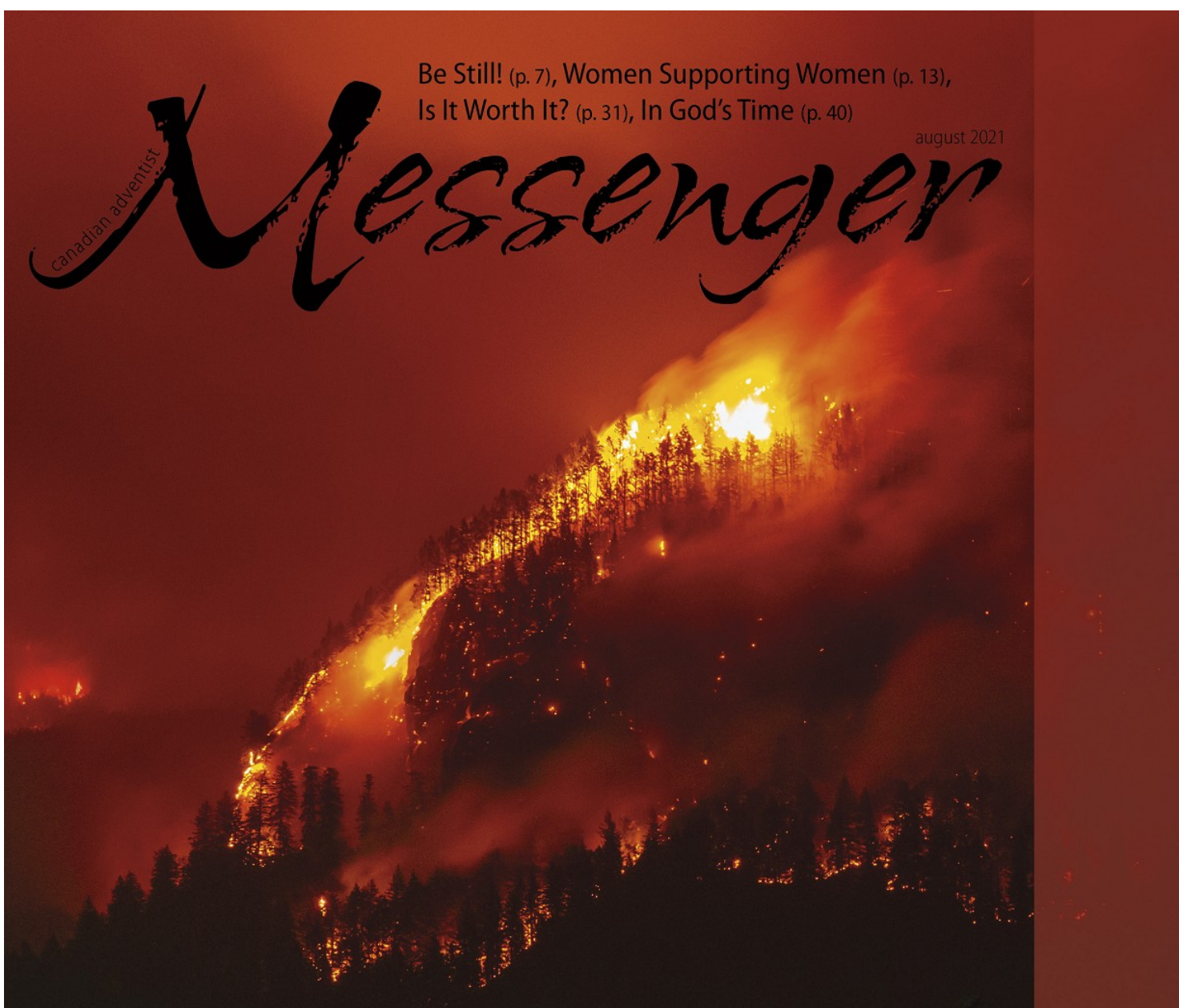


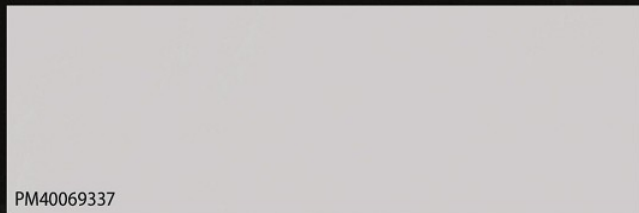
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heart to heart

“I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

—John 14:6, *ESV*

Travelling Toward Eternity

The objective of Christian faith is not merely to join some sort of members-only association, complete with clubhouses and a secret lingo that perplexes the uninitiated. The aim of Christianity is to begin a walk with God now that continues into eternity.

The religion of Christ isn't something you or I can fake our way through. Authentic faith is a daily series of actions that consistently align with God's values. That faith is a witness to one's willingness to sacrifice a personal agenda. The friend of Jesus may become so faithful that they would rather die than misrepresent Christ.

Perhaps, like me, you have on occasion encountered a person who looks and sounds much more “holy” in a Sabbath school class debate than they prove to be in real life. My late grandfather had a saying that I think applies here: “Your actions speak so loudly, I can't hear what you're saying.” It is sad indeed when anyone claims lofty motives and pure hands when you know intuitively that they're far away from the kingdom.

May I suggest that our undoing is often the result of relying on ourselves more than we do on God? Christ's statement in the Gospel of John tells us that only He is the way to alignment with God. Only the transforming strength and capacity of Jesus will bring us into unity with the Father and serve as our entrance into His kingdom.

What Jesus is saying here, in essence, is that there are no shortcuts in the journey to our destiny. Only He can get us in. Knowing Christ and permitting His transforming power to work in me is a daily activity. It is that which strengthens us. We need to be constantly in conversation with Christ.

Have you, have I, become so accustomed to staying right beside Jesus that He will take us to the kingdom? ■

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



August 2021

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WHAT'S INSIDE

August 2021



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WHAT'S COMING Find your passion. Embrace your purpose. Claim your promise. In next month's issue, read about Melane Mullings's journey to finding God's will for her life.

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religious liberty



FREEDOM OF RELIGION



Q: *My child has a classmate whose family are members of the Sikh religion. This classmate wears a knife to school. It looks like a small dagger, and I'm concerned. Does the school have to allow this boy to wear a knife to school?*

A: Thank you for your question. That knife is called a *kirpan*, which is carried by Sikhs because of a religious commandment given by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699. The word *kirpan* derives from the word for "mercy" or "kindness" and the word for "honour" or "dignity."
Your question was considered by the Supreme Court of Canada in 2006. In that case, a 12-year-old student named Gurbaj Singh Multani dropped his kirpan in the school yard of his school in Quebec. The school's governing board refused to allow the wearing of a kirpan because it violated the school's code of conduct, which prohibited the carrying of weapons and dangerous objects. That is obviously a good policy for a school, but the family proposed a compromise in which the kirpan would be sealed and sewn up inside his clothing. The school didn't change its policy or accommodate Gurbaj's wearing of a kirpan.

Gurbaj's father started a lawsuit claiming that the board's decision failed to reasonably accommodate their freedom of religion and amounted to religious discrimination. This was a public school, to which the Charter of Rights and Freedoms applied. If your child attends a private school, the same general principles would apply under the relevant provincial human rights legislation.

The evidence was that orthodox Sikhs must comply with a strict dress code requiring them to wear religious symbols known as the Five Ks: (1) the *kes* (uncut hair), (2) the *kangha* (a wooden comb), (3) the *kara* (a steel bracelet), (4) the *kaccha* (a special undergarment), and (5) the *kirpan*. The evidence was also that Sikhism

teaches pacifism and encourages respect for other religions, that the kirpan must be worn at all times (even in bed), that it must not be used as a weapon to hurt anyone, and that Gurbaj's refusal to wear a symbolic kirpan made of a material other than metal is based on a reasonable religiously motivated interpretation.

There was no doubt that the rule prohibiting the wearing of a kirpan in school interfered with Gurbaj's freedom of religion. The Supreme Court of Canada considered a 1991 human rights case from Ontario in which it was documented that kirpans had never been used as a weapon on school property in Canada even though the Sikh community had already been in Canada for nearly 100 years at the time.

The court wrote: "Religious tolerance is a very important value of Canadian society. If some students consider it unfair that [Gurbaj] may wear his kirpan to school while they are not allowed to have knives . . . it is incumbent on the schools to . . . instil in their students this value that is . . . at the very foundation of our democracy."

As Adventists, we have to agree. What we as Adventists claim as accommodations for Sabbath keeping, union membership, and other rights must also be extended to all religious groups in Canada, no matter how peculiar their practices may seem to us. ■

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



Be Still!

"Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!"—*Psalm 46:10, ESV*

We can gain valuable spiritual insights when we reflect on everyday life experiences. The Bible shows that Jesus used ordinary stories and parables to convey His teachings to people. He also applied illustrations from nature to make His messages understandable, relatable, and practical for His audience.

I recall a memorable experience that took place during a ferry sailing from the Lower Mainland to Vancouver Island in B.C. a few years ago. Bill Gerber, our Camp Hope director, was with me on that trip. At first, the ferry started moving slowly, and then it gained speed, as expected. A few minutes later we were cruising through crystal-clear waters—an amazing scene!

Bill and I started making our way to the dining area and lined up along with others to order our food. Suddenly, the ferry began to sway—slowly at first, but soon the movement was harsh enough that the passengers could feel the ferry being tossed from one side to the other. It turned out to be so strong that we had to take a step back and plant our feet firmly on the floor to avoid falling. The folks at the cafeteria stopped serving the food while the ferry was rocking.

Attempting to disguise my anxiety, I said to Bill that despite the current sailing conditions, we should be feeling safe because the captain would have everything under his control. With a friendly smile on his face, he replied, "I guess the ship is on autopilot and the captain might even be taking a nap now." We laughed and things eventually went back to normal. Although my friend was just joking when he made those remarks, the big modern ships of our day are indeed automated, and those weather situations are not that unusual for their crew.

Either way, as passengers, we wanted to be certain that the captain knew what he was doing. I believe there is a spiritual lesson for us in this story as we

apply it to life's situations.

Oftentimes we face similar "swaying experiences" that make us feel as if we're being thrown in different directions. It is comforting and encouraging to know, though, that as we sail through the "seas" of our lives, we can be certain that our Captain never "takes a nap," and most importantly, He is able to calm all the storms (Mark 4:39). He is in full control of the "waters and winds" (Mark 4:41) that the enemy brings to confuse, frighten, and hurt us in his desire to destroy us. We have nothing to fear!

Despite all the misery and suffering that sin has caused, our heavenly Father rules over all things and they obey His command. He tells us in His Word, "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10, ESV). When the "waters" rise high and the "winds" blow strongly, we should rest knowing that He is steadily holding the helm of our lives with His own hands to take us safely to the "other side." He will never let us go (Heb. 13:5b).

Yes, the simplicity of certain happenings and personal encounters can teach us precious truths to strengthen our confidence in God as we choose to trust Him no matter what!

I pray that all of us will continue to place our lives in God's hands. Be still, rest securely in His protection, and claim His promise: "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" (Jer. 29:11, NIV). ■



Wesley Torres is president of the British Columbia Conference.



aguilars on a mission

Bikes for God

“When I awoke this morning, God instructed me to give this to you.” And with those words, an envelope was handed to me. “Use it where it is required,” she continued.

The unexpected gift was a divine intervention, and I knew exactly where it would go—to bless a dedicated volunteer. We had witnessed the personal sacrifices made by volunteers who continue to work in the community years after a project is completed. Their unwavering commitment is particularly inspiring because they, too, are struggling to feed their families and send their children to school.

Jason, a volunteer with the Batwa settlements in southwestern Uganda, recently paid a visit to the ADRA office in Kampala. This was the window of opportunity we had been looking for. We told him we had to go to an appointment and that our meeting with him would have to take place en route. So we asked him to hop into the vehicle with us. We didn’t tell him where we were going. As usual, he provided an update on activities and projects. He was unaware of what was happening until Charles turned to him and asked, “Which motorcycle do you want?”

A month later God impressed another family to make another e-transfer donation. So we used it to purchase a second motorcycle, this time for Dr. David, a physician and founding member of a community-based organization that advocates for the Batwas’ overall health and nutrition. Additionally, he organizes medical/dental clinics in their settlements and works to alleviate the severe discrimination against the Batwa people (commonly referred to as “Batwa stigma”).

ADRA empowers community-based organizations to ensure the sustainability of interventions and impact, but there are gaps in ADRA’s implementation process that are unfunded by major donors; however, with unrestricted donations such as those we recently received, immediate needs can be met.



Dr. David providing door-to-door medical checkups.

It’s truly incredible how God orchestrates the collaboration of people from all over the world. And often, it’s sufficient. Sufficient to purchase a new blue 125cc motorcycle, adequate safety gear, and accessories. Sufficient to cover licensing fees and processing. Sufficient to transport the new bike and its owner 10 hours to Kisoro in southwestern Uganda.

When Jason returned home, his family threw a party to celebrate the unexpected blessing. They rejoiced and praised God with joyful tears.

Dr. David couldn’t wait to show off the new motorcycle to his father, a retired pastor. His father had always taught him, “Sacrifice for the Lord’s work, and blessings will follow.” They, too, wept joyfully at the family’s blessing.

Thanks to the new motorcycles, Jason and Dr. David will no longer have to hire and pay for rides to reach the displaced Batwa communities in the mountains. Jason can now deliver produce from his farm to the market centre, allowing him to support his ministry and family needs.

Dr. David and his team will be able to save money on transportation and invest it in much-needed health programs. His new bike enables him to provide door-to-door service and increase community access to health services.

Jason and Dr. David can now be more effective in their efforts to improve the lives of their families, the Batwa people, and the communities in which they live. Hallelujah! ■

Charles and Elizabeth Aguilar, along with their children Jewel, Jaden, and Onyx are missionaries from beautiful British Columbia.



Creation Corner for Kids

Even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it [the land], they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness," says the Lord God.—Ezekiel 14:14, NKJV

Pseudoscorpion

I found a scary critter on my kitchen counter this morning. The thing had dangerous-looking pincers and looked like a scorpion. But this tiny beast would have fit on the top of a pencil eraser. It was a pseudoscorpion. Also, like scorpions, pseudoscorpions (fake scorpions) have venom but no tail or stinger. They can't bite or sting, so they're no danger to people. And the venom is harmful only to tiny pests like mites and ticks, so they're good to have around—even if they are a little scary looking.

Because they don't have wings and their legs are short, pseudoscorpions can't travel far without help. So they hitchhike on larger flying animals like flies, beetles, and bats. Using its pincers, a pseudoscorpion will just clamp onto its chosen vehicle and take off!



Think about it.

A pseudoscorpion doesn't think about where it wants to go and will catch a ride with anything that comes its way! It can't be that way for us though, if we want to go to heaven.

You won't get to heaven just because you know someone who is going there. You can't catch a ride with your grandma, your best friend, or the pastor. Only those who know Jesus personally and have accepted His righteousness will be in heaven.

Do it!

Make time in your life today for getting to know Jesus. Put away whatever is distracting you and spend time with Him in Bible study and prayer.

It would be better to part with everything dear to you in this life than to miss out on the joys of heaven (see Matt. 18:8, 9).





L to R: Ingrid Lowe, wife of associate pastor Benton Lowe, and Francis Douville, lead pastor of Really Living Seventh-day Adventist Church, sorting food donations.

W

hen the pandemic began to spread in March 2020, ADRA Canada, with help from the SDACC, the North American Division (NAD), Adventist Community Services (ACS), and ADRA International, leapt into action.

Partnering with churches, affiliated church entities, organizations, and groups, we provided resources to fund 33 projects nationally.

The Really Living Seventh-day Adventist community located in Hamilton, Ont., was one such local partner.

"I want to thank ADRA for making funds available for churches to reach out to communities in a disinterested fashion," says Francis Douville, lead pastor. "This is what we're about at Really Living."

A bustling church community, Really Living hosts anywhere from eight to 12 outreach ministries each year. In December 2019, Douville was assigned to sit with a visiting family. "We always have lots of members willing to be assigned to sit with visitors. My assignment was a Muslim family from Iraq. I remember admiring the family dynamics, the affection that was evident between the father and his children."

But with COVID-19, this Christ-modelled ministry centre had to suspend all outreach programs. "Members were more than a little discouraged," says Tina Douville. "As the sign says, Really Living is more than just a building where a church meets. It's a hub for public events and community services serving the Hamilton area."

"And this is where Bags of Hope came into being," says Pastor Douville. "We used the digital board, an email list, and phone calls to announce that we were offering groceries. Benton Lowe, our community liaison, did an excellent job ensuring that as many people as possible would benefit from ADRA's support."

One day, while delivering groceries to needy families, Francis met the same Iraqi family he had sat with in church

the previous year. "It was amazing to see them! The father answered the door and recognized me right away," he says, beaming. "It was truly a blessing to see the children so happy to see me, their faces pressed against the windows."

As the Christmas holidays rolled around, Catherine Poplawski, the Really Living Gift Club co-ordinator, began her calls to community families. But tragedy had struck. In early November 2020, the father of the family had taken a trip to Libya to visit his brother, who was sick with cancer. Tragically, the father contracted COVID-19 and was hospitalized. Two weeks later he died, leaving behind a wife with limited English language skills and five children ranging from eight to 18 years of age.

Members of Really Living, as well as community members who were familiar with the work of the church, volunteered to help. The church donated time and money to help the eldest son and daughter complete the basement renovations their father had begun. This also gave Pastor Douville the opportunity to engage another community member to donate and install the flooring as well as leave Ma'ab, the eldest son, with a book to help him see the love of God.

"It is always a privilege to be the hands and feet of Christ. But more than that, it is my hope that the experience of a Christian entity helping a Muslim family will resonate within their hearts for many years to come."

The Really Living "Bags of Hope" project served 863 vulnerable Hamiltonians and engaged 24 volunteers between April and May 2020. They continue to partner with local entities to meet needs in Hamilton. ■



ADRA

Peggy Caesar is a communications specialist for ADRA Canada.

FRESH FAITH

Partnering With God

by Alannah Tjhatra



Anna Flores started her first store when she was seven years old. She sold crafts she had made, as well as other trinkets she had found or created. "Sometimes I would even find items around my own house and resell them to my family," laughs Anna.

Since then, Anna has always had a fascination with business. Born in Ottawa and raised in Oshawa, Ont., Anna was homeschooled until she was 10. She then attended College Park Elementary School and went on to graduate from Kingsway College. Anna now attends Burman University, where she has just completed her second year in her business administration

studies and is involved in various university activities and organizations.

It was during the COVID-19 pandemic, however, that Anna's work in business began to take off. In early 2021, she started an online business, the Elysian Flores Company. The idea really first began in high school, and now Anna uses her online platform to sell art that she's created: painting, digital drawings, and resin keychains, combs, and coasters. Recently, she's also begun refurbishing old furniture. Whenever she sells a piece of furniture, she includes a copy of *Steps to Christ* or *Desire of Ages* with the purchase.

"Anyone can do business," Anna reflects. "Age doesn't matter. You can start at any time to reach your goals."

Anna has always had a passion for people, and having a small business allows her to meet individuals from all different walks of life. She is open about her faith on her business account, and as she keeps going, she hopes to be able to continue having meaningful conversations with people and sharing her love for Jesus.

Anna hopes to one day own a physical store—a warm atmosphere where people can not only shop but also spend time leisurely. She loves the idea of having a place that also incorporates a vegetarian café, Christian writings, and various workshops, guest speakers, and poetry readings—a place where she can meet new people and share her passion for Christ.

To other young entrepreneurs, Anna says this: "Business doesn't have to be dirty. Remember that money is the result, not the goal. And when you have God as a partner and you use business as a way of connecting with others, then God will bless those efforts." ■

fresh faith / 35 & under

35 & UNDER

In 35 words or less, what do you think is more important: happiness or peace?

Adam Peter

I personally would rather have peace of mind over happiness. I feel like once I'm at peace (no stressors), happiness usually follows. Then I can appreciate my life.



Brennan Katsuren

I think with peace, happiness will come. But with happiness, peace doesn't come all the time. Rather, if you know you are doing something good, you will be happy doing it.

Cassia Mohns

For me, peace is only achieved when I'm also happy and content. There are so many places and people without peace; once you're at peace and have felt that blessing, ... you're happy, assured, loved.

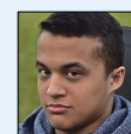


Joshua Onuot

Peace is more important than happiness. Happiness is temporary; we always return to baseline even if we experience the best of the best. Peace allows for better mental health and allows a person to thrive.

Kayla Bruno

Peace and happiness are both important, but peace is more foundational to one's happiness than happiness in one's peace. Peace and happiness can come hand-in-hand but not in every circumstance.



Vinicius Silva

Happiness is more important than peace. A lot of rich people have peace but not happiness. Being able to appreciate what you have and not taking it for granted is important in a Christian's life.



teen talk



Ask Me Anything

Q: Do miracles still happen today?

A: I love this question. Yes! Miracles happen each and every day.

We are raised with a considerable amount of cynicism and doubt in this 21st century. We're taught that if something seems too good to be true, it most often is. Miracles are often dismissed like a magician's trick easily explainable and embedded with behind-the-scenes gizmos. We often look at our modern lives and view them as empty of divine miraculous acts.

Miracles performed by Jesus and recorded in the Bible include bringing someone back to life (John 11:1–45), healing illnesses (John 9:1–7), Jesus' control over nature (e.g., walking on water, John 6:16–21), and feeding the 5,000 (John 6:5–14). These events are not easily explainable by scientific laws. Miracles, I believe, were God's assurance of His presence, protection, and power. In the various examples of miracles, we see that God reveals Himself for a specific purpose—to affirm someone's faith, to heal an individual so they can return into community, or to provide for those who are lacking resources but are in need.

Miracles with these principles occur daily.

God shows up to heal broken hearts and broken bodies, sometimes instantly through direct divine acts without human

support but more often working through the hands of those who have given significant time to serve—such as those who studied how to heal: doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, and nutritionists.

God shows up in the miracle of provision, moving on the hearts of people like you and me to establish organizations such as our own ADRA, soup kitchens, and NGOs.

God also shows up to heal and restore people to communities through the work of addictions counsellors, social workers, mental health professionals, and others who have dedicated their lives to service.

God shows up in the creativity of the poet, the musician, the painter, the architect, the singer, and the writer—all modern-day miracles, all valid.

Miracles happen around us each and every day. I believe almost every family has a story of an experience with a direct miracle of God. My suggestion? Start compiling this great witness about the presence and power of God in our human lives! ■

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

Growing Up

Millennial



“Judgments, gossip, thinking less of a woman who wants something different than you do—it’s exhausting, and I believe that it’s wrong.”

Women Supporting Women



just got off the phone with my mom. We talk a lot—I don’t think two days have gone by in a long time where we didn’t connect in some way. Spending time with her is so important to me, and

tonight we started reminiscing on my growing up.

You see, my mom had the opportunity to be a stay-at-home parent while I was growing up. And I recognize that this isn’t a path for everyone. It’s not always an option for a family, whether it has to do with affordability, the respective wants of partners, or the needs of the children. But my mom wanted this; she wanted to stay home with my brother and me, and she even quit her job as a nurse to do so when she was just 27.

On our phone call tonight, we talked about the life that she gave me. We talked about the memories that we made together. We talked about what it was like for her, being a mom alone with two little kids. We talked about fun parts of this life for her, as well as some more challenging times.

What struck me most was what she said about how other moms would sometimes treat her: they would look down on her for staying home, thinking that she was inferior because she didn’t have a paid job. She often felt disrespected, and sometimes she didn’t gain the level of respect all women should be giving one another until others found out that she had previously been a nurse!

The thing is, if we really consider everything that women

have worked for, isn’t it all about giving women the option to seek different opportunities? Why do women look down on other women? It doesn’t matter whether we’re talking about being a stay-at-home mom or whether it’s about the girl that your ex starts dating after you, or if it’s the girl that “takes” your best friend away.

I hate that we don’t build one another up.

I hate that girls, from a young age, see other girls as their competition—people to beat, people to be “better than.”

God wants us all to love one another. He wants us to love each other as He loves us (and I’ll be the first to admit that this sometimes feels near impossible), and He doesn’t want us to spend time attacking one another. This applies to all people, not just women; but being a woman in this world, I see it so frequently. Judgments, gossip, thinking less of a woman who wants something different than you do—it’s exhausting, and I believe that it’s wrong.

Every person is deserving of respect, no matter what their choice is. So what if you don’t want to be a stay-at-home mom, but your sister does? So what if someone new dates your ex? Love others as God loves you. We are not put on this earth to put others down; we are here to lift others up. So stop comparing, and remember that if God can love us in all of our sin, we can try to love one another. ■

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





Tech Tips to Nail Your Online Presentation (Part 1)

"Your audience should not struggle to hear your message. Their online experience should be pleasant and pain-free."

Remember the days when you were able to speak to your audience in a building? You made sure the audio and video equipment was operational, the lights in the building were bright, and the platform was presentable. Although the pandemic has drastically affected our in-house meetings, it doesn't mean you shouldn't be putting that same effort and attention to detail into your online presence. Presentation is everything.

This is Part 1 of a series of tips we will be sharing to help you with your online presentation.

Tip #1: Internet connection: hardwired into your router over the use of Wi-Fi

Wi-Fi connection is great when you're at home and you want to move your laptop from one room to the next, but it is not the most reliable method.

Wi-Fi can cause your video to look very grainy and distorted when you're broadcasting. Worst of all, there is a greater chance of the audio and video signal losing connection and dropping out. When this happens, your audience loses the message.

Be aware of any interruptions that you might experience due to maintenance or issues in your neighbourhood. Some providers have a dedicated internet line that is fed to your own home, while some have a shared service. We recommend that you contact your service provider and inquire into a secondary internet line. This is a failsafe in the event that your primary internet line loses services.

Monitor your upload and download speed to ensure that you are receiving the best connectivity. You can download software apps such as Speed Test. Run a speed test before your meeting begins as well as during your event. Match the upload and download readings with information that your service provider states you should be receiving.

Tip #2: A decent webcam and microphone¹

These two factors are crucial, because if people can't see you or hear you, they will miss your message. When we were meeting in a building, people would move to another seat or whisper out loud to their neighbours about their plight. With everything now online, you can easily lose your audience because they can tune you out or turn to another program. Either way, your message will be lost.

Your audience should not struggle to hear your message. Their online experience should be pleasant and pain-free. What you need to be aware of is the fact that often what your voice sounds like to you while you're speaking in your work area is not what the audience will hear through their computer speakers. Ninety percent of your message is being presented orally. Do not make it difficult for people to hear your message.

A decent wired microphone, lapel microphone, or headset microphone is the best method. This will allow your message to be heard clearly and crisply. When you rely on the microphone on your laptop, computer, video camera, or even your webcam, you risk the chances of external noise (e.g., a child screaming, dog barking, etc.) being picked up by these ambient mics.

A webcam is a portal by which people will see you. So make sure that you're seen. You don't need a \$3,000 camera to achieve this, but you do need one that will keep you in focus and allow people to see you as if you were in person.

Stay tuned for Part 2, where we'll discuss why your location and background choices are important to the success of your presentation. ■

Clem Dwyer (cdwyer@savweb.com) works and lives in the Greater Toronto Area and has been with Sandy Audio Visual (SAV) for 20 years. For more about Sandy Audio Visual, go to www.savweb.com.



DIVERSIFYING YOUR

EVANGELISM

When was the last time you knocked on a door and shared your faith with someone? I'm guessing it has been a long time. So much has changed since we grew up learning about evangelism. With the advent of video doorbells, very few people open their doors to strangers anymore.

Over the years we've been introduced to new methods such as friendship evangelism, being seeker-sensitive, health evangelism, and, recently, using social media to share the gospel. I posted something on my social media account recently. Within a few days, over 6,500 people had seen my post through the power of the internet.

Earlier today I had breakfast with a friend who is producing a faith-based film with themes of the second coming and Sabbath. My friend Lloyd told me, "I dedicated my life to God by sharing the love of Jesus through the film to reach the masses." How inspiring.

I was walking through my local shopping mall recently and noticed a vertical banner promoting a psychic. My immediate thought was, *Why doesn't a local church pay for a similar banner, offering a listening ear for prayer, with a phone number people can call?* Imagine how many people could benefit from a caring person on the other side of the line who will provide compassion and display God's love through the phone.

One of the most important things to consider when we think about loving the unconnected in the community is our approach. You cannot "out Bible-fact" the unchurched, because they don't use the Bible as their source. You cannot outsmart them with a health message, because so many of them are more health-conscious and disciplined eaters than most people at the church potluck lunch. So how do you reach these people? Ellen White tells us, "A kind, courteous Christian is the most powerful argument that can be produced in favor of Christianity."¹ Her words echo those of Jesus: "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:31, NIV).

Some people will go to church to experience Jesus. Others will do so through different paths that are related to their interests and life journey. How are you diversifying your evangelism plan to reach people along their journey? ■

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

¹ Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages* 3:238.

it is written canada

The Greatest **Miracle** of All

“My name has given some people grief. When I worked in the nursing home, there were some residents who were bound, bent, and determined that this had to be a male’s name—and only a male’s name,” says Charlee Blabey, smiling as she recalls various reactions to her name. “When I went to high school, they put me in the boys’ dorm originally as well. These were all clerical errors that could be fixed.” Named after her paternal grandfather, Charlee says her name grew on her.

Once a shy young person, she wrestled with God’s calling on her life. “When I was younger, though I enjoyed preaching to the trees in the woods and to my dolls, I never wanted to be a pastor, but I enjoyed the Bible.”

“The biggest imprint on my life was a moment with my grandmother.” There had been conflict in the home, and Charlee went upstairs to comfort her grandmother. “I walked to the top of the stairs; she was kneeling by her bed praying. And that always stuck with me—that she turned to God in prayer at that moment.”

Charlee smiles as she recalls: “My mom, to this day, is very much a woman of prayer as well. ... Every morning she goes to what’s known as her prayer room, and she will spend her first hour or so praying for all the individuals’ names she collects. Knowing how much prayer has impacted their lives, it can’t but impact mine as well.”

Charlee witnessed the power of prayer first-hand when their church went skating at a local rink. A young man blasted a hockey puck, which accidentally hit her mother in the head, thankfully shielding her three-year-old sister. Doctors determined that if her mother survived, she would have to cope with numerous setbacks: memory problems, trouble speaking, seizures, and the inability to walk and drive. After the church prayed for her, within three to four weeks Charlee’s mother recovered and was able to walk, drive, talk, and live without any seizures or memory problems.



Watch Charlee’s interview with Mike and René Lemon, “The Greatest Mirade of All: A Life Surrendered to Jesus!” on *It Is Written Canada’s* YouTube channel.

When Charlee was 15, her dad was diagnosed with Stage 4 colon cancer, and the doctors gave him six months to live. Her family was scared, yet her dad decided not to take chemo or radiation but consented to surgery. The weekend before the operation, a couple came to their church and spoke on the power of prayer. They asked Charlee’s dad to come forward so the church could lay hands on him and pray for him. Following this time of prayer, her dad had peace that God’s will would be done, and he would accept the outcome of the operation.

After the surgery the doctor confessed, “Ted, we opened you up and the cancer that had spread through the walls of the colon was all neatly wrapped in a ball, and we were able to remove all of it.” The doctor went on to affirm, “I don’t believe in anything, but Ted, whatever you believe in, it’s working. So keep believing in it.”

Now every time Charlee’s father goes back for checkups, the surgeon tells him, “You’re my miracle patient.”

Through these and other miracles, answers to prayer, and the influence of significant people, Charlee witnessed the unfolding of God’s plan for her life, and today she is the chaplain and teaches Bible at Kingsway College in Oshawa, Ont.

If you want to hear the rest of Charlee’s remarkable story, please go to itiswrittencanada.ca or *It Is Written Canada’s* YouTube channel and click on the program titled “The Greatest Miracle of All: A Life Surrendered to Jesus!” ■

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



Life's Battles Are God's

"This is what the Lord says: Do not be afraid! Don't be discouraged by this mighty army, for the battle is not yours, but God's."— 2 Chron. 20:15, NLT

The armies of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir declared war against King Jehoshaphat and his people. The king was fearful, called for a national fast, and pleaded with God to intervene. God responded as follows:

Do not be afraid! Don't be discouraged by this mighty army, for the battle is not yours, but God's. Tomorrow, march out against them. You will find them coming up through the ascent of Ziz at the end of the valley that opens into the wilderness of Jeruel. But you will not even need to fight. Take your positions; then stand still and watch the LORD's victory. He is with you, O people of Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid or discouraged. Go out against them tomorrow, for the LORD is with you! (2 Chron. 20:15–17, NLT)

This message prompted a response of worship from King Jehoshaphat and his people. Then the following happened:

The LORD caused the armies of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir to start fighting among themselves. After they had destroyed the army of Seir, they began attacking each other. So when the army of Judah arrived at the lookout point in the wilderness, all they saw were dead bodies lying on the ground as far as they could see. Not a single one of the enemy had escaped. (verses 22–24, NLT)

After collecting the valuable items from the battle site for three days, the king and his army were "overjoyed that the Lord had given them victory over their enemies" (verse 27, NLT).

They marched into Jerusalem to the music of harps, lyres, and trumpets, and they proceeded to the Temple of the Lord. When all the surrounding kingdoms heard that the Lord himself had fought against the enemies of Israel, the fear of God came over them. So Jehoshaphat's kingdom was at peace, for his God had given him rest on every side. (verses 28–30, NLT)

That is the story. Now for some encouraging reminders from the story:

- God makes Himself available to His children constantly. Based on what has been revealed to us, however, He does not act immediately on every occasion in response to a prayer for His intervention. The story in 2 Chronicles 20 is a time when He did. Our role is to trust His wisdom.
- With confidence, we can leave anxieties, worries, and burdens with God and demonstrate faith in His power to deliver in His time and way. He is not confined by anything, anyone, time, space, or methods when He acts.
- We can learn from the experience of Jehoshaphat and Judah, who celebrated in anticipation of God's response long before the opposing armies were defeated.
- When we feel cornered by a crisis, we may feel the urge to handle the situation ourselves first and consider prayer only after our attempts fail, but we should resist this urge. The faith approach is to consult God first and wait for His directions and intervention.
- God was present with His people in their crisis then. He continues to show up for His people in every crisis.

When circumstances destabilize us in an environment of decadence, decay, and disorder, resting in God is a stabilizing force in our hearts that removes anxiety.

God's resources are limitless. The impossible is nothing to Him. ■

Maria McClean is the director for health and prayer ministries for the Ontario Conference.



where are they now

Where Are They Now

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

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



Wayne and Jean Martin

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

Wayne Martin: I was born to Samuel and Emma Martin in Clarendon, Jamaica. My father was a tailor, and my mother managed the grocery store adjacent to his shop. When I was nine, my family moved to London, England. I attended Rosendale Primary School and later graduated from Tulse Hill Boys School in 1964. I worked in accounting for one year before immigrating to Toronto in 1966.

M: What were the circumstances that brought you to Canada?

W: The mid-1960s were a time of change and migration for the baby boomers, and I thought it would be exciting to explore a new country. Canada seemed a good option, as I had relatives who had settled here. My father showed me an article describing the opportunities available in Canada for immigrants with an accounting background, so I started looking into the possibilities of relocation.

During my interview with the Canadian Embassy, I was asked if I had any money saved. I shared that I had saved about 60 pounds sterling, and [the agent] made me an offer I could not refuse! He suggested that instead of using my money for a flight to Toronto, the Canadian Embassy would purchase my ticket and the Canadian government would make monthly withdrawals from my salary once I obtained a permanent position. The repayment began when I was hired by Canada Life Assurance Company in their data processing department.

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

W: I attended Canadian Union College (now Burman University) from 1977 to 1980 and graduated with a bachelor of theology. In 1982, I attended Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University and graduated with an M.Div. in 1984. I attended McGill University and, in 1994, obtained a master of sacred theology degree with an emphasis in ethics and human relations. I began doctoral studies in 2005 at Andrews University and in 2010 received a D.Min. in Christian leadership.

M: *What factors led you to choose the gospel ministry as your career?*

W: My father was a church elder at the Coleyville Seventh-day Adventist Church in Jamaica. I admired his devotion to working for the Lord and was impacted by his dedication to lay leadership. Although my father inspired me to dedicate my life to full-time ministry, my godfather strongly suggested that I consider a more lucrative career option. He effectively dampened my interest in ministry, so I focused on accounting instead.

Upon my arrival in Canada, I obtained a junior position at a chartered accounting firm but was told almost immediately that I would have to work on Sabbaths—a major deterrent to my accounting aspirations. I changed my focus to data processing and computers, and although I eventually became a computer operations supervisor for Honda Canada, my mind was troubled. God's calling, my growing church involvement, Bible studies, and visitations were becoming more important than climbing the secular corporate ladder. My wife and I sought the Lord's direction and we both changed our career paths. She studied nursing at Ryerson University in Toronto between 1975 and 1977, and in September 1977 I left to pursue my calling to the ministry at Canadian Union College. Thankfully, my family was able to join me in March 1978.

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

W: I began ministry in Montreal, Que., on Jan. 1, 1981, and was assigned to the Pointe St. Charles church. In the fall of 1981, I began serving at the Westmount church as associate pastor.

After I returned from seminary, I was assigned to the LaSalle church, and later Pointe St. Charles was added to form a district. Ministry was moving during those early years, so I was also assigned to the newly formed Ghanaian Fellowship and Filipino congregations.

The building of the Pointe St. Charles church was in dire need of renovations, and members worked tirelessly to help provide the much-needed facelift. One Sunday,

a spark from a welder's torch caught the curtain on the stage, and the fire destroyed much of the original structure. Thankfully, within a few months, we made a cash purchase for our new church building with proceeds from the sale of the original building and the insurance claim. At our grand opening, the church name was changed to Mount Zion.

In 1989, I was reassigned to the Westmount church for another five years. The church was built in 1913. Based on its architectural heritage and Byzantine Revival style, we received grants from the City of Montreal for its much-needed renovations, and it is still classified as a heritage building.

My next pastoral move was to the Norwood church in Ville St. Laurent, where renovations were again required. During my tenure at Norwood, I served concurrently as the ministerial director and executive member of the Quebec Conference. I also served on the executive committee of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada as human relations advisor for our conference. In addition, I served as a member of the Human Relations Advisory Committee for the North American Division.

In 1999, I was called to the Ontario Conference as senior pastor of the Toronto Central church. After six years of service at Central, I was elected as the Ontario Conference director for Sabbath School, Community Services, and Adventist Development Relief Association.

Four years later, in what would be my penultimate full-time pastorate, I was called to be the lead pastor at the Apple Creek church in Markham, Ont., where I served for six years. During my final two years in full-time ministry, I pastored the It is Written Fellowship and Latter Rain churches. After the first year, these two congregations merged and were organized as the Mount Gilead Seventh-day Adventist Church.

On Dec. 1, 2018, after 38 years of ministry, I retired from the Ontario Conference.

M: *Tell me about your family.*

W: Jean and I have been married for 53 years. She is a retired Registered Nurse with expertise in ICU and cardiology. We have three children: Gary, who lives in Boston, Mass.; Sarah-Jane, who resides in Montreal with her husband and their 10-year-old son; and Francine, who lives in Atlanta, Ga.

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

W: We live in Whitby, Ont., and enjoy travelling. I have a fulfilling post-retirement position with Chapel Ridge Funeral Home as a funeral director assistant. ■





Creamy Rice 'n' Sprouts

INGREDIENTS:

- ½ cup (125 ml) raw Brazil nuts (approx. 70 g)
- ½ cup (125 ml) chopped onions
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) olive oil
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) cornstarch
- ¾ cups (175 ml) water
- ¼ tsp (1 ml) salt
- 1 ½ cups (375 ml) Brussels sprouts, quartered or shredded
- 2 ½ cups (625 ml) cooked brown rice

INSTRUCTIONS:

- In a small saucepan sauté onions in olive oil for 5 to 7 minutes or until onions have softened.
- Put cooked onions in blender along with Brazil nuts, garlic, cornstarch, water, and salt and blend until smooth.
- Gently steam Brussels sprouts in a saucepan with a little water or in a steam basket for 5 to 7 minutes or until just tender.
- Add steamed Brussels sprouts, rice, and Brazil nut gravy to a pot and mix together. If mixture is a little dry, just add a little water. Cook on medium heat for 3 or 4 minutes, just enough to allow the cornstarch to thicken the mixture. Taste and add additional salt if necessary.

Makes 4 servings (approx. 1 cup per serving).



NUTRITIONAL INFO:

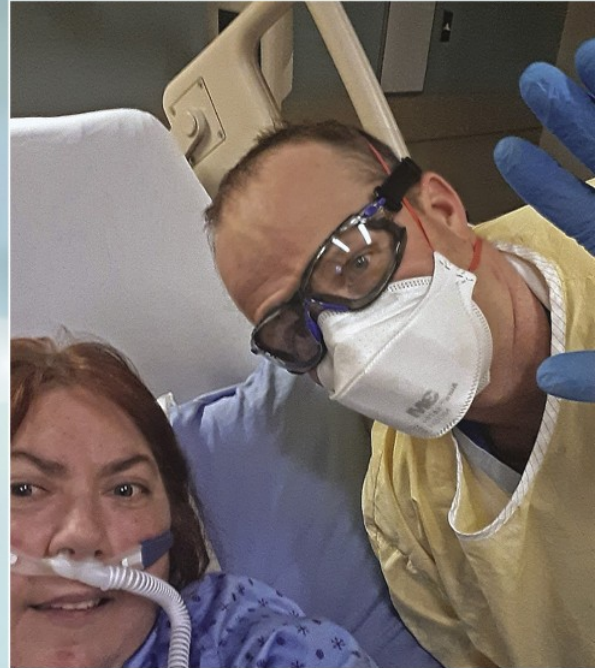
- Serving Size 152 g
- Calories 293
- Total Fat 15.5 g
- Saturated Fat 3.2 g
- Cholesterol 0 mg
- Sodium 158 mg
- Total Carbs 35.9 g
- Dietary Fibre 4.4 g
- Sugars 1.9 g
- Protein 7.0 g

The late Afiya Donkor was a passionate health advocate. The Powerful Plate is available for purchase online at adventistbookcenter.com or by phone at 800/765-6955.



Myfan and John Wall (front row) with their children, Debbie Wellman, Curtis Wall, Charlene Wall, and Darcy Wall.

testimonial



Charlene's selfie at the hospital with Dr. Ben.

RESCUED FROM THE GRIPS OF COVID

I received news that the younger of my two adult daughters, Charlene, was on a ventilator battling COVID-19. The ICU doctors suggested the family say their permanent goodbyes. I've never been a weak man. As a trapper, hunter, builder, and logger, I wanted nothing more than to trap, hunt, tear down, and winch this disease from my girl.

I stayed awake all night wrestling emotions. And as chunks of my heart began to fall out of my chest, landing piece by piece on the floor, drowning in my own tears, needing that Jesus who walks on water to take my hand, I wondered how my wife of 65 years, a lady of deep faith, was coping. She is an Adventist, a great vegetarian cook, a wife, and a loving mother. She told me darkness was coming closer, and yet she knew the evil was not of God. She sensed that those invisible vapours surrounding our daughter were the very hands of Satan choking the breath out of my child. It was then that I prayed for God to push back the darkness and breathe into her body the breath of life once again.

My older daughter, Debbie (Pastor Greg Wellman's wife), told the doctor that her sister had a teenage son, Levi, at home who needed his mother, and she stated that people all over the world were praying for her and that he needed to save her. "All over the world" may sound like exaggeration, but Debbie's daughter Amy had put requests out on Facebook that had turned into prayer chains all over the United States, as well as through the Salvation Army where she was doing a practicum for a homeless shelter. There were Protestant and Catholic

churches placing Charlene's life in the nail-pierced hands of Jesus.

The family was sick with late nights and bruised knees asking for the impossible, asking for a resurrection like the one of Lazarus of old. Then the miracle happened. My daughter was breathing on her own in ICU! Weeks later we celebrated her arrival home when she told us the supernatural experience she'd had of hearing her son's voice screaming her name four different times in desperation, perhaps when the doctor was trying to revive her.

This was not the first time Charlene experienced divine intervention. From almost choking on a candy as a small baby in church, to almost being kidnapped, to losing too much blood after a surgery several years ago, she has been visited by a guardian angel or person sent by God many times.

We are so grateful that COVID was not stronger than God's loving care, beautiful mercy, and ever-real presence. Charlene's favourite saying shows her cheerful, grateful, and slightly cheeky side: *God loves you, but He loves me more!* Her favourite Bible verses are Philippians 1:6 and Romans 8:38, which say that God will finish the work He began in our lives and that nothing will separate us from the love of God. ■

John Wall, as told to his daughter Charlene Wall. John and Myfan Wall attend the Cawston-Keremeos Seventh-day Adventist Church. All parties mentioned in the story, including the medical doctor, granted permission to print this article.

What do you think? Send a letter to the editor at messenger@adventist.ca.



August 2021

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rainmakers

RAINMAK

Inside Every Child

“Whether we speak of the Adventist, Black, or any other community that has been marginalized, there is a need for children to see themselves in literature. What children read sets the foundation and the tone for their learning experiences and their lives. To see yourself reflected offers validation, builds self-esteem, and reinforces who you are. Books also provide an opportunity for readers to have a glimpse into lives that are not like their own. In the books I write, I try to ensure children have a broad and well-rounded experience through the content and illustrations so that we are more celebratory of our various ethnicities, cultures, and backgrounds.”

These are the words of Canadian-born Valene Campbell, whose cultural roots lie in the Caribbean soil of Jamaica. “There is never a family gathering without hearing a funny story about a random character (fiction or non-fiction) deriving from that beautiful island.” But it was after Valene had her daughter, that she came to truly appreciate the power that storytelling and reading had on young minds.

“When my daughter was born, we received a lot of children’s books as gifts. And as I searched for my own selections, I noticed that very few of them featured diversity or had diverse lead characters. I have always been aware of the underrepresentation of Black voices in literature, and I knew how it affected me when I was growing up; however, after becoming a mother, the void became even more apparent. I knew cultural representation was something I wanted to encourage for my daughter and all young readers.”

It was then that Valene, a Howard University master of physical therapy graduate as well as founder and managing director of a home health care agency, decided to write books herself.

Valene’s first book, published in 2020, tackles the complex topic of the COVID-19 pandemic. “In the early days of the pandemic, many of us were struggling with what little information we had. It was a difficult situation for adults and children alike. I felt our children needed something that would incorporate a visual and a message. The book’s message is about hygiene, health, and safety, a topic that many parents express is a struggle for their children to understand and to remember. I felt this story would serve well during this unusual time and have heard how helpful it has been in creating good hygiene habits for children.”

Unlike most children’s books, *The Amazing Zoe Defeats the Germie Germlins* features Zoe, a strong, smart little girl who is also Black. The book answers questions children may have, such as “Why are we told to stay home?” “Will we ever go to school and hang out with friends again?” and “Why do I have to wash my hands if I can’t see any dirt on them?” The children’s book combines a simple message with appealing illustrations of the evil Germie Germlins and brave Zoe.

“In my second book, I wanted to tackle a secondary, racial pandemic.” As Valene reminds me, “2020 was also the year of the murder of George Floyd and the conversations people were engaging in around this critical social issue. In many cases of race, it often causes polarized opinions. I wanted this story to shed

light on the perspective of those who are unaware of the experiences faced by racialized or marginalized groups. The person who is ‘unaware’ may not necessarily be racist but is uneducated about those lived experiences.”

In Book 2—*A Queen Like Me!*—Zoe and her friend Kaitlyn play dress-up. Trouble ensues when Kaitlyn refuses to let Zoe be the princess because “she has never seen a princess like her before.” Through this situation, the book author affirms, “children will learn that unique appearances do not limit what we can do or who we can be.”

“So, the book examines the biases that people live with, not necessarily about princesses but about the boxes we put each other in,” Valene explains. “Through the book, I want to dismantle that hierarchy and demonstrate that thoughtful, meaningful conversation and open discussion between the two families can make a difference. Zoe’s parents introduced Black History to Kaitlyn’s family, and they learned about black royalty, both ancient and present-day. The lesson we learn is that if we do not understand the experiences of others, we can take the time to read about them because the information is out there and it’s available to us all. It’s just a matter of taking the time.”

The third book in *The Amazing Zoe* series tackles Alzheimer’s, another complex and challenging issue. And I wonder if perhaps Valene is a children’s author who tackles challenging issues. So I ask, and I am rewarded with a beaming “yes!”

“I’m a new mom,” she explains, “and I realize that we live in the real world, full of tough issues. And children

ERS

are not absolved from what is happening in the home or their environment. I'm learning through my daughter just how much children absorb."

"The topic of Alzheimer's disease," Valene explains, "hits very close to home. My mom and my daughter have a special bond, and we know that Mom will experience changes as time progresses. I wanted to capture a little of that special relationship between Zoe and her grandma in the book." Titled *Grandma's Memory Box*, the book helps teach children about aging and neurodegenerative diseases. As Valene explains, "children are not immune from the same issues that touch adult lives. So, *Grandma's Memory Box* is designed to assist families with senior relatives who are living with forgetfulness or Alzheimer's."

In fact, Valene says, "It is estimated that Blacks are about twice as likely as whites to develop Alzheimer's disease. Growing up, I knew very little about dementia or Alzheimer's disease, and again it goes back to representation. When you look at various health organizations that offer support to families, even still today, you see predominantly white people represented. And over time, it gave the impression that Black people or ethnic communities did not acquire certain illnesses. ... I feel this depiction is a contributor to why many marginalized groups do not seek early intervention.

"My other reason for writing this book is to show that Alzheimer's disease affects not only the individual. It affects entire families, including children, often based on their relationships with their grandparents who play an integral role to their growth and development. I

realized that children needed a thoughtful explanation for changes that happen in their loved ones as well."

Beautifully written and illustrated, Valene Campbell's children's stories provide a springboard for discussion. Each page is resplendent with the multiculturalism you would encounter on most streets in metropolitan Toronto.

"My goal, by God's grace, is to continue to create more stories that help represent the different scenarios that

happen in families. I want to expand the conversation so that children can continue to see stories they can relate to."

Valene Campbell's *The Amazing Zoe* series can be purchased through her website at valenecampbell.com, Amazon, Indigo, Barnes & Noble, Books-A-Million, and independent bookstores. ■



Valene Campbell

Peggy Caesar is a communication specialist for ADRA Canada.



cover story

FINDING HOPE AMID DESPAIR



The unsettling thing about an emergency is its unexpected nature. For the village of Lytton, B.C., it began with months of dry weather conditions followed by a massive heatwave in the waning days of June that meteorologists called “unprecedented and historic.”

On June 29, at 49.4 degrees Celsius (120.9 °F), Lytton tied with Death Valley, Calif., as the hottest place in North America. Already well-known as the location of Canada’s highest temperature records, Lytton went on to set an all-time high of 49.6 degrees Celsius (121.3 °F) on June 30. This was the world’s highest temperature ever recorded north of 45 degrees latitude and is hotter than the record highs for all of Europe and South America.

The picturesque little village, nestled where the mighty Fraser and Thompson Rivers meet, has a population of 250. That is 250 neighbours, friends, and familiar community residents.

It is also home to Lytton First Nation (LFN), located on 14,161 acres of land divided into just over fifty small reserves. Two of the 56 LFN reserves, Klahkamich and Klickkumchheen, are in the village of Lytton. Others are spread around the vicinity. For the Indigenous population and historically, Lytton is *Kumsheen*, meaning “where the Rivers cross.”

A critical element in an emergency is that it requires immediate action. Reports from the ground indicate that residents had only minutes to flee after first realizing the danger. Lytton mayor Jan Polderman told CBC News that “it took, like, a whole 15 minutes from the first sign of smoke to, all of a sudden, there being fire everywhere.”¹

Lytton residents fled in all directions, not knowing which

way, if any, was safe. The 71 km/h winds played a leading role in the speed at which the fire spread, pushing it north into the Village of Lytton. In the coming days, bewildered and exhausted, evacuees relocated many times in search of safe housing.

At 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, June 30, Okumu (Charles) Lomudak, pastor of the Better Living Centre/Lillooet, Merritt, and Ashcroft Seventh-day Adventist Churches, was on his way home from visiting the neighbouring city of Chilliwack. The journey home to his family in Lillooet usually took him through Lytton. Except on this particular evening, Lytton was ablaze.

“As I approached the town, I could see cars lined up on the opposite side [of the road],” said Lomudak. “They were bumper to bumper; no one was moving. Many people were outside of their cars, in the street, looking back toward the town. I saw smoke but kept driving, not quite sure of what I was seeing, although people were looking at me as though I was crazy going the opposite way.”

The pastor drove up to the town until he met a roadblock. There he parked, exited the car, and took in the scene.

“I got out of the car and started walking toward the roadblock. There was so much smoke and flames. I stood there watching, talking with people who were looking on in disbelief. There was so much visible trauma; I was encouraging them, saying it’s going to be OK and praying in my heart that it would be.

“I saw a man sitting on the side of the road, covered in ash. He held a bottle of water and was staring blankly ahead. I asked him if he was OK, but I could see that he wasn’t.”

By this time, Okumu Lomudak had been on the scene for nearly two hours. With cellular networks down and electricity cut off, he was unable to call his family, nor was the police officer with whom he spoke able to tell him when the situation would be resolved. Concerned that his family would be worried about his prolonged absence, he turned his vehicle

around, taking a more circuitous route. What, under normal conditions, would have been a 45-minute drive from where he stood took an additional five hours.

Early the next day, calls began going out. The Seventh-day Adventist Church (British Columbia Conference), local church members, and leadership, in partnership with Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) Canada, sprang into action. ADRA ambassador Elaine Roque of Better Living Centre in Lillooet led the charge in co-ordinating the provision of hot meals and sandwiches for evacuees.

“When I heard what was happening on the news,” said Roque, “I called the Lillooet



Damaged structures and vehicles are seen in Lytton, B.C., on Friday, July 9, 2021, after a wildfire destroyed most of the village on June 30. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Darryl Dyck



cover story

Friendship Centre. I am an iHeal Healthy Lifestyle Coach, and the staff knows me well. So when I asked what we could do to help, I was told they needed food for about 450 people. Thanks to the support from ADRA, donations of fresh greens from Green Dirt Farm, and our amazing team, we prepared a hot meal of rice, lentils, and salad for 450 and served 200 tired, hungry evacuees.”

Later that day, as Pastor Lomudak walked through the makeshift evacuation centre at Lillooet Recreation Centre, he read confusion, anxiety, trauma, and fear on the faces of Lytton citizens. He shared, “People were in agony with the realization that they had lost everything. It was such a painful experience. It was heartbreaking to see. It reminded me of my own experience fleeing my burning village in Sudan.”²

Even staff at Fountainview Academy, a Christian boarding high school (an Adventist supporting ministry) located 40 kilometres north of the Village of Lytton, were also forced to leave under the emergency evacuation order.

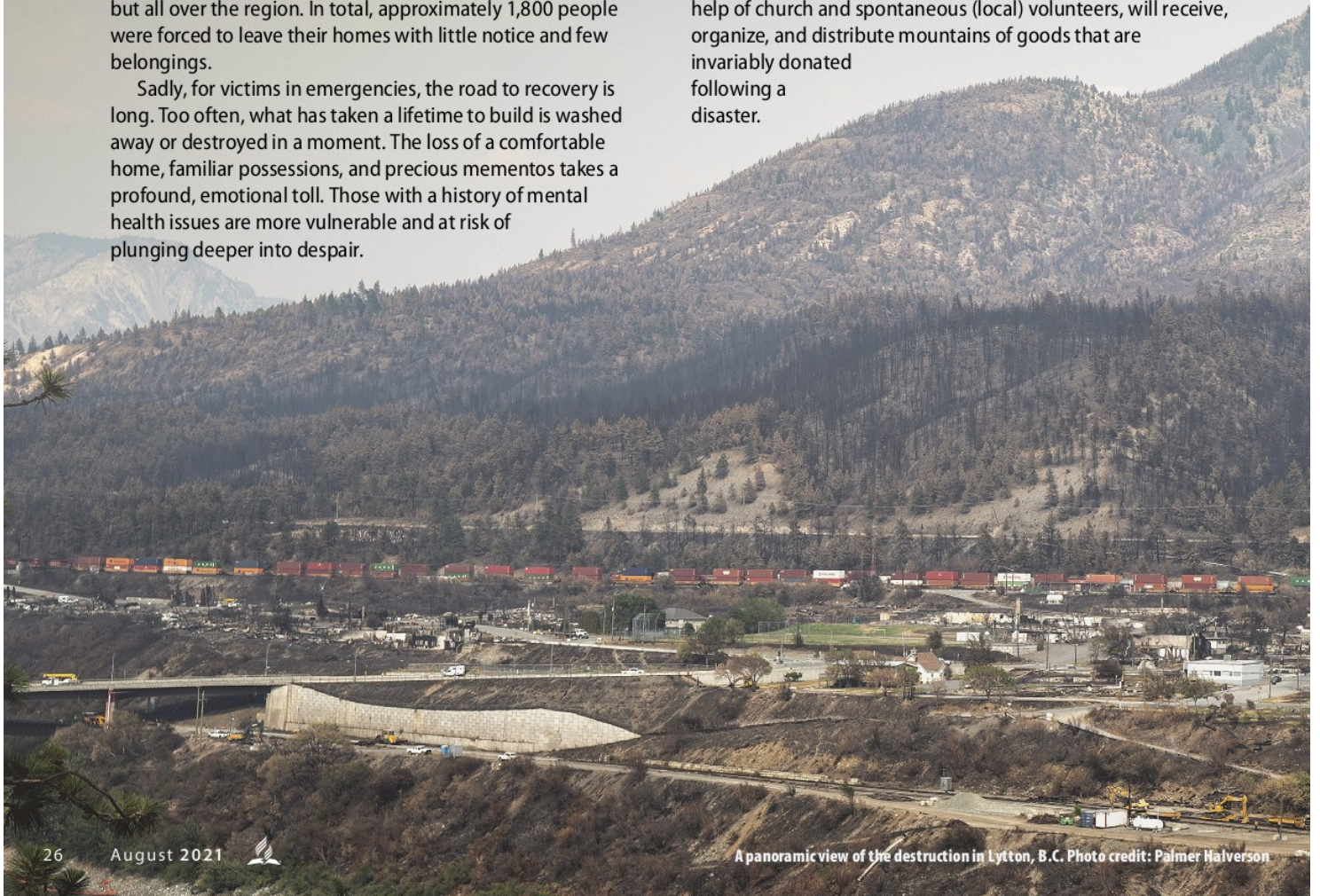
The Lytton Creek wildfire scorched about 90 percent of the Village of Lytton and was responsible for at least two deaths. It also destroyed properties in the Lytton First Nation community, along with thousands of hectares of land in the Fraser Canyon. In the days following the Lytton disaster, reports of more than 300 fires burning across the province and more than 80 out of control underscored that wildfire season had begun with an awful toll. Evacuees not only came from Lytton but all over the region. In total, approximately 1,800 people were forced to leave their homes with little notice and few belongings.

Sadly, for victims in emergencies, the road to recovery is long. Too often, what has taken a lifetime to build is washed away or destroyed in a moment. The loss of a comfortable home, familiar possessions, and precious mementos takes a profound, emotional toll. Those with a history of mental health issues are more vulnerable and at risk of plunging deeper into despair.

Yet even in the darkest hours, God’s mercy shines through. Amid the devastation, one story emerged, of a woman living in Lytton who thought her house, like others, had burned to the ground. When the folks from Better Living Centre connected with her in Lillooet, they discovered that a helicopter with a bucket of water had inexplicably dumped it—right on her house. Hers was one of two houses left standing after the fire and was undamaged!

However, in partnership with His mercy, God also requires us to act on His behalf. In a supreme act of love and sacrifice, the British Columbia Conference, along with Camp Hope staff, cancelled the camp’s summer schedule and event bookings and chose to open the camp to house and assist wildfire evacuees. “We have enough room here at Camp Hope to house 500 if needed, and thanks to our leadership, supported by the SDACC and ADRA, we’re willing to cancel all bookings indefinitely if the demand is there,” said Bill Gerber, Camp Hope Manager. “What is important is that we’re not just the hands and feet of Christ, but His heart, His eyes, and ears as well.”

Following the great work done by our teams in response to the Fort McMurray fire in 2016 and the tornadoes that wreaked havoc in eastern Ontario in 2018, ADRA was approached by the British Columbia provincial government to lead in organizing the In-kind Donation Management for the Lytton Wildfires. Directed by Alain Normand, who has over 30 years of experience as an emergency management professional, ADRA, with the help of church and spontaneous (local) volunteers, will receive, organize, and distribute mountains of goods that are invariably donated following a disaster.



"ADRA has been mandated, through Emergency Management British Columbia, to set up and manage collection points, warehousing, and distribution of in-kind donations in the vicinity of Kamloops, B.C. We will be managing the volume of goods that are donated in an emergency and working with agencies like the Canadian Food Bank and other corporate donors to help meet the immense need, said Steve Matthews, ADRA Canada's executive director. "This is part of ADRA's specialization within the Canadian emergency response arena, and we are recognized for that commitment and expertise."

Matthews added, "Here in Canada, ADRA is one of several faith-based organizations at work co-operatively to respond to emergencies and disasters. As a member of the Emergency Management NGO Consortium of Canada (EMNCC), ADRA collaborates with a number of NGOs such as Red Cross and Salvation Army to support and bring relief to vulnerable communities and people across Canada. We are blessed to be called to do this work, supporting local church efforts and larger responses. We are grateful for every volunteer, every member, who is willing to help."

Christ's imperative in Matthew 25 is to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and invite the stranger in. Through our actions in ministering to those who have lost everything and are in urgent need, we reflect the love of Christ. By giving the best we have, we honour God and recognize that they are a part of our family. For those who have and those who are planning to support, we say thank you.

The needs are great, and God has allowed us to touch hearts for Him. You can support the response by visiting <https://www.adra.ca/lytton-b-c-wildfire/> or utilizing the enclosed prepaid envelope to the ADRA Canada office. ■

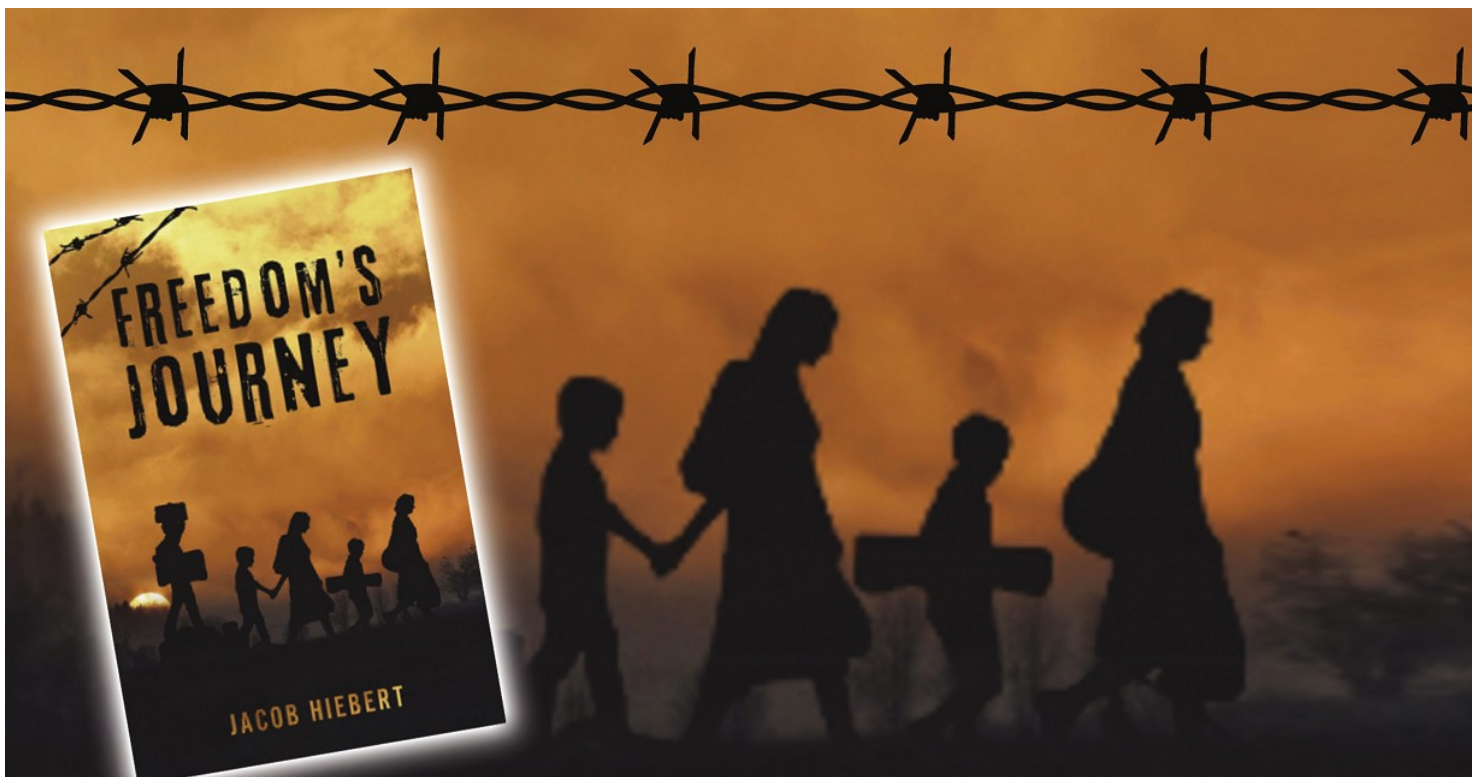


ADRA

Peggy Caesar is a communication specialist for ADRA Canada.

- 1 Bethany Lindsay and Courtney Dickson, "Village of Lytton, B.C., Evacuated as Mayor Says 'The Whole Town Is on Fire'," *CBC News*, June 30, 2021, <https://bit.ly/36EVuQ9>.
- 2 Read "Meeting God Under a Mango Tree" in the February 2021 issue of *Canadian Adventist Messenger* for Charles Okumu Lomudak's riveting story.





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I watch your Sunday broadcast on Vision TV, and I want to let you know how blessed and uplifting it is to me being able to feed on the Word of God. Thank you so very much. I wish you God's richest blessings. Warm regards!

—June

I would like to thank you for the offer of the Bible study course with Amazing Facts Ministries. I really enjoyed studying with you, and I graduated with a certificate. I have continued to watch your ministry and your teachings for over three years. I would like to thank you for your prayers ... God bless!

—Peter

*H*i, I really enjoyed and appreciated the course I took from Amazing Facts. It helped me in understanding God's will and the gift of the Holy Spirit. God Bless.

—Alan

*T*hese Bible facts are so good! Thank you for providing these lessons to help me understand the Bible.

—Maria

*F*or years we thought the Sabbath was Sunday until we did the Bible studies. Now we go to the Seventh-day Adventist church, and we really like it! Praise God!

—Nate and Candace

I am blessed by all your programs, especially since COVID-19. May God continue to bless you in His service.

—Maegan B.

*M*y wife and I really enjoy your programs on TV. We love listening to Doug Batchelor preaching the true word of God. We pray for his ministry always. Listening to his sermons fills our hearts with joy and happiness. Having Jesus Christ as our Saviour is all we want. God bless Amazing Facts Ministries, and the host Doug Batchelor, and all the volunteers. Thank you!

—Mark and Elsa

I have recently started watching your excellent program regularly (having discovered it a few years ago and then lost where it was on the dial!) and truly enjoy Pastor Batchelor. I am writing to request your free offer #825 "The Day of the Lord." Thank you and may God continue to bless and work beautifully through you!

—Lily

I am willing to follow Jesus' example of Sabbath keeping. I have never felt right about going to church on Sundays in my former church.

—MG

*T*hese study guides have opened my eyes and I feel that keeping the seventh-day Sabbath is the right thing to do. I would like to connect with the Seventh-day Adventist church in my area.

—Pauline

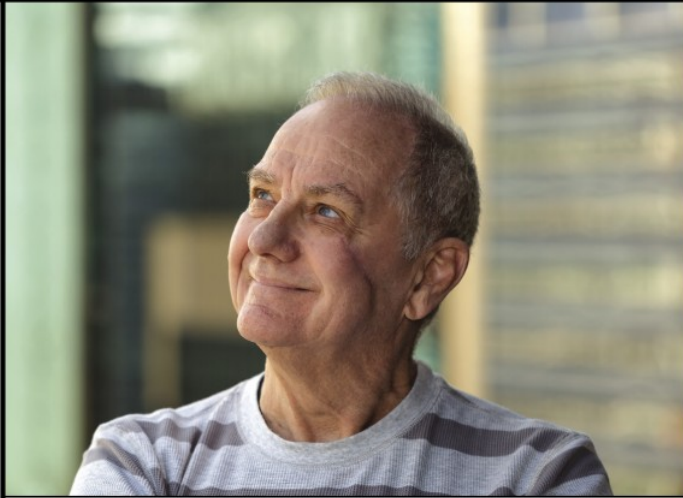
*H*ello, I was baptized as an infant. ... I wish to become born again and to start a new life, repenting of my sins and living a victorious life. I would like to be contacted by a local Seventh-day Adventist pastor so I can be baptized.

—Richard

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Healed by His Stripes

“In spite of this ordeal, he told us that he was daily experiencing the true fellowship of Christ Jesus, who was healing him day by day.”

As we were driving past a home on the side of the road, we noticed something strange. On top of the roof the following words were written: “JESUS IS ALIVE.” The home next to it had these words written: “SO IS ELVIS.” We approached the home that had the words about Jesus. We were sure this home had strong believers and that they would appreciate not only our health-related publications but also the beautiful spiritual books we had to offer.

When we knocked on the door, an elderly woman answered. As we spoke to her, she became very agitated. She told us that she didn’t want anything to do with us, our health books, or our religion. We gently asked her if she was a Christian because her roof seemed to show it. She said she was not and asked if we had seen her husband, which we hadn’t. She said, “Good.” We turned to leave, disappointed.

As we were getting into our vehicle, we saw a slim man walking from the barn to the house. He seemed to be bleeding from his face. We wondered whether we should leave on account of his wife’s anger, or approach him. His bleeding face drew us, but we were taken aback. There was an open wound on the side of his face, and it was dripping with both pus and blood. One of his eyes and ears seemed to be completely covered with bare, skinless flesh. It was shocking and grotesque.

We called to him and asked him if he was all right. He responded, “I am healed by the stripes of Jesus.” We were amazed. After a brief discussion with him outside his home, he invited us inside. We sat down with him at the kitchen table, and he spoke to us about his life. He

had a disease that was expected to spread to other parts of his body and eventually kill him. In spite of this ordeal, he told us that he was daily experiencing the true fellowship of Christ Jesus, who was healing him day by day.

He had [grown up in a Christian religion] and had drifted away from his church. After a wild life as a youth, he turned to the Bible. He never did go back to church but was keeping the Sabbath at home by himself, because of the Bible’s indication that Saturday was the Sabbath. He spoke of [Bible prophecy, and it was clear his understanding was on the right track]. He spoke of the connection of our health and food to our spirituality. It was truly amazing! He had been taught by nobody but the Bible and the Holy Spirit.

He believes in getting his information straight from the Bible and from Jesus. He loves talking about Jesus and “gets a high” from it. We had a wonderful visit!

We know he is devout and truly has a living experience with God. We hope to visit him again and show kindness to him. We do not believe we stopped by his home by accident. By God’s grace, he’ll accept more truth and have a clearer view to be prepared for what will happen in the last days! And we pray that we will meet him in the New Jerusalem, free of disease and suffering! ■

Grigore and Angie Decev shared their story with us while serving as CYC literature evangelists. Lifestyle Canada is Canada’s literature evangelism ministry.



David Forsey

Is It Worth It?

Debating the Value of Adventist Education

Much has changed over the last half-century in Adventist education, particularly in the North American Division. In the '60s and '70s, it was a given that Adventist children would attend Adventist schools at all levels. Parents sacrificed to afford this faith-based education, children assumed they would go to our schools, and attitudes were positive.

But change occurs regularly, often perpetrated by circumstances, attitudes, and issues, and this is true of Adventist education as well. In recent decades, a number of influences have contributed to a decline in loyalty to Adventist education:

- Public reports on the success of public education have caused some Adventists to measure our system against these benchmarks and values. Even if perceptions aren't a reality in every case, the consensus is often that public education—or other faith-based schools—offer more for less money.
- An increasing view that the church and the home should fulfill the values often thought to be found in Adventist schools cause some to wonder why they should pay extra for Adventist education.
- The growing cost of Adventist education causes some parents to believe it is not affordable. This should be calculated carefully to see if it's really true; some accounting experts state that, given inflation and other mitigating factors, the cost is not considerably more than it was decades ago.

So how can we justify the effort and expense of Adventist education today? Given financial and societal pressures, is it realistic to think of continuing and growing Adventist education? Let's look at some of the pluses—the positives—that validate Adventist education.

- Two positive factors are obvious and generally accepted: (1) a better ability to find an Adventist spouse and (2) the likelihood of staying in the church. (Some critics

suggest, however, that these are not enough. After all, they suggest, can't the church and the home fulfill these two roles?)

- A significant factor is the quality of education. Studies indicate that Adventist education ranks right up there with the best when it comes to standardized test scores and student success.
- Most Adventist schools are small, and there is merit in the teacher–student ratio this allows. More attention can be given to individualized learning and the development of talents.

In spite of these positives, there is certainly room for growth in Adventist education. Schools must pursue continuous improvement, and this is possible only as homes, schools, and churches work together in positive ways. For example:

- Parental involvement has increased through the years and has the potential both to enrich students' educational experience and to develop more of a sense of community.
- Close alliances with local churches are a critical factor. When pastors and church boards are knowledgeable, involved, supportive, and committed to the school, schools thrive.
- Organizational structures may need to be re-examined. Everything from school schedules and communication to school grounds and facilities must be regularly reviewed to ensure that they contribute to positive outcomes.
- Adventist education is a journey to excellence. It is important not only to strive for excellence and to develop measures to regularly assess our progress but also to share the positive stories along the way. This could include visual reports by students, virtual visits, test results, special events featuring student achievement, student baptisms, and more.

Adventist schools need your prayers. With God's help, much can be accomplished in this setting to advance the Lord's work with great benefits for today and for the days to come, until the Lord returns! ■

David Forsey is the interim superintendent of schools for the Ontario Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.



THE BURMAN EFFECT

BURMAN ALUMNI
IMPACTING THEIR COMMUNITIES

Team Player

No one had been found to fill the vacancy in CUC's physical education department, so word went out: *No intramural sports this year. We don't have the faculty to organize it.*

Not willing to forgo one of the most popular student activities that culminated in an annual Sports Day each spring, students Gerald Chipeur, Ted Matthews, and Glen Wilson volunteered. With the school's blessing, the team ran a successful intramurals program while simultaneously completing their academic requirements.

Gerald's leadership attitude that helped save intramurals that year was learned early in life. Mom and Dad had taught him by example that service is a part of life; that when asked to fill a need, the answer is yes. While still in junior academy, he started a school newspaper. While still a high school student, he led out in worship services at his church. The conviction that one can make a difference in the world had developed strong roots that were nourished on the campus of what is now Burman University.

It seems no accident that Gerald chose a career in law. He has devoted himself to conflict resolution through the promotion of human rights and commitment to equality. One of his better-known cases was that of Larry Renaud in the Supreme Court of Canada.

As Gerald tells it, Larry was fired by his employer, a public school board in British Columbia's Okanagan Valley, because of his Seventh-day Adventist faith. A janitor, he was required to clean the school each weekend for Monday morning classes. The collective agreement specified that the cleaning take place Friday night, during the Sabbath. Larry offered to clean on Saturday night or on Sunday. The union rejected that proposed accommodation, and the matter went to the British Columbia Human Rights Commission.

Eight years later Larry's case made it to the Supreme Court of Canada. He had

lost before the lower courts and had been out of work more often than not over the time it took to get to Canada's highest court. It had been difficult for him to support his wife and children during this time.

When the Seventh-day Adventist Church chose Gerald to join a team of lawyers in support of Larry, he seized the opportunity to make a difference. The arguments he put forward outlined the basis for human rights legislation and the importance of accommodating religious convictions. The Supreme Court of Canada accepted the arguments, overturned its recent precedent, and ruled that all employers and unions have a duty to make a reasonable accommodation for the religious beliefs of an employee. Larry received his job back—as well as eight years of back pay.

Gerald's decision to help fight Larry's battle impacted not only Larry's life. It resulted in a ruling that would change life for many other Canadians. The precedent set by the Supreme Court of Canada for Larry has been the basis for workplace accommodation of differences in religion, gender, or ability. The Renaud decision has now been followed by courts in over 1,400 cases. ■

As told to Renate Krause, editor of Burman University Magazine.

Gerald Chipeur, Q.C. (far left), in a more recent appeal with colleagues Geoffrey Trotter, Derek Ross, André Schutten, and Barry Bussey.



Gerald and Dr. Barbara Chipeur are supporting the construction of Burman University's new library because, like many Adventists, they have a passion for individual freedom. In addition to embracing the Adventist tradition of peace and justice, Gerald is a lawyer by profession.

He explains, "The work of lawyers is grounded in freedom of thought and expression. Past decisions and consequences inform the future. Keeping our history alive is essential to maintaining hard-won freedoms, and libraries are essential to that end."

"Barbara and I want to strengthen Burman's ability to make connections between the past, present, and future for conflict resolution; between diverse people for greater understanding; and between academic disciplines for greater discernment. We believe that this library will advance Burman's mission of preparing students for effective service."



Dr. Barbara and Gerald Chipeur



BURMAN
UNIVERSITY

To join the Chipeurs in their commitment to prepare young people for service in Canada and around the world, contact

- President Loren Agrey: 403-782-3381, ext. 4147
email: president@burmanu.ca
- JD Victor Fitch, *President Emeritus*, Chair, Campaign Advisory Team: jdvictorfitch@gmail.com
- Gerald D. Chipeur, Q.C.: gchipeur@millerthomson.com

BURMAN UNIVERSITY STEPS INTO THE FUTURE

Hearty Meals, Winter Coats, and a Fresh Start for Central Alberta Teens



Students at the Alternative School Centre had access to snacks and takeout options when classes were being held in-person (pre-COVID). ABW paid for these items.

Situated in the heart of Red Deer, Alta., is the Alternative School Centre, a Grade 9–12 school where teenagers feel safe and cared for. Students receive flexible learning in the midst of challenging circumstances. With no mandatory attendance, teens can learn at their own pace while working through challenges such as homelessness.

When A Better World Canada (ABW) learned the school's meal program was strapped for cash, volunteers stepped into action. After all, the organization had been looking to support local projects focused on education. It had started investing in this critical effort in fall 2019.

"When we got involved, the food was already being prepared by a hired cook," says ABW co-founder Eric Rajah. "The students would all get involved and would cook and eat together. Whatever was left after lunch, the students could pack up and take home."

Then in early 2020, COVID-19 struck, resulting in sit-down meals being discontinued at the school. To make up for this, hampers were introduced.

Stephen Pottage, district principal for 11 Red Deer public schools including the Alternative School Centre, said volunteers deliver monthly hampers, ranging in size from single-use to families of 12. "We're consistently providing complete meal and holiday hampers for 20 of our students and their families," Pottage said in May 2020.

ABW's dependable funding has been so beneficial. Thanks to the school's food program that was created three years ago, attendance has never been better. "The

more we can get them in here, the better chance we have of getting them through their high school education," says Pottage. "Anecdotally, I believe that kids are happier."

The charity's Student Well-Being Program recently added free dental and eye care as well as services like massage therapy. Free eyeglasses have been donated. "For the few who have accessed it so far, it's been life-changing," says Pottage.

As well, ABW is now funding extracurricular activities like sports and music. "We are super, super excited about the opportunities that our kids will have," says Pottage.

Students will also be eligible to receive gift cards for clothes and shoes.

Overall, the project is a great fit for ABW, which formerly supported individuals and families under its Neighbours division. "We've shifted to helping youth who are vulnerable and working with our local school systems at achieving educational success," says Rajah.

This past winter ABW joined New Coats for Kids provided through Lacombe & District Family and Community Support Services.

Julie Stegmaier, director of operations and donor relations co-ordinator for ABW, says 65 children benefited through this program, which involved several community partners. "It's good to know that so many children in the community had warm, proper fitting winter clothing, and it's also good that we could assist with some of the financial difficulties that parents had, especially this past year with COVID." She also praised Reds Source for Sports for supplying the winter gear.

"I am glad we can help in the community," says Stegmaier.

Many donors are keen to help in their own backyard, adds Rajah. "Sometimes poverty is invisible in our communities. We have to be mindful of children struggling in our own community." ■

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

A Day of Art and Joy in Cree Territory

"Then he said to them, 'The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.'"

—Mark 2:27, NIV



Volunteers from Burman University or BU alumni run the children's Sabbath programs that are held at MANS, where hallways often serve as makeshift children's division rooms.



Drawing is an integral part of worship for many of the children who attend Sabbath services in Maskwacis.

What about the Sabbath makes it interesting to you?" I asked Hope Crier, who attends the Mascwacis Cree Company that has been meeting for many years on or near the Treaty Six reserve set aside for the Plains Cree of Central Alberta, Canada. Hope attended Mamawi Atosketan Native School (MANS) for most of her elementary and high school education, and it is where she was introduced to the idea of the Sabbath.

"I think it's cool, especially with the singing and how the pastor makes the stories more interesting," responded Hope. "I think a day of rest really helps you a lot. I definitely notice it on a long weekend—how refreshed I am after. I would definitely want my kids to grow up learning about these things like I did."

The Maskwacis Seventh-day Adventist Company has always enjoyed offering opportunities for sharing of stories and music, and the Sabbath is no exception. When kids arrive for Sabbath school, they get a sheet of paper. While volunteers tell the Bible story for the day, the children draw what they hear. Always artistic, beautiful depictions of what they have seen as they listen are created and then posted on the wall. It's always a big hit. Sabbath has consistently been a high day at the

company, with lots of fun, stories, music, and laughter while we learn about God.

Another student offered her input: "I keep the Sabbath because it's the day we get to rest, and when God made everything on the seventh day, He rested too." The student continued, "I like the church because I get to learn about God and stuff. I want to keep the Sabbath as I get older, and I would teach my future kids as well."

As Jesus said in Mark 2:27, the Sabbath was made for people and not people for the Sabbath. The joy and happiness that it brings, the life and colour it adds to the week, and the beautiful relationships built from its weekly observance—these are the gifts that God has blessed us with as we worship in Maskwacis. ■

Hadassah Koester, a senior at Burman University, volunteers at the Maskwacis congregation that meets at MANS when COVID allows, and created this story in collaboration with attendees of the Maskwacis Cree Seventh-day Adventist Company.



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



August 2021

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FAITH – OF OUR – FATHERS

A Father Who Led His Family to Freedom



Helene and David Hiebert

Communism and war. Hunger and thirst. Fear and stress. Leaving it all behind and fleeing for freedom is something that any young child could not forget. Young Jacob Hiebert pleaded with his mother, “When will God give us a house again?” He walked kilometre after kilometre with other refugees on the dusty roads not knowing where the next meal would come from. His father was, at one point, forcibly taken from the family, so they had to sojourn without him, not knowing what would happen.

Jacob had been living in Ukraine with his sister, Erna, and parents, David and Helene. Originally, the family were Mennonites. Mennonites had fled to Ukraine from the persecutions that had arisen during the Reformation. They worked the land for many generations.

David served in both World Wars and not by choice. In the early 20th century when communism took over, David was forced to join the military; however, he did not bear arms.

At one point during the First World War, David was given a rifle and instructed to aim at a certain target. Since the exercise itself would not involve hurting or killing anyone, he did as he was told. He aimed and hit the mark dead on. The officer was very excited and said, “Very good! ... Try it one more time.”

David realized at once what was happening. He knew that if he hit the mark a second time, the officer would most likely send him to fight in the most critical, dangerous part of the battle. He quickly aimed for a mark way off the main target and hit exactly where he aimed but not the mark that he had been asked to aim for. Of course, the officer was not pleased and said, “It was just luck the first time; you are not a good marksman.” This saved David from bearing arms; as a result, he was told

to perform kitchen duties as a cook, which very well may have saved his life.

David was always very religiously inclined and a strong student of Bible prophecy. After he accepted the Adventist message, he also became a strong supporter of the Spirit of Prophecy. As religion of any kind was not tolerated during the years of both World Wars when Communism was at its strongest, religious activities were conducted in extreme secrecy. Whenever the authorities discovered religious books and articles, they confiscated them. Only select pages of religious books were exchanged and only with other believers one could trust. It was under these conditions that David served as a minister of the Adventist Church while publicly working and being known as a photographer.

During the war the family decided that if at any point a family member was missing, they would seek to reunite after the war by writing letters to the Adventist Church headquarters in Berlin. David was indeed separated from his family by force. It was a terrible blow. His wife and children prayed earnestly for him during that time of separation. After walking hundreds of kilometres away from the war front, the fatherless family found themselves in Poland when the war ended. They had received no word from their beloved father. Letters were sent to Berlin. No answer came. Weeks went by.

They found themselves staying in a large mansion, deserted by its owners but filled with refugees. Almost every day dead people were taken out of this big house. Some 30 people died while the Hiebert family stayed there. Also, with 20 people crammed in one room, it was a challenge staying free from lice.

Jacob's sister Erna decided to write one more letter to Berlin to contact her father. Again, no answer. They decided to leave Poland with another family to try to get to the West.

On the Friday before they were set to leave, a lady suddenly came to their door and cried, "Come quickly! Outside there is a man who is asking for the Hieberts." Full of surprise and hope, they ran down the steps. Erna was already far ahead and was the first to greet her father. It was Erna's final letter that was put together with her father's letter in Berlin. He was then able to figure out where his family was, and he hastened to get on his way to meet them.

The children's mother, Helene, later wrote, "Even though he was still a distance away from the house, I soon realized it was my David! We greeted each other with joy and tears. Now that we were all together, it seemed to us as though it was a dream, but it was actually reality. He brought many presents with him: raisins and figs and other dried fruits, which no one could expect to find during this time. We thanked the Lord for His love and grace and wonderful way He led us back together, and we all joined in a song in German which stated, "The Lord has done great things for us; therefore, we are happy and thankfulness is fitting to be made, and our rejoicing reaches to the heavens above."

As a united family, the Hieberts were able to get to the West. That is a story in itself! And yet there's more.

David was a born leader and organizer. No matter where he lived, he had Bible studies with those who were interested, and organized churches that were compelled to worship in secret. The church had to go underground in order to survive during those years.

Jacob remembers, "One of the greatest character traits [my father had] and one that I chose to adopt by the example of his life to me, was he was always positive about God's Word and God's church. I never heard a critical word from him about the church or its leaders as long as he lived. Also, he never ever questioned the validity of the Bible and its teachings. Once he was thoroughly convinced about what the Bible taught on a certain point, he would never again question what his duty and responsibility should be as he moved forward in his Christian experience. This is the single most important legacy he left for me to follow and which I will ever be grateful to him for. He never criticized the truth and the church that made him what he was. I would not be where I am today without his positive example."

David Hiebert is given a prominent place in Jacob's recently published book, *Freedom's Journey*.¹ As Jacob describes, "It was during these most difficult years that our experience with our God reached an all-time high, never to be erased from our memories." Those memories continue in the retelling of a life well lived. ■

Barry W. Bussey is a lawyer practising in the area of law and religion.



The Hiebert family in 1946 just after crossing from East to West Germany. Back row: Erna and Arthur; middle row: Helene and David; front row: Jacob.

¹ Jacob Hiebert, *Freedom's Journey* (TEACH Services Inc., 2021).



news

of Canadian Adventist members and churches in action

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

SDACC

J.D. Victor Fitch Retires (Again)



J.D. Victor Fitch



Ken Wiebe

J. D. Victor Fitch, former president of Canadian University College (now Burman University), is hanging up his hat as writer for the *Canadian Adventist Messenger*. Fitch has been writing the "Where Are They Now?" articles since 2014 and has decided to focus once again on retirement. He is married to his long-time sweetheart, Gem, and together they have three adult children.

An educator by trade, Fitch worked as a teacher, men's dean, principal, academic dean, director of admissions and financial aid, education superintendent, and president of Canadian University College before his retirement from full-time denominational service in 1997. With his wealth of experience in several areas of church service, Fitch has interviewed an array of former church leaders for the *Messenger*. His ability to bring out the inspirational and oftentimes humorous

experiences of interviewees helped readers to see another side of their former leaders and administrators.

In his stead, Ken Wiebe has agreed to carry on the mantle of telling the story of fellow retired church leaders. Wiebe has served the Adventist Church for 44 years in pastoral and administrative roles in Ontario, British Columbia, Manitoba-Saskatchewan, and most recently as president of the Alberta Conference before his retirement in 2016. He is married to Vera, and they currently reside in Lacombe, Alta. The Wiebes have two sons and four grandchildren.

The *Canadian Adventist Messenger* team wishes all the best to Victor Fitch as he embraces the wonderful world of retirement. We look forward to many years with Ken Wiebe as he brings a new point of view and familiar faces to the pages of "Where Are They Now." ■

Quebec

Centre Meilleur Chemin Serves in Quebec City



L to R: Kenel J., CMC volunteer; Guy B., REF employee; Marie-Hélène R., food security development agent; and Cindy-Lee M., REF general manager

Meilleur Chemin (translated *Best Way*) is the service and training centre of the Adventist Church in Quebec. Since Quebec City has only 150 Adventists out of a population of 700,000, Centre Meilleur Chemin (CMC) as an entity has strong involvement and a great relationship with the community—all in close co-operation and support from the city. The centre works both on its own and in partnership with local associations.

With the help of its volunteers, Meilleur Chemin offers services such as food distribution, maintenance of public refrigerators, organization of social gatherings; and various workshops, such as English lessons, seminars on depression, tutoring and homework assistance for children and families in need, as well as faith-based workshops to help people encounter and connect with Christ.

Matthew 25:35–36 and “Christ’s method” of healing ministry are what the Centre Meilleur Chemin strives to accomplish with its outreach programs. In early March 2020, a CMC volunteer and active church member contacted the CMC director, Pastor Kyala, about a community need in the

Sainte-Foy area of Quebec City. CMC then quickly delegated some of its volunteers to help the organization Ressources Espace Familles (REF) twice a week, to prepare bags and boxes containing perishable foodstuffs and personal care items.

CMC volunteers have been volunteering for REF since the first wave of the pandemic hit Quebec City in spring 2020. And thanks to our partnership, we have even been able to offer Christmas bags to our church members in need.

So, to introduce REF, here is a short interview with its executive director, Cindy-Lee McKenzie:

Tristan Morency: *How would you describe your relationship with the CMC?*

Cindy-Lee McKenzie: I think we have a great relationship! Our organizational values are very similar to those of the CMC: caring, solidarity, partnership, and teamwork that make working together so beautiful and rewarding for everyone!

TM: *What is your mission in Quebec City and why?*

CLM: Our mission is to ensure that every child can have the best possible overall development. To achieve this, we try to offer projects and services that correspond to the needs expressed by families, which always pushes us to adjust our current projects and set up new ones.

Our projects allow us to meet the basic needs of families, such as food aid, to ensure the proper social development of children (and their parents); to equip parents so that they can develop in this role and support their child(ren) in their life journey; and to promote their current or future academic success ... and all this, while having fun!

Although many projects are focused on the 0–5 age group, we offer activities for all age groups. We work to promote cultural and social diversity and to encourage people to live together.

We are also committed to volunteering and citizen involvement. Each year we count on more than 275 volunteers.

Knowing how spiritually enriching this experience is for our volunteers, we encourage every church member to consider volunteering in their community. “This is how everyone will recognize that you are my disciples” (John 13:35, MSG). ■

— *Tristan Morency, assistant pastor, Centre Meilleur Chemin*

>> SDACC REVOLVING FUND REPORT: As of June 30, 2021, there were 380 depositors with a total deposit of \$31,752,542. There were 88 loans with a value of \$28,821,009.

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





Erica Cabangon and Vanessa Florendo being baptized by Pastor Matthew Reyes.

Inspire Ministries Seventh-day Adventist Company, a church plant that was established with the help of the Vancouver Filipino church in 2014, is celebrating a couple of special baptisms and the stories behind them.

Meet Vanessa Angel B. Florendo and Erica Jade R. Cabangon. Both were born and raised in Christian homes. Their conversion stories began when they were still very young.

Vanessa's grandfather was an Evangelical pastor and introduced her to Jesus when she was eight years old.

While she was in high school, Vanessa expressed a desire to get baptized on three separate occasions and even tried to have her baptism scheduled, but it simply never materialized. Eventually, she even finished her nursing degree and got married, still not having sealed her decision.

One day Vanessa's sister asked her about her salvation and Vanessa felt a strong sense of conviction, which gave her hope. She started attending our Bible care group hosted by Greg and Phoebe Deza.

Finally, at age 33, Vanessa got baptized on Sept. 5, 2020, at Silver Lake in Hope, B.C.

"It's true that if we try to do something in our own timeline, most of the time it's not going to work," Vanessa shared at her baptism. "The reason I'm here for baptism is not because I made it happen, but God led me."

Erica was born to Seventh-day Adventist parents and raised in the church. Growing up surrounded by the church community, Erica was actively involved in mission trips and events. She graduated from an Adventist school, but she admits she struggled accepting the beliefs of the church. All her Pathfinder friends got baptized before entering high school except for her. When her mom asked her why, Erica replied she was neither interested nor ready.

Two of Erica's classmates and spiritual mentors, Lyra Pederal and Jennel Arimado, continued praying for her until she finally felt the Holy Spirit tugging on her heart while fully immersed in her nursing career. She was impressed by a sense of how important it was for her to have a real connection with God as she cared for and attended to her patients. She completed Bible studies with Pastor Matthew Reyes.

Erica was baptized on the beautiful Sabbath day of Oct. 3, 2020, in the Fraser River. The special event was witnessed by her family and old Pathfinder friends.

Both Vanessa and Erica believe that every struggle they've experienced in turn strengthened their faith. Their baptism serves as a wonderful lesson for us. First, it reminds us of our own baptism, renewal of faith, and recommitment to God. Second, their baptisms teach us that God loves and pursues us patiently and incessantly. Third, we're

reminded that we can make all kinds of plans, but the Lord's timing is best. Fourth, it affirms our salvation. Jesus tells us in Mark 16:16 that "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (KJV).

The baptism experience is a celebration of God's grace and forgiveness. Isaiah 30:18, 19, says, "Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you; therefore he will rise up to show you compassion. ... Blessed are all who wait for him" (NIV).

Commenting on this verse, Winn Collier writes, "It's a wonder that our Creator, the Savior of the world, chooses to wait for us to welcome Him."¹ This is exactly what happened with Vanessa and Erica. And this same spirit of patience, compassion, and support is a core value of Inspire Ministries. Our church's mission statement is "Inspired to Inspire," where "Inspire" is an acronym for:

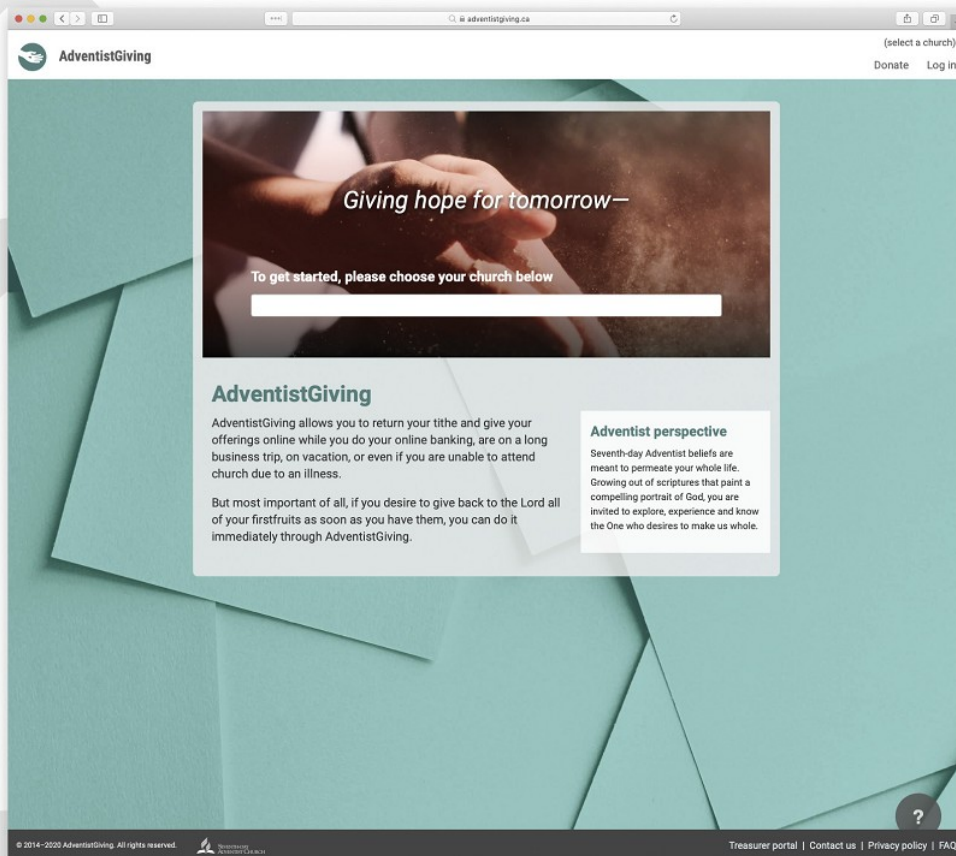
Intentional
Nurture
Selfless sacrifice
Prioritize community
Impactful service
Rooted in Christ
Experience God

As a church company, we look forward to continue following the Lord's leading and to connect with people by meeting them right where God is already at work in their lives. ■

Rachel Pederal is the reporting clerk for the Inspire Ministries Company congregation.

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announcements

Announcements

PROCESS:

- All announcements (non-profit events, new member notices, birth announcements, weddings, anniversaries, obituaries, and tributes) should be emailed to [Adrianna Lewis \(lewis.adrianna@adventist.ca\)](mailto:Adrianna.Lewis@adventist.ca) or faxed to her attention at 905/433-0982.
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- 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.

Legal Notice

Notice is hereby given that the 10th Constituency Meeting of the Quebec Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church will be held VIRTUALLY on Sept. 24–26, 2021, beginning on Friday, Sept. 24, at 5 p.m. EDT.

The Meeting is called for the purpose of receiving reports for the past five years, the election of officers, directors and associate/assistant directors of departments, the election of the Board of Directors, consideration of proposed changes in the Bylaws that may be recommended, and the transaction of such other business as may come before the Meeting at that time.

The member churches of the Quebec Conference are represented at this meeting by delegates chosen on the following basis: one delegate from each church plus one additional delegate for each 50 members or major fraction thereof.

*Kwasi Ansah-Adu, President
Lucian Stefanescu, Executive Secretary*

Obituaries

Harold Hanson was born Jan. 20, 1930, in St. John, N.B., and died April 30, 2021, in Fredericton, N.B. Harold and his wife of 63 years were members of the Zealand Seventh-day Adventist Church in New Brunswick.

He was active in the building of the church and worked tirelessly until it was finished. Harold was the first appointed elder of the new church. He was predeceased by his spouse, Mary (née Reynolds); parents, C. Perley and Bessie (née Morehouse); son, Joseph; daughters, Ann McGiverty and Kathryn Morgan. Surviving: sons, Allen Reynolds of Oshawa, Ont., and Charles (Bonnie) Hanson of Greenhill Lake, N.B.; 11 grandchildren; and 14 great-grandchildren.

David Arthur Ovington was born June 26, 1934, in Princeton, B.C., and died Jan. 3, 2021, in Quesnel, B.C. He was predeceased by his parents, John and Sarah; daughter, Lori; brothers, Ken, Frank, Roy, and Ronald; sisters, Shirley Hall, Bernice Ramkeeson, and Evelyn Ross. Surviving: spouse, Linda (née Fit); son, Raymond (Sue) of Prince George, B.C.; sisters, Vera Morgan of Vancouver, B.C., and Margaret Burgess of Horsefly, B.C.; four grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.

Ann Saunders was born May 11, 1918, in Scotland, and died April 11, 2021, in Aldergrove, B.C. Ann worked for the British Columbia Conference for many years. She will be remembered for playing the organ and piano and for her poetry and flowers. She was predeceased by her spouse. Surviving: daughters, Judi and Yvonne Saunders.

Merle Toftner was born Jan. 30, 1935, in Grande Prairie, Alta., and died Dec. 3, 2020, in West Kelowna, B.C. Merle was school board chairman for many years. He also served as the Sabbath school superintendent. He was predeceased by his parents, Lawrence and Hattie. Surviving: wife, Florence; son, Greg of Winfield, B.C.; daughters, Tammie (Scott) Hanebuth of Coeur D'Alene, Idaho, and Cindy Toftner of West Kelowna; brother, Jim (Linda) of Reedsport, Ore.; and two grandchildren.

Tributes

Ilah Janes Dalke was born in St. John's, N.L., on Jan. 4, 1940. She grew



up in a multi-generational home. Helping to care for this extended family likely helped develop Ilah's caring attitude toward others.

Ilah attended Oshawa Missionary College (now Kingsway College). In the mid-1960s, she moved to Toronto, where she met and married Ed Bowes. Their son, Scott, was born in 1970.

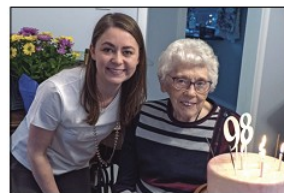
Ilah's husband Ed passed away in 2009. Two years later she met and married Denis Dalke. Denis and Ilah made the most of their nearly 10 years together. They travelled and spent winters at their trailer in Florida. Ilah was happiest when she was surrounded by people. She loved planning and preparing meals for family get-togethers.

The delights of her life were her granddaughters, Ashley and Amber, and she rarely missed a recital, school program, or soccer game. She took them on separate trips to Newfoundland so she could spend dedicated time with each one and show them the places where she had grown up.

After a long battle with cancer, Ilah fell asleep in Jesus on Nov. 30, 2020. She will be missed by her many friends and family.

Ilah is survived by her loving husband, Denis Dalke; three daughters and their families; her son, Scott (Katherine) Bowes; granddaughters, Ashley and Amber Kelly Bowes, and Mikayla and Charalyn; three brothers, Ralph (Connie) Janes, John (Barbara) Janes, and Heber (Aprille) Janes; three nieces; two nephews; four great-nieces; two great-nephews; and one great-great-niece.

Edna Jeanne (Babcock) Morgan of Oshawa was born April 1, 1923.



Edna with great-granddaughter Heather (Bruce) Lane.

She celebrated her 98th birthday on April 3, 2021, with family. Her husband, Claude Morgan, passed away in 1988. She is mother of five—Judy (Dave) Villeneuve, Sandra (Bob) Kopp, John (Pat) Morgan, Joanne (Wes) Jenne, and Bob (Sharon) Morgan; grandmother of 10; great-grandmother of 18; and great-great-grandmother of five.

Gladys Frances (Dawe) Bussey Aug. 18, 1942–July 2, 2021

Gladys Frances (Dawe) Bussey, in her 79th year, of Trent Hills, Ont., passed away on July 2, 2021, at Northumberland Hills Hospital after living with

Alzheimer's disease for more than 15 years.

A memorial service was held on July 10 at College Park Seventh-day Adventist Church, with pastors Peter Caran, Milton Perkins, and Roy West officiating; eulogy delivered by Paul Batten, nephew.



"Gladys" (as she was affectionately known) was born in the family home in Conception Bay South, N.L., to William Gordon Dawe and Eliza Ann (née Smith) Dawe on Aug. 18, 1942. The family later moved to Kelligrews, where she attended St. Edward's School. Following this, she attended Queen Elizabeth High School in Foxtrap.

It was at the Foxtrap All Saints Anglican Church where Gladys unknowingly caught the eye of her husband, Henry Winston Bussey. They married on May 16, 1964, at St. Mary the Virgin Anglican Church in St. John's. She spent the bulk of her working life as a loving homemaker and mother to her four children. Later, she worked as head cook for 12 years at Camp Frenda, on Lake Rosseau, Muskoka, Ont. She mentored numerous young summer students who worked alongside her, many of whom have kept in touch throughout the years.

Dear sister of Daphne (Bill), Harold, and Heather (late Gerald); predeceased by Bill (Marie), Fred (Gretchen), Evelyn, Helen (Bob), Doris (Murph), Don (Bertha), Jim (Cherry), Gordon, Arthur (Daphne), and Lawrence. Dear sister-in-law of Marina (late Joseph), Amy (Eric), Ella (Fred), Gladys (Donald), Wallace (Annie), Peter (Diane), and Wayne (Margo). Lovingly remembered by many other extended family members and friends.

Always a loving, caring, and devoted wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, Gladys is grievously missed by her equally loving, caring, and devoted husband Winston; her four children, Barry (LaVonna), Gregory (Karen), Rodney (Delise), Barbara (Ricardo); her nine grandchildren, Carmelle (Michael), Adam (Malissa), Seth (Cara), Taylor (Matt), Aaron, Liam, Landon, Nyliya, and Miscily; her five great-grandchildren, Arianne, Jackson, Westley, Cosette, and Abigail.



Memorial gifts are greatly appreciated in support of the Gladys Bussey Memorial Fund at Camp Frenda, which can be found at the following link: <https://www.camp-frenda.com/> (in upper right corner, click on "Get involved" and then click on "Donate").

The family of Gladys wishes to extend sincere appreciation to Saint Elizabeth Health Care's personal care workers, Michelle and Tammy; and Victoria Order of Nurses' care workers, Virginia, Krista, and Skyla. Sincere appreciation to all those who have shown their love and support throughout Gladys's illness and now in this time of mourning.

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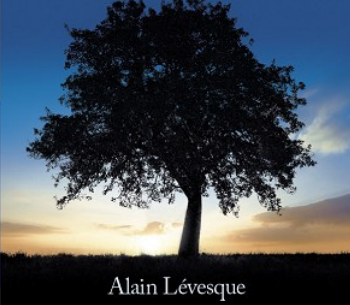
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Jacob Hiebert, a successful businessman, pastor, and administrator of Dutch/German origin, was born in southern Ukraine. Living during World War II under the rule of communism, he and his family spent six years of his early life as refugees before coming to Canada.

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2021 OFFERING SCHEDULE

AUGUST

Local Church Budget August 07
Canadian Christian Record Services* August 14
Local Church Budget August 21
Conference Advance August 28

SEPTEMBER

Local Church Budget September 04
World Budget (General Conference)* September 11
Local Church Budget September 18
Conference Advance September 25

*Special materials provided.



from the editor

I WAS FIVE years old when I stood outside and watched my home, my house, my possessions burn to the ground. Thankfully, my mother, father, and sister were all safe. At that age I wasn't that worried about much, as I knew that my parents—who had solved all problems—would solve this one too.

Soon our small community stepped in with kind intentions to help. Except much of it wasn't helpful. We received toys and dolls that were broken: a truck that had three wheels and a doll with a head that wouldn't stay on. Some people cleaned out their pantries to give us food that no one in their home liked. People gave us items that were not good enough for them but "good enough" for us.

Later in life I found myself in another position, joining a charitable effort that involved sorting and packing clothing items to be sent overseas in containers. One container was designated for an area in Africa. I remember seeing some infant clothing coming in to be donated. It was worn out, and a girls' dress had a noticeable bleach stain on it. I asked the donor if this was good enough for her children, and she said no. I handed the clothes back to her and said, "Then it is not good enough for the children in Africa."

No mother wants her baby dressed in tattered clothes, and every little girl wants to have a pretty dress. The donor did not understand that we were not looking for "good enough"; we wanted items that we ourselves would use.

When a need arose a few weeks ago here in Oshawa, one of my co-workers provided the same food and goods she would want to receive if she were the one in need. I think Someone said something about that a little over 2,000 years ago.

I am thrilled with the actions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (British Columbia Conference), ADRA Canada, Camp Hope, and the B.C. Conference Youth Department. They are doing so much more than "good enough" or "just enough to get by." Youth camps had to be cancelled this summer at Camp Hope to accommodate those in distress, but a great need is being filled for many who found themselves suddenly homeless. Read and reread our cover story in this issue. And then share it.

My church makes me proud to be a member and an employee. Our members are giving in the same manner as they would like to receive in the same situation. Turns out Matthew 7:12—"So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets" (NIV)—is still as relevant today as the day our Lord and Saviour spoke it. ■



from the editor
Good Enough?

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