is not only to [help Bahamians] recover but also to give the tools to ADRA Bahamas ... [for] reconstruction now and for resiliency to face similar and stronger disasters in the future. ... Our goal is to build capacity in the region so that ADRA Bahamas can help others as they have been helped."

Honduras

Edwin Flores, the emergency response co-ordinator for ADRA Honduras, gives further insight into the toll these disasters take on communities and the most vulnerable. Three weeks

after Tropical Storm Eta hit northern Honduras on Nov. 5, 2020, Hurricane Iota slammed into Honduras on Nov. 18, 2020, heavily affecting the communities in and around the Sula Valley.

Thousands of Honduran families, already heavily affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, were now forced to deal with the devastating effects of the twin hurricanes. Eta and Iota made a precarious situation involving several droughts, food insecurity, increased violence, poverty levels, and latent dengue and Zika epidemics much worse.

Edwin, who had been a member of the Hurricane Dorian response team two months earlier, now found himself working on behalf of his own people.

"When you have over three million people affected by a disaster, the resources needed are enormous," says Edwin. "People who have lost everything are living on boulevards in plastic tents. Here in Honduras, there are places still today that are underwater. People are leaving Honduras in caravans going to the United States.

"I've been doing this work for the past 20 years," continues Edwin. "But it is hard to see what is going on. ... We are short on resources; the international community's response has not been as much as others. Lots of companies lost infrastructure, so many lost jobs. These things take a profound psychological toll, not just on the people but also on us, as workers and as Hondurans."

As Edwin points out, a challenge to any effective response is the damage to critical infrastructure left in the wake of these storms. Often a community's sewage backs up and water infrastructure is damaged, making clean water a very high priority. Skin problems and cholera are the results if help does not come quickly.

"Here in Honduras, we are setting up mobile Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) stations. We are also delivering drinking water to people in communities that are still without," Edwin explains. "We provide hygiene kits and see the tears produced by a hygiene kit when someone has lost everything. Many have been evacuated in temporary shelters, and many subsistence farmers have lost their crops. Many who were part of the informal economy have lost incomes due to the hurricanes



A house destroyed by Hurricane Dorian in the Bahamas.





A young participant in Honduras.



Wayne Hall shows the water filtration system in the Bahamas.

and COVID-19. We prioritize families with female heads of household, elderly, pregnant, people with disabilities, and children under five.”

ADRA’s hygiene kits provide much-needed essentials such as liquid cleanser, bleach, laundry soap, shampoo, soap bars, garbage bags, surface cleaning cloths, and a bucket. They are useful for cleanup as well as for personal hygiene.

Emergency response

In the immediate aftermath of a hurricane, there is an urgent need for food, clean water, shelter, medicines, and other emergency supplies. ADRA’s goal is to provide direct assistance to preserve lives, improve health, and restore hope.

But beyond an immediate response lies a massive recovery effort that often takes months or even years of ongoing assistance to create a sense of normalcy.

With the COVID-19 pandemic still active in communities

globally and with confirmed cases rising, ADRA responds with disaster relief, personal protective equipment, and education on keeping safe and practising healthy habits in an emergency.

None of what we do at ADRA would be possible without the generosity of our supporters here in Canada. Your compassion has shown the love of God to millions in desperate need. Truly, may “the Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace” (Num. 6:24–26, NIV). Thank you for your faithfulness. ■

Peggy Caesar is a communications specialist for ADRA Canada.

- 1 Name has been changed.
- 2 Tagalog for village.
- 3 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) and National Weather Service, *National Hurricane Center Tropical Cyclone Report*, April 20, 2020, https://www.nhc.noaa.gov/data/tcr/AL052019_Dorian.pdf.





Giving God a Second Chance

"As we reached the door, she called out to me and said, '...I'm ready to give God a second chance.'"

It was late one night and I was tired and hungry, but my partner and I decided to knock on one more door. I'm happy we did because we met a young woman named Linda, and her life has never been the same.

Linda didn't look like someone who would be interested in anything spiritual; however, we still went through our usual literature evangelism introduction, and she actually let us in.

Once inside, I shared with her more of what we were doing in her community and also showed her one of our health books. She liked it very much, so I proceeded to show her a spiritual book called *God's Answers to Your Questions* (a.k.a. *Bible Readings for the Home*). Her face turned angry, and she quickly told me that she didn't believe in God and didn't want my "God book." She muttered something about her dad having been killed and couldn't understand why God—if He existed—would allow that.

One thing I have realized over the years is that when people do finally say what really matters to them, they often do so quietly. We must learn to listen carefully and between the lines. What's being said out loud doesn't always accurately reflect the underlying issue; sometimes what people mutter under their breath or leave unsaid is the key.

Since Linda was about my age, I took a risk and boldly asked her, "If God exists, wouldn't you want to ask Him why He let your father die? As you can see from the title of the book, it might really answer your question!"

She refused the book, but we kept talking to her, ministering to her emotional needs by actively listening and showing compassion. After some time she decided to take the book that addressed healthy living. She went

to another room to get her wallet. When she returned with the money, my partner asked her if she really wouldn't prefer the *God's Answers* book. You could see there was a struggle going on, but in the end she firmly declined. There was some tension in the air right after that, but with God's help, we were able to bring back a friendly atmosphere.

After a long talk it was time to go. I felt impressed to pray with Linda. I could sense that she was so empty and needed the comfort and blessing of God. I told Linda, "I know you don't believe in God, but do you mind if I pray for you?" She smirked and told me that I could do whatever I wanted. I prayed for her health, her needs, and her future. It was a simple prayer, but I meant every word of it.

When I finished the prayer, she had tears in her eyes. She was very quiet, so I just picked up my bag and we started to leave. As we reached the door, she called out to me and said, "Jonathan ... I think I'm going to take the God book. I'm ready to give God a second chance."

There are many hurting people in this world. They are so empty and they don't know where to turn for help. Linda was filling her days with smoking, drinking, and social activities that were not conducive to her well-being. Yet still, something was missing; it was a void that only God could fill.

Can God count on you this month to reach out to someone who may have given up on Him? Take the compassion challenge and leave the results to Him. ■

Jonathan Zita currently serves as the director for the Lifestyle Canada ministry. Lifestyle Canada is Canada's literature evangelism ministry.

Even before I was born, my parents knew that they would enrol me in an Adventist school. My father, Acner Ace Olibris, had attended an Adventist primary school, and my mother, Samuele Vanessa Olibris, was enrolled in Adventist education for her entire pre-university academic career. Often, as my parents reminisce, they fondly discuss school assemblies where they would spend an entire hour in prayer, praise, and worship, and sports days where they and their classmates would get a chance to demonstrate their skills and playfully challenge one another.

The biblical principles that so strongly form the foundation of Adventist education created an environment where my parents were able to grow mentally, physically, socially, and spiritually. With age and awareness, they began to recognize a marked difference between the influence of other institutions and that of their Adventist schools.

“Education on earth is an initiation into the principles of heaven,” Mrs. White wrote,¹ and this had been my parents’ experience in Adventist schools. Needless to say, as they grew more mature in the faith, they developed an overwhelming appreciation for the Adventist education system. It was, as Mom puts it, “a continuation of what [they] were learning at home.” They vowed that, as parents, they would afford me the same opportunity; and that they did.

I have attended Adventist schools for my entire academic journey, with only two years remaining before I graduate from high school. I appreciate the many values and lessons I have gained in this environment, the structure it provides, the God-fearing friends and teachers I have been fortunate enough to meet and bond with, and the limited exposure to negative influences.

Most memorable for me are the times spent in assembly, collectively worshipping and exploring the nature of God. I am moved by the inclusion of the various cultures, ethnicities, backgrounds, and beliefs that exist within our school, and the constant reminder that we are all “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Psalm 139:14, KJV). I recognize the financial sacrifice made for me to attend this school, and I thank God for the opportunity, firmly believing that it continues to be a worthwhile investment.

In the future, when I have children of my own, I will most definitely ensure that they, too, share in the experience of Adventist education. This is the ongoing circle of commitment to Adventist education. Just as my parents experienced its blessings, they passed these on to me, and I will, in turn, pass the blessing on to my children. My Adventist school gives me a safe space to grow in faith and shields me from an environment where I would be encouraged to compromise my beliefs.

The Bible acknowledges parents who know how to give good gifts to their children (Matt. 7:11), and I’m grateful that my parents gave me the gift of Adventist education. I write to express my gratitude, and I pray that this blessing is one that many others have the opportunity to experience as well. ■

Shamour Abigail Olibris is a Grade 9 student at Greaves Adventist Academy (Montreal, Que.) who aspires to study law.



¹ *Education*, 307, https://egwwritings.org/?ref=en_Ed.307.6¶=29.1616.

THE BURMAN EFFECT

BURMAN ALUMNI
IMPACTING THEIR COMMUNITIES

An Education for Life

As much as we would like to think that our church is full of perfect people, we all know it is not. We just have to look at ourselves, right? Yet there are times when I have to remind myself.

Since graduating from university, I have had the privilege of serving the church, first as a teacher, then as principal, superintendent, and now as associate director of education. Board meetings and other committee meetings seem to lend themselves to potential conflict. Even when we work one-on-one with students and parents, differing perceptions, expectations, and beliefs sometimes bring out the worst in us.

Avoiding impending conflicts (or defusing them when they are unavoidable) takes leadership skills that are mostly learned on the job through trial and error. That's not unusual. Much of what is learned in university is theory based. Then, when employment conditions demand it, theory tends to become practice.

Some university programs, of course, do provide safe environments for learning practical skills: prospective teachers have to fulfill student-teaching requirements, and medical students have clinical rotations. Trade schools require students to complete apprenticeships. Practising specific skills that were taught in classrooms is important, but how does one practice skills that are both extrinsic *and* intrinsic—skills such as leadership?

As I look back on my own education at Burman University (then CUC), I see that all classes prepared me for my career. The one that has been most influential in learning to work with others—whether in classrooms, in committees, or on school boards—was a practicum course in leadership. While I learned various leadership theories, I also learned how to lead by practising in a safe environment.

Our weekly lab exercises consisted of three parts.

First, my group was required to solve a problem. This may have been physical ones, such as trying to find items with modified flashlights that allowed only pinpricks of light in a completely dark gym, or finding a way to get from

one side of the gym to the other without touching the floor. The problem may also have been ethical: how would we go about selecting one of two equally ill patients for our only kidney machine?

Second, each week the leadership role was rotated among us. The leader's job was to take charge and guide the group through whatever challenge had been assigned.

Third, we had to arrive at a consensus on whether or not we had met our challenge.

My Burman education gave me skills to work with people during both joyful times when everyone is pulling together and also tense times when nothing is working smoothly. Burman's value cannot be easily measured. Attending a Seventh-day Adventist university and taking classes from professors who place Christ first and challenge their students to do the same has had an eternal impact on me. ■

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

Shad and Tara (née O'Donnell) Lehmann are both graduates of Burman University. They have three children: Elisha, AylaWynn, and Haniah.



Amazing Testimonies

from Amazing Facts Ministries

Thank you for the *Great Controversy* book someone left in my mailbox. I have read it through, and it has been a tremendous blessing. Getting this book has been a high point in my life. After I reread some sections, I will give it to a friend who will appreciate it. I have been watching *Amazing Facts* on TV for years.

—Tom

Dear Amazing Facts Ministries, Thank you for the Bible course. Your support gives me courage to change my opinions and open my heart. I met with Pastor ———, and we had good fellowship. He calls me regularly, and I am amazed that people care about me.

I'm living a good life today. I have a roof over my head, clothes on my back, and food to eat, and I want for nothing. I was not always this way. Living only in the flesh led me to lose everything, and all I was left with was my alcohol. I am not that way anymore. When I lost everything, I cried out to a God I never thought existed. I pray to Him every day, and I know that He took away my addiction because I believe in Him.

—Randy

Awarm thank-you to Amazing Facts Ministries, and especially Pastor Doug Batchelor for sharing such important messages in such a factual and brave way! We were staunch Sunday churchgoers from birth (40+ years). We have now left that faith due to hearing the truth of the Bible through Pastor Doug's sermons. These messages need to be heard by everyone!

—Brenden family

I received your free offer for your Bible study guides in the mail, and I just had to say thank you. Thank you for all of your good work in touching the lives of God's people and bringing them back to Him, including myself. Your TV programs have touched me dearly and have answered so many confusing questions I've had about the Word of God. All of the great work done by everyone at Amazing Facts Ministries has changed my life. I wouldn't be where I am now without your love. So, a million times, thank you! God bless all of you and everyone you touch!

—Kiera

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for all your Bible studies you have sent me. Please, I'm requesting yet another series if you have more. You have taught me so much in getting to know Jesus and His teaching from the beginning of time till the end of this life on earth. God bless all my friends at Amazing Facts Ministries.

—Pamela

I was baptized at 19 and through the years have learned to trust my Lord. His faithful promises are my armour and protection. His strong right hand holds me secure. Thank you for these Bible study guides. I have learned so much, I have shared with my sister, and I'll use them to teach others. My son and his family want me to do the study with them.

I was raised in a church, under a lot of man-made rules, and hell was the main theme, along with fear and wrong doctrine, so thank you again. I was raised believing Sunday was the Lord's Day. Please pray for me as I change my way of thinking. I love the Lord and want to follow all His commandments. After 69 years this will take a lot of prayer and mindset. Thank you!

—Mary

AMAZING FACTS

MINISTRIES

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The Greatest Present You Have to Offer

“I just came from a funeral on Zoom, and I’m feeling fragile,” Tanya’s voice quivered. “I can’t stop crying. I probably shouldn’t be here right now.”*

“Why do you feel you shouldn’t be here?” someone asked.

“Because I’m such a basket case, and I’m falling apart,” she blubbered through her tears, mascara streaking her cheeks.

“I’m so glad you showed up!” Another friend in our Zoom Sabbath school class reassured Tanya.

“Yeah, we need you here, Tanya!” René reassured her.

“It’s not you guys I’m uncomfortable with ... it’s God. Like, this is Sabbath school, and you are my church family. I can count on you guys, but where is God? I just want to talk to God. My whole world’s falling apart, and He says He loves me, but where is He?” Tanya kept wiping away the stream of tears. “I should just keep my mouth shut ...”

Silence.

A conversation like this, where a friend is being brutally honest and vulnerable, often leaves people feeling uncomfortable and not knowing what to say.

“You know, Tanya, when our eldest daughter, Jo-Ann, was learning to swim, she wouldn’t let go of me because she didn’t think she was ready to swim on her own.”

Everyone listened intently.

“Then, one day she saw another little girl her age swimming by herself, and Jo-Ann’s tiny eyes grew as big as saucers. That did it. She pushed me away and began swimming with her new friend.”

Tanya’s tears stopped.

“So, when you were asking, ‘Where is God?’ it made me think of that story.”

“Why?”

“Because whenever we feel like we can’t do it, we ask God to show up, and He does.”

“How does God show up? I don’t see Him.”

“You know how Jesus said, ‘I am the light of the world?’”

“Yeah.”

“Well, He also said to His disciples, ‘You are the light of the world.’”

“Uh-huh.”

“So every disciple of Jesus is like Jesus. When my daughter thought she couldn’t swim, God sent another little girl to encourage her, and when Jo-Ann saw someone like herself swimming, she knew she could do it.”

“You guys are my Jesus.”

“We’re trying our best.”

“Yeah, you’re doing a good job.”

Thank you, Pastor Mike. I’m so happy I showed up.”

“Tanya, we’re all happy you showed up!” René voiced the sentiments of the entire class.

“Tanya, this is so corny, but I want to share with you a play on words,” I said.

“Go ahead.”

I took a deep breath and spoke from my heart: “Tanya, the greatest present you have to offer us is your presence.”

“Oh, that’s so sweet! I love that! It’s not corny!”

That morning, by simply showing up, Tanya gave us all a chance to exercise our faith—to be authentic—even though we felt a bit awkward and didn’t really know



what to say. When she exposed her weakness, it nudged us closer to one another. This doesn’t always happen, but thank God, it miraculously happened that day.

The Bible encourages us with these words: “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that you may be healed” (James 5:16).

If you are feeling a little disconnected and want to meet with others for a warm, spiritually uplifting, and friendly get-together, I invite you to join René and me for 15 minutes every Friday evening at 7:30 p.m. EST on Facebook Live to connect and usher in the Sabbath together: facebook.com/ItIsWrittenCanada/

We hope to see you there! ■

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



Adventist Education Sabbath 2021

...to inspire in each student a life of faith, wisdom, and service



Sharing Care and Compassion With the Turkana People in Kenya



Famine relief food distribution to the Lodwar-Turkana community.

A man sat suffering, alone in his hut. He was barely alive when Rick Wiebe met him—a memory Wiebe will likely never forget. “He was probably in his late 50s and his belly was touching his spine, he was so skinny,” says Wiebe. “I had never seen anybody that thin in my life. Unfortunately, he passed away the next week due to starvation.”

Wiebe, a Red Deer business owner and a project manager for A Better World Canada, has been doing what he can to help the Turkana people dealing with widespread famine and poverty in northwestern Kenya.

Eight years ago A Better World (ABW) began building water wells and classrooms in the region that Wiebe says has largely been forgotten by the rest of the world. The Turkana district is among the poorest counties in Kenya. According to the Kenya National Statistics Office, 88 percent of the Turkana population lives below the poverty level.

Prior to COVID-19 Wiebe visited the area each year and, after some time, became good friends with a pastor named Benson. The Lodwar resident volunteered to find people with the highest need while checking on churches in remote areas. Benson was someone Wiebe could rely on because of his trustworthiness.

On one visit himself, Wiebe observed a beehive-looking hut in the middle of a sandy area with little vegetation. A wheelchair was stuck outside.

“When you poke your head in, here is this young woman

sitting on the ground,” Wiebe says. “There are two blankets hanging and four pots—those are all the possessions she owns. You give her some food and some water and she’s so thankful.”

In 2020 truckloads of rice and beans were delivered at three different times. Prior to that, one shipment was done annually for the past eight years. A drought like this current one can go on for several years with no or very little rain. Wiebe wondered why the inhabitants don’t relocate to a different area, but this is where they’ve always lived. It is likely that the residents couldn’t afford or wouldn’t survive a journey to a better climate, he adds.

In a semi-arid climate, it’s difficult to grow food. “Our game plan is for them to grow their own vegetables, their own food,” Wiebe says. “But for now we have people who are starving.”

He anticipates this program will be long-term because there are so many challenges to developing self-sustainability. More water wells are needed, as the Turkana people are largely nomadic, Wiebe explains.

There’s great potential in the region because of oil reserves and even large aquifers. Wiebe, along with A Better World, is hopeful for positive change and will continue to partner with the Lodwar community so that, together, they can seek just that.

Learn more about these projects at www.abwcanada.ca. ■

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

Kim Harrington Recognized as Teacher of the Month by Local Radio Station



MANS teacher Kim Harrington got an unexpected Christmas gift: She was named 105.5 FM's Teacher of the Month, December 2020. "To the world you may be just a teacher," read Kim's certificate from the Red Deer radio station, "but to your students, you are a hero."



The usual Christmas decorations in Kim's living room took a back seat to essential household items for the displaced family of a MANS alumnus.

Kim Harrington of Mamawi Atosketan Native School (MANS) was recognized as Teacher of the Month (December 2020) by local radio station 105.5 FM for her outstanding efforts to help her students in and out of the classroom.

A math specialist, Kim has also taught high school English, art, and cosmetology classes at MANS. But while her varied and hectic teaching schedule takes up a significant amount of her time, she still goes out of her way to help numerous students and their families outside usual school hours. Even after they graduate, Kim maintains a connection with her students. So when it came to her attention that the family member of an alumnus needed some help, she stepped up.

A mother with five children had to move just before Christmas. Circumstances were such that they had no possessions other than their clothes. To this mother in need, Kim was a trusted connection.

Using simple word of mouth, Kim organized a drive to help the family. The Christmas decorations in her living room took a back seat to piles of towels, linens, kitchen appliances, and beds as many friends and acquaintances responded to Kim's request for essential items. One father of three sons, considering the age of the boys in the displaced family, contributed a basketball for the athletic teenagers.

Kim's efforts triggered the nomination to 105.5 FM

as Teacher of the Month. She received a "Teacher of the Month" certificate, a Two-for-One Family Pizza gift card, and her glowing nomination letter was read on air.

"You go above and beyond for your students," the letter began. "Most are struggling on the reserve or are in single-parent homes. You do so much for everyone and deserve some appreciation."

In response to all the fanfare, Kim says, "I guess I don't love being in the spotlight. I like to do things quietly behind the scenes. My list of friends who helped out is vast. I couldn't have done it without them." She adds, "Every teacher at Mamawi deserves an award like this." She went on to explain, "Whether it's giving our lunches or bringing extra fruit so kids can have more for breakfast, everyone on this campus goes above and beyond for our students."

If one thing is certain, it's that MANS is a special place. It's not just the students and staff who feel a sense of community and connection with the school. Families have that connection too. ■

Myken McDowell is a master printmaker and communications specialist living in Edmonton, Alta.

Videos and more news at www.mans1.ca





FAITH — OF OUR — FATHERS

My Father's Journey



Peter and Helen Neufeld

Where will I find a church that keeps the Sabbath and where the members don't eat pork? These were the only two tenets Peter remembered. "God, please help me find such a church in Canada," he prayed.

My father, Peter Kornelius Neufeld, was born in 1923 in Omsk, Siberia. He was the middle child in a family of 11 children. In 1948 Peter made it to Canada alone. His journey is one of a series of miracles. This is his story.

Many years ago Russia was mostly populated by German farmers who had accepted the offer from Catherine the Great to have people immigrate to Russia and help cultivate the land. My grandfather, Kornelius Neufeld, was born into this regime in Siberia in 1894. In 1926 he bought a 60-hectare parcel of land and farmed it, while also raising cattle and horses. He also worked at logging, making boards out of trees to make coffins. On top of all that, he was a schoolteacher who taught his own children. But the best work he had was being a Seventh-day Adventist preacher when all religion was forbidden (*verboden*)!

In 1929 the KGB took over and took all my grandfather's possessions away, leaving him destitute. In 1931 he moved his family to Ukraine from Siberia. Two years later a severe famine developed in Russia, leading to a shortage of food and clothes. Shoes, especially, were hard to come by.

In 1938, as an educated man, my grandfather was chosen to be in charge of an audit in his town, and he ended up discovering fraud in the books. The chief of the city was displeased that he had found the fraud, so my grandfather was taken away on Aug. 16, 1938, deported by the Russians, and thrown into prison. The underlying reason, however, was that he had been preaching the Good News underground and had been found out. Bowls of blood were witnessed streaming out of his cell, and he was

shot to death in prison toward the end of 1938. He lived for the Lord and died a martyr's death.

As for Kornelius's wife, Suzanne, she was given no choice but to work hard for the KGB, picking and hoeing cotton. She had borne 11 children. There was no food to be found, so she shared her own few grams of bread with the children. Little Lyda, the youngest, born May 7, 1933, never had a chance. My grandma had to leave her nearby in the cold, wet grass while she worked. Lyda got sick and died on May 15, 1935. Not long after my grandfather's passing, Suzanne died of pneumonia on May 15, 1939, at the tender age of 44.

Despite hardship, every one of my father's siblings became a Seventh-day Adventist Christian. My uncle Wanja, born Sept. 18, 1931, currently resides in Germany as the last living sibling.

Kornelius Neufeld, the eldest child, went through a great deal of hardship. Married with two children, he was drafted into the war. He was gone for so many years with no communication. Thinking him dead, his wife and children eventually left for Canada. He finally came home to an empty house, and not knowing what had happened to his family, he remarried. In time he heard from them in Canada, but it was too late for them to reunite. Uncle Korny, as we called him, eventually came to Chilliwack to visit our family. He loved the ice cream—something he had never eaten before!

My father, Peter, was born on Aug. 26, 1923. My dad's story about how he fled Russia and made it to Canada could be a book. He was recruited to the German Army and enlisted into the SS. (The only positive thing to come out of this is he received his first pair of real shoes!) The Nazis took him and tried to make him fight, but he was a conscientious objector and refused. God was with him as they lined up some men, Dad being one of them, and shot their guns. Twelve escaped with their lives, and he was one of them. He shot himself in the arm to get out of fighting, then ran away. He ended up a POW in Linz, Austria, in 1945 for a time. The communists knew that the wound in his arm was self-inflicted, and any dictator could have had him shot for doing that. But no one did. God was watching over him.

My dad was a musician and owned an accordion, but at that time he was so hungry he sold the instrument for one gram of bread! He travelled to Poland, then Germany, where he met my pretty mother, Helen. When he immigrated to Canada, he had to work in the bush for one year to help pay back his passage. At that point he was in Lake Nipigon, Ont. Never in his life had he seen tables of food like he saw there. Next he travelled to Winnipeg, Man., where Dad and Mom reunited again.

Peter and Helen Neufeld were married in 1949. All five children were born in Winnipeg. Our current names are Laurie Trayer, Karen Dauncey, Roland Neufeld, Kathe Neufeld, and Ellen Loewen. Only German was spoken in our childhood home, so we had to learn English fast.

The next important thing on his agenda was to find this church that he remembered in his youth—but he had no idea what it was called. There was no name for it in Russia. In the meantime he joined our mother's Mennonite church but

continued searching for his ideal church. It was a busy life learning English and raising a family. Miraculously, God helped him find the German Seventh-day Adventist Church. He was so happy! After Bible studies for nine months, both Peter and Helen were baptized.

In 1962 we all moved to Chilliwack, B.C. Growing up in Russia, Peter was the family mechanic. He could fix anything! So in 1964 he opened Pete's Motor Repair on Broadway St. in Chilliwack, where he served the community for 35 years. We were proud of him. With nearly no schooling, he made a living for his family, learned English, and even struggled through the paperwork. Dad witnessed from his shop to most of his customers about God and sent many Bibles to Russia throughout the years; not all got through but many did.

Peter was a wonderful musician. He played the balalaika and mandolin by ear at an early age. I recorded my father playing on one of my CDs, *Blessings*, which I am now so grateful to have. Dad passed away in December 2009 having lived a full life. He stayed so strong in the faith and trusted in God, no matter what difficulties he encountered.

This is why I'm a Seventh-day Adventist Christian today. ■

Laurie Trayer lives in Hope, B.C., with her husband Norm. They have four children and eight grandchildren. Laurie continues to share her musical talents for God's glory and looks forward to the day she is reunited with her parents and grandparents in the world made new.

Shoes were hard to come by in 1930s Russia; young Peter (standing, far left) and the other children were often barefoot.



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British Columbia

A Huge Thank You From the Students at Shuswap Adventist School



Staff and students at Shuswap Adventist School celebrate their \$32,000 fundraising effort. With matching programs, a total of \$128,000 was raised, more than ten times their original \$10,000 goal.

When COVID-19 cancelled their annual Christmas program, the 35 students at Shuswap Adventist School in Salmon Arm, B.C., decided to turn their program into a project. It had to be meaningful, and it had to be challenging. So after vigorous discussion they decided that they would help feed the world. To achieve their goal of raising \$10,000, they invited ADRA Canada and the Canadian Foodgrains Bank to partner with them.

To know a little bit more about

what it's like to be hungry, they organized a Ration Meal Challenge. On a designated day they ate an ADRA refugee diet of plain rice for breakfast and cornmeal patties and beans for lunch.

But as Finn (Gr. 7) points out, "It wasn't the same. We didn't have to wait in line for hours to get food and water." And Jonathan (Gr. 9) adds that, unlike millions of refugees, we know we'll have more food at home. We also have clean water and shelter. Everyone agrees,

though, that the Ration Meal Challenge was a great learning experience.

Their "starvation day" spurred them on in their letter writing campaign. All helped with writing 200 letters and addressing the envelopes. They sent them out to everyone they could think of: parents and their co-workers, grandparents, friends at church and in the community, and many others. They explained that the Canadian Foodgrains Bank and the Canadian government would match every dollar raised at a ratio of 4:1.

Then they prayed and waited. It was an exciting time when donations started to arrive. Regular updates were met with loud cheers.

Their hard work and long hours over many days paid off: they far exceeded their goal and raised \$32,000. Matching funds turned that into \$128,000! They attribute their amazing success to their many donors and thank God for each one.

What can 35 students in a small school do to help millions of starving people? The students at Shuswap Adventist School now know: quite a bit—with God's help, ADRA Canada, Canadian Foodgrains Bank, generous people, and a personal commitment to making a difference for good! ■

—Renate Krause, editor,
Burman University
Magazine

Ontario

Mt. Olive Stewardship Day

Genesis 28:20–22 reminds us of the promise Jacob made to God when he said, “If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, so that I come back to my father’s house in peace, ... of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You” (NIV).

The Mt. Olive Stewardship Department was mindful of Jacob’s promise to God when planning the 2020/21 theme titled “Living Faithfully According to God’s Word.” For 2020 our main mission was to foster spiritual empowerment in each member by encouraging faithful living according to the biblical principle of putting God first in all that we do. Although we hadn’t anticipated the challenges the current global pandemic would bring, we made it our mission to encourage the church family to remain faithful to God in all situations. Regular stewardship sermons by the church leaders, annual stewardship emphasis day, a financial seminar, as well as weekly video presentations and quarterly messages aimed at millennials were some of the activities intended to energize the church to live faithfully.

Despite the limitations for physical gathering inside the church, God made it possible for our dedicated church leaders to swiftly organize the Zoom platform as a creative means to continue our fellowship. Using this platform, the Stewardship Department was committed to deliver pertinent messages to the congregation about the importance of returning a portion of our resources to God even during times of uncertainty.

Whenever possible, the team shared the two-minute clips from the *God First* video series during the Personal Ministries segment of the program. Each month a team member would take a turn presenting on the importance of being

good stewards with our time, talents, and treasures to strengthen our walk with Christ.

In preparation for the annual Stewardship Day on Dec. 12, 2020, the team circulated an electronic copy of the *Seeking the Kingdom of God* revival readings, authored by Joan Tatar (pastor), to the church to promote personal devotion and reflection on principles of faithfulness. This well-written resource filled with an eight-day compilation of Bible stories reminded us of

how such characters like Daniel, Jacob, Ruth, and Mary to name a few, remained faithful by putting God first. The author also shared stimulating children stories with each daily reading to foster key learning to the younger generation on the importance of being faithful to God in our youth.

The congregation was blessed to hear the timely sermon by Gerry Pasikatan, the conference’s stewardship director, titled “Stewardship in Challenging Times.” Our church’s stewardship team is grateful to all those who participated in the program, as they certainly made the program extra special. As children of God, we can expect to live a holistic life when we are faithful to God.



Gerry Pasikatan, Ontario Conference stewardship director and guest speaker at Mt. Olive church's Stewardship Day program.

Similar to the story of Jacob and other characters in the Bible, our path in this life will include joyous occasions as well as challenging times like the global pandemic we are currently facing. How we respond in these circumstances is a direct reflection of our personal walk with God. As we approach a new year, the Stewardship Department would like to encourage each one of us to keep our eyes on Jesus and remain faithful in all circumstances because God is ever faithful to us. ■

—Jolean Lloyd,
stewardship director,
Mt. Olive Seventh-day
Adventist Church



Manitoba – Saskatchewan

Valentine’s Day Food Donation From Henderson Highway Church Feeds the Homeless in Downtown Winnipeg



Children’s Ministry leader Sheryl Sokolies and her son Martin with decorated lunch bags.



Stephanie Yamniuk delivering 523 lbs of donated food to Harvest Manitoba.

As I was watching the news one night, I saw several stories about groups that were trying to feed and support the homeless community in downtown Winnipeg. We know several youth who are homeless, and I felt that we had to do something. I sent an email to our church board and to my prayer group sharing my idea of collecting lunches and distributing them to the homeless. On the Sabbath of February 13 we made an announcement and had a very generous response.

On Sunday, Feb. 14, only 24 hours after the church announcement—and even though it was -35 °C—we collected 250 lunches! Twenty families participated in our impromptu food drive. Families decorated many of the bags with hearts and messages of love from the Henderson Highway Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The generous donations from members and friends of the Henderson Highway church filled eight carts, which is two carloads full of boxes of lunch bags, chips, sandwiches, juice and water, granola bars, and hand warmers.

Harvest Manitoba weighed the first delivery at 138 kilograms (304 lb)! The weight for the second delivery was almost 113 kilograms (250 lb)! They were overwhelmed by the donation and delivered the food to several food kitchens for the homeless within hours of receiving it.

Thank you for your generous donations and for your prayers! It was pure joy to be able to reach out to our friends in need. ■

—Stephanie Yamniuk,
Henderson Highway Seventh-day Adventist Church



Aseoluwa Jegede packed lunches for the Valentine’s Day Food Drive.

>> SDACC REVOLVING FUND REPORT: As of Feb. 28, 2021, there were 387 depositors with a total deposit of \$31,732,160. There were 89 loans with a value of \$28,162,144.

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

Birthdays

Lenora (née Acorn) Hemphill of



Belfast, P.E.I., celebrated her 95th birthday on Jan. 20, 2021. Lenora has been a long-time member of the Charlottetown Seventh-day Adventist Church in Charlottetown, P.E.I. Though Lenora and her husband had no children of their own, they helped raise a neighbour's son.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, Lenora's church family were not able to celebrate with her, but her caregiver, a church member, visited Lenora on her birthday. She and Lenora shared cake and reminisced about Lenora's early years. Lenora is still the sweet gentle soul she has always been. Her church family wish her God's blessings, sending their love along with birthday greetings.

Births

Ceildh Briar Ann was born on Jan. 2, 2019, to Evan Kirkby and Sheila Hamilton of Gananoque, Ont.

Nolan Richard was born on Oct. 5, 2020, to Evan Kirkby and Sheila Hamilton of Gananoque, Ont.

Rowan Ford was born on July 1, 2017, to Evan Kirkby and Sheila Hamilton of Gananoque, Ont.

Obituaries

Winnifred (née Roberts) Murphy was born Mar. 31, 1934, in Swan River, Man., and died Dec. 30, 2020, in Kelowna, B.C. Winnifred served the church for 20 years as a church school teacher. She was predeceased by her parents, David and Gladys Roberts; brother, Lloyd Roberts; and sisters, Llewella DeRoo and Greta Wagner. Surviving: husband, Daniel of Kelowna; son, Roger of Scotch Creek, B.C.; daughter, Bev Holdal of Kelowna; brother-in-law, Cleon Wagner of Kelowna; sister-in-law, Betty of Revelstoke, B.C.; and four grandchildren.

Curtis Scott Wolfe was born on Nov. 22, 1933, in Blue Earth, Minn., and died on Nov. 18, 2020, in 100 Mile House, B.C. Wolfe was a noted Adventist violinist, music arranger, and educator whose career spanned more than 40 years. He taught orchestra, band, and choir at several Adventist high schools in the United States. At Burman University in Alberta, he was professor of music and head of the music department. He was predeceased by his parents, Owen and Alice (née Scott); first wife, Agnes (née Zbaraschuk); half-brother, Elton; and sister, Sharon.

Surviving: wife, Susan (née Mueller); son, Scott (Raylene) of Beaumont, Tex.; daughter, Celeste (Kent) Kemmerer of Milton-Freewater, Ore.; stepdaughter, Sallee (Joel) Duntin of 100 Mile House; brother, Harlan (Janice) of Loma Linda, Calif.; five grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

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The Prayer of Faith, by Daniel O. Yeboah:

A convincing guide to moving mountains, *The Prayer of Faith* is designed to help you understand the true heart for prayer, meant for building a meaningful relationship with God. Readers looking to develop their faith through communion with God will be greatly blessed by Yeboah's insightful experience and compassionate guidance. Daniel Owusu Yeboah is an elder of the LaSalle New Life Seventh-day Adventist church in Montreal. The book can be purchased at Amazon, Apple iTunes store, or Barnes and Noble. (05/21)

Duplex for Rent: Located in Charis Village (60+ adult living) in Lacombe, Alta., near Burman University. New construction, finished basement, 1294 sq. ft. on each floor, 3 bedrooms + den, 2 ½ bathrooms, open-concept kitchen living area, six appliances, lots of storage, air conditioning, attached single-car heated garage. \$1,800/month plus utilities. Includes maintenance, yard care, use of Village common areas. Email mjacobson@xplomet.com or call Merle 403/391-0419. (04/21)

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Hope Channel International, Inc.*	April 10
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Conference Advance	April 24

MAY

Local Church Budget	May 01
Disaster & Famine Relief*	May 08
Local Church Budget	May 15
Conference Advance	May 22
Canadian French Ministries*	May 29

*Special materials provided.





I CAN ONLY IMAGINE what a blessing it would be to start life with an Adventist understanding of God's wonderful character, as I did not grow up with that. Those who are introduced to that picture of God early in life, which is significantly different from what many other Christians encounter, might have trouble understanding what it's like to grow up seeing God's character as undesirable, unapproachable—repellent, even.

If you've never been through a mainstream hellfire sermon teaching that God loves you so much that He gave His only begotten Son to come and die for you, *and that if you fall short, you burn in a painful, fiery furnace for all of eternity*, then consider yourself lucky. I don't even like touching a moderately hot casserole dish taken out of the oven.

I recall long ago someone asking in a non-Adventist Bible study group why God would do that. Why would He enjoy watching people suffer? Without flinching, the leader answered that it was because God is a vengeful God and that, being God, He had every right to do this to us. When asked how we could possibly live in paradise knowing that a relative was suffering in hell, the leader answered, "We would be in such heavenly bliss, we wouldn't even be thinking about it."

Not surprisingly, God, in my mind, was like the school bully who wanted my lunch money, and if I complied, he would be my friend. But if I didn't, my life would become hell. Not the fiery kind but the abusive, painful, and humiliating kind.

One of the most considerable gifts we have in Adventism is that we read the Bible as it is written, and we take the whole of what the Bible says. "For the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23), but "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not *perish*" (John 3:16).¹ We do not believe that those who reject God's gift will *live forever* in an inferno.

Recently, I was told about a person who started to sleep better and even regained some of his health back once he learned that his deceased brother couldn't possibly be suffering in a burning hell in some distant part of the universe.

Over the next few months, our church at large will be providing helpful information on how to launch home churches. For those of us who have been living with the Adventist message for a long time, it's easy to forget that one of the biggest gifts we can share with people is the comforting truth of God's character—that God does not enjoy watching people suffer, especially the ones who never sought or accepted Christ.

But remember that it all starts with a conversation, not confrontation. Let's share the truth we have about God's loving character with the world. ■

from the editor
Not A Bully

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