

Starting Over With Dignity (p. 15), Who Are You? (p. 17),
Falsely Accused (p. 22), Something Better (p. 29)

september 2021

Messenger

Canadian adventist

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Messenger

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heart to heart

“On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness.”

—Zechariah 13:1, *ESV*

The Cleansing Fountain

*There is a fountain filled with blood
drawn from Emmanuel's veins;
and sinners plunged beneath that flood
lose all their guilty stains.* —William Cowper

The woman or man who knows Christ accepts the reality that the human race has a sin problem. Neither you nor I will be as good, kind, or holy as Jesus under our own steam. That's where God comes in.

The prophet speaks of a fountain, not a mere trickle. And using the metaphor of water, that indispensable substance that cleanses that which is unclean, places the reality right before us that humans are not self-cleansing. It is an outside work. And only God can do it.

This passage in Zechariah inspired William Cowper's melody. A favourite of many Christians, it reminds us that we are cleansed from the impurity of sin through the blood of Christ.

God is love. God is forgiveness. God is also holy. In God's eternal solution there will be no second wave of sin.

He says it in Nahum 1:9: "Affliction shall not rise up the second time" (KJV).

Sin, unrighteousness, is a problem. On occasion I meet people who tell me they are Christ-followers but, after a short conversation, lead me to think that some part of them might *wish* they knew Christ and that in reality they are in trouble.

You and I don't need to be captives of Satan's cycles of sin. The power of God is the antidote to uncleanness. We may walk so closely with God that in every temptation, in every crisis, we will turn to Him. Experience teaches the Christian that there is one way and only one in which the conflict with temptation may be won. And that way is Christ.

Shall we walk with Jesus? He is the Way. ■

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

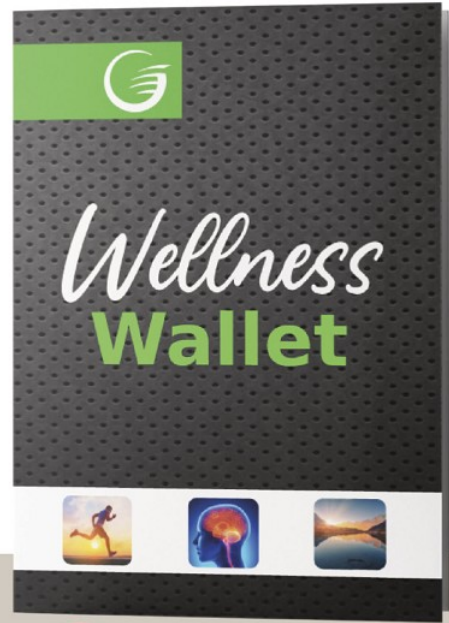


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WHAT'S INSIDE

September 2021



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WHAT'S COMING What is your legacy? In next month's issue, read the remarkable story of three Reimche siblings who have served God well into and past their 90s, and they're not stopping any time soon!

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Cover photo and top photo (this page): Thomas Sorensen



religious liberty



FREEDOM OF RELIGION



Q: *I heard that the federal government was discriminating against Christian organizations in funding summer jobs for students. Is that true?*

A: That is a very timely question. The Federal Court of Canada recently issued a decision overturning a federal government decision to withhold funding from Redeemer University College in Hamilton, Ont.

For many years the federal government has had a Canada Summer Jobs program, which funds work experiences for young persons via wage subsidies to employers. In 2017, the federal government changed the program, compelling applicants to affirm the government's view on a list of issues, including the government's position on abortion, sexual orientation, and gender identity or expression. Many faith-based organizations that maintain traditional religious views on marriage and sexuality instantly became ineligible if they were not able, in good faith, to make the attestation.

In my view, this was discrimination by the government. The government was offering a funding program but deemed religious organizations ineligible because of a tenet of their faith. Far from being neutral about religious matters, the federal government was determining which beliefs were good and which ought to be censured.

Because of the resulting controversy and some litigation, the federal government removed the attestation for the 2019 program requirement but replaced it with a question about whether applicants would provide a safe, inclusive, and healthy work environment. Redeemer University College applied in good faith and provided its non-discrimination and health and safety training policies when requested by the government. Despite that, Redeemer's application was denied.

It turns out that federal government employees had found information about Redeemer on the internet. Without even telling Redeemer what it was concerned

about, the government determined that Redeemer was ineligible on the ground of harassment and discrimination. The federal government had a concern that Redeemer discriminated on the basis of sexual orientation, but not on the basis of any information that Redeemer had provided.

On June 29, 2021, the Federal Court of Canada determined that the federal government had been procedurally unfair to Redeemer. The government had not made an attempt to properly assess the evidence. It appears to me from the court decision that the government officials simply stereotyped Redeemer without any attempt to understand its religious foundations or, for that matter, to respect its constitutional rights of freedom of religious, freedom of expression, and freedom of association.

Because the court concluded that the government had been unfair to Redeemer, it did not decide the important constitutional issues raised by the case. However, the judge specifically noted that the government "should take no comfort" since if it were found that "officials discriminated in administering funding programs against faith-based institutions because of the sincerely held religious beliefs of their community, a finding of a Charter violation may well result." The court made a significant costs award against the government because of its conduct.

Unfortunately, we cannot assume that governments will respect religious beliefs, particularly when they fall outside the majority view on social issues. In this case, I'm pleased that the court saw the issue and corrected the government's conduct. ■

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

The Lost

“What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing.”—*Luke 15:4, 5, NKJV*

In Luke 15 Jesus tells three stories about the “lost.” There is a lost sheep, a lost coin, and a lost son. In all three stories, Jesus helps us understand how important the lost are to the sheep owner, the coin owner, and especially the father of the son. The three lost relationships occupy the full attention of the owners and father. It is interesting to note that the sheep, coin, and son never lose their value to the influential people in the stories; in fact, they take on an even greater value and purpose to be found again.

The sheep is lost and fearful, wishing to be back with the fold but unable to do so on its own. I love the fact that the 99 are left alone, and the focus is put on that one lone sheep. So, too, are we of infinite value to Jesus that when He finds the lost sheep, He puts it on His shoulders to carry it home. Just think how incredible that once frightened sheep feels being carried on the shoulders of the loving owner and then, to top it all off, to be the sole object of a great celebration for having been found.

In the story of the coin, we find a precious metal currency that is out of sight but definitely not out of mind. The owner looks everywhere while that coin is lodged in the darkness and dirt—turning the house upside-down just to uncover the whereabouts of the coin. When it’s found, again we find another celebration being called.

In the story of the lost son, it is amazing the son never loses his place as the son in the story. *Never.* He is always the son even when he is hanging out in the smelly pigpen. Imagine being that son and seeing the father run down the road to embrace you, and all you can do is cower in fear for all you’ve done. But what does the father do? He ignores his son’s plea to make him one of his

hired servants.

Instead, He puts His robe of righteousness around him, covering his son’s tired, smelly, calloused feet with His own sandals and then placing His own ring on his finger. And again, we see Him throwing a party for the formerly lost.

Repentance is a change of heart, not to the owner or father, but to the sheep and son especially. The owners and the father put the lost on a greater place of attention than all the rest. The heart of God goes out for each and every one of us. He longs for us to be close to Him and in His loving arms. More of us need to keep our focus of how important and precious we are to the Father. How loved we are and how eager God is to come and take us to where He is.

I loved when my kids came running into our room in the morning after a restful sleep. They would jump on our bed and into our arms. As parents, my wife and I loved having our kids in our arms. So it is with God!

Even when we, like the lost son, have been so lost in sin, God is so overwhelmed with having us home that He tenderly looks at you and me with love and envelops us in His care and into His arms. I now have a greater grasp of the words of the angels who said, “Do not be afraid.” ■

Paul Llewellyn is the executive secretary for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada.



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Creation Corner for Kids

Bless the Lord, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name! Who satisfies your mouth with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.—Psalm 103:1, 5, NKJV

Pink cockatoo

One of the oldest birds on record is a bald eagle that lived to be at least 38 years old. But a pink cockatoo named Cookie was even older than that. Cookie probably started his life in a nest of rotting wood in an old acacia tree in Australia. He lived in the wild with his family, learning to forage for seeds, roots, and insects. Then when he was about one year old, he was captured and taken to the Brookfield Zoo when it first opened in 1934. Cookie died there in 2016 at the age of 83.

One of the amazing things about old birds is they don't age the way people and mammals do. They never look old. Old dogs grow grey whiskers, and old elephants get lots of wrinkles. But birds always look young.

Do it!

Do you want to eat what's best for your health? Read about the "good things" God gave us for food in Genesis 1:29 and Daniel 1:8–20.

Think about it.

God has promised to renew our youth the way He renews the youth of birds. If we follow His plan for us by eating "good things," we will be healthier, stronger, and able to think better than if we eat what's bad for us. More than this, God wants to give us eternal life with Him in heaven forever, where He will satisfy us with fruit from the tree of life!



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





Thanks to ADRA's Food for Hope project, Dora and her children receive a monthly stipend of food.

Preparing a Biblical Feast

God's Word is filled with stories of feasting and eating. Some of today's popular health foods were part of the biblical diet. These include olives, pomegranates, grapes, goat milk, raw honey, lamb, and bitter herbs. Wherever you look, you can find passages of Scripture that describe food and drinks. Even the psalmist David describes God's work by saying, "You prepare a table before [us]" (Psalm 23:5, NIV).

While it has always been God's plan that His creation experience plenty, today almost 700 million men, women, boys, and girls will go to bed with an empty stomach. Sadly, the COVID-19 pandemic is making this dire situation worse.

In Canada and internationally, ADRA is working to make God's intention for His people a reality. For years ADRA Canada has responded to the hungry in emergencies through our partnership with the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

In Lebanon we continue to relieve the suffering caused by the Beirut explosion. In Cambodia, Laos, and Yemen, we are addressing moderate and severe malnourishment in children under five years old. We are working to increase crop yields and teach sustainable agricultural methods so small farmers in Mongolia, Nepal, Indonesia, Kenya, and the Democratic Republic of Congo can grow kitchen gardens bursting with nutritional goodness. Families that once survived on donations are now independent and resilient.

Dora knows all too well what it's like to go to bed hungry. She used to sell candy in the streets, but that's no longer an option. A mother of four children aged two to eight, her questions daily are "What are we going to eat?" and "Where

can I find a job that will allow me to buy food?"

After Dora sold everything she owned to buy food for her children, her situation grew desperate. With nothing left to sell, women like Dora often resort to selling themselves to feed their children. With noticeable sadness, Dora told ADRA that "a mother, for love, does many things. Even things she never imagined."

Now a participant in ADRA's Food for Hope project, Dora and her children receive a monthly ration of rice, beans, maize, pasta, oil, salt, and sugar. The food is a tremendous blessing to the family. They have a better life and hope for the future.

In October, through ADRA's Ration Meal Challenge, we can "prepare a table" for people like Dora while experiencing what it's like to go to bed on an empty stomach. For one day or one week, we can live the life of almost 700 million people worldwide. For just one day, we can eat frugally and donate the money we would typically spend on food or snacks to help our brothers and sisters in need. Through ADRA's Ration Meal Challenge, every dollar donated is matched as much as 4:1 to assist hungry families around the globe.

"I thank ADRA immensely," says Dora. "Thank you for caring about us. Thank you because we can eat. We need you here, and this food that you give us is a great help." ■



Peggy Caesar is a communications specialist for ADRA Canada.

FRESH FAITH

The Sweetness of Compassion

by Alannah Tjhatra



Photo credit: Jessica Kaitlyn Photography

Warm days spent jumping rope, playing marbles, climbing trees. Sucking on sugarcane so juicy it dripped down chins and fell into cool nights sweetened by Haitian hot chocolate, filled with stories told by a grandfather whose voice carried through the air and into the ears of aunts, uncles, and young cousins. Green jumper school uniforms, hair tied with ribbons and barrettes, bento boxes for lunch, and fresh-baked bread in the evenings.

Dieulita Datus describes all this as she looks back on her childhood in Haiti. Surrounded by a strong support system and filled with the innocence of youth, Dieulita says it was there that she first tasted the sweetness of caring for

others. Her mother would take Dieulita and her siblings to do outreach and visit those in need, and Dieulita learned what it meant to help others. As she got older, she was often asked on these outings to act as a translator. She continued to do this as she moved from Haiti to the Bahamas and finally to Alberta, accompanying her parents to bring food to detention centres, assisting during prison visits, and later translating for HIV/AIDS patients.

As time went by, Dieulita continued her evangelism journey. She travels across Central Alberta, speaking about anti-racism and inclusion, mental health, and community relations. Along with her associate, Sadia Khan, Dieulita also founded Ubuntu-Mobilizing Central Alberta, a registered non-profit in Alberta with a focus on inclusion, diversity, representation, and justice.

Dieulita explains that her motto is Micah 6:8. She yearns to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with her God. Even through various struggles, such as having to leave her homeland suddenly, facing discrimination, and even going through breast cancer, Dieulita has always found her strength in God. Her journey has allowed her to become more empathetic to those going through difficult times.

"[Even] as I am walking down the street, I am preaching the gospel," Dieulita says. She knows that even the little things matter: a smile, a hug, a hello—these are like ripples in the water. They may start small, but they can go far. "Jesus did all of His work in the streets, on the hills, on boats, at friends' houses. Letting people know that they are loved without condition or exception—that is how I try to preach the gospel." ■

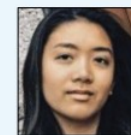
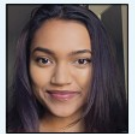
fresh faith / 35 & under

35 & UNDER

In 35 words or less, why do you believe in God?

Amayah Shaw

In everything I do, I can feel a higher power guiding me. When I find myself stuck making decisions, I pray for guidance and I'm given an unthinkable solution. It has to be God.



Anna Flores

I believe in God because I have grown to learn who He is for myself from the Bible and experiences where I have seen His power so clearly in my life.

Cassandra John-Whittingham

I believe in God from an analytical side because intelligent design is evident in all aspects of nature and machinery. It proves that we weren't just put here by accident but to achieve a purpose.

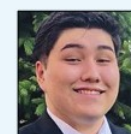


Joshua Pak

My belief in God was largely expedited through studying the sciences. Seeing the incredible innovations of God's creations never ceases to amaze me and affirms my belief in a Creator.

Oliver Morgan

It's the personal relationship I have with God that sustains me. Not only is He always there, leading me in the paths of righteousness, but He also comforts and directs me in His Word!



Jakob Kwon

I can't brag about my love for God, but I can sure brag that He loves me so much He never gives up on me. I'll keep working on being friends with God.



teen talk



Ask Me Anything

Q: How do you break up with someone who is behaving like a bad friend?

A: Honestly, friendship breakups can be worse than romantic breakups. Friendships typically end when either party may feel there has been irreparable damage. If you want to make the decision to cut someone off, first decide if this is permanent or temporary. A lot of times it is hard for people to correctly communicate the difficulty in their lives and the complexity of emotions. When our friends are going through difficulty either at home, with school, extracurriculars, family, or even relationships, there tends to be a period where being friends is extremely hard.

Now, I know there's a vast amount of content and info on Instagram and Tik Tok about cutting off "toxic" people, but you have to first evaluate what's happening to your friend. Reflect on whether this behaviour has been consistent and constant. Perhaps initiate an in-person meeting or Zoom that allows you to face each other and gives you the opportunity to compassionately share some of the behaviours that have hurt you.

Vulnerability can be hard, especially when you're not sure how it will be received. Be brave. I'm sorry that you

are in a position where you have to make this evaluation on someone you hold dear. There's no prescriptive advice that can definitively erase the pain of separation or the discomfort of being hurt by someone who means a lot to you.

Jesus surrounded Himself with friends—people He could trust, depend on, and be vulnerable to. And yet there were times when they misunderstood Him, disappointed Him, and even denied knowing Him. While Jesus forgave and reconciled with His friends, it is also important to hold our friends accountable (e.g., call our friends out) as Nathan did with David (2 Sam. 12).

Praying for you as you seek God's grace, and peace as you seek a resolution for your friendship. ■

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

Growing Up

Millennial



"It was hard accepting different life paths. But it's necessary. It's good. ... There's no one keeping track of timelines."

Timelines

Last month, my little brother got married. I love his wife, and I'm proud of him for lots of reasons (getting married, moving to Florida, graduating university, getting a full-time job, etc.), but there were a few times where I couldn't help feeling sick to my stomach. Because I'm older. Am I not supposed to be the one getting married and getting a full-time job first?

It's hard to remember that we chose different paths. I chose to start graduate school immediately after I graduated university. I chose to move across the United States away from my family and friends and boyfriend. I chose to get more education in order to become a clinical mental health counsellor rather than start working right away. And don't get me wrong—I'm proud of myself for this. I'm happy with the choices I've made. I've become more adventurous, more confident, more independent, more mature.

But ... when my brother got married, despite being proud of him *and* proud of myself (for very different reasons), I couldn't help feeling this jealousy. Why wasn't I getting married and getting a full-time job? Shouldn't I manage to have it all? Graduate school and marriage and a career?

And I fought this for a little while, because for women and girls, the idea of marriage is SUCH a thing. For some girls, getting married has become one of their biggest goals, and though marriage and finding a life partner is great, it has no right to be someone's main goal in life.

And I won't state that watching my little brother take a different path wasn't hard, because that would be a lie. Watching my brother decide to get married, knowing I'm still in school, felt "off" to me,

especially because I've always done everything first. It was hard knowing I wouldn't be first in this.

I had to remember that getting married is never the be-all-end-all. It's something I want, sure, but as a 21st-century person, remembering that a wedding and having a spouse is a part of life and *not* something that will make or break you is substantial. I know that I'll get married one day. I also know that when that happens, I'll have my graduate degree. I'll have done the best that I can in school and remember that just because my life looks a little different from my brother's doesn't make it any less worthwhile.

Honestly, I think that God has given me a lot of patience in dealing with these feelings of frustration. Sometimes I have fallbacks, where I start to feel those emotions of frustration at myself for not being "first" at each thing (like marriage), but then I remember this verse: "The end of something is better than its beginning. Patience is better than pride" (Eccl. 7:8, GNT). Waiting for the right time is vital. Allowing myself to grow in my education and in God is more important than being "first," and so is remembering that the end goal is more important than doing something just to be "first."

So, yes, I struggle not being "first" with certain things. It was hard watching my baby brother get married and me being in grad school. It was hard accepting different life paths. But it's necessary. It's good. You don't have to ever be first at any life event. There's no one keeping track of timelines. Be conscious, be aware, and be proud of where you are and how far you have come. ■

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

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



September 2021

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Tech Tips to Nail Your Online Presentation (Part 2)

“Make sure that the quality you’re streaming is top-notch.”

Last month, for Part 1, we shared Tips #1 and #2. We discussed why the specifications of your internet connection and the importance of a decent webcam and microphone are key to a successful online presence.

This month we talk about your location and your choice of background.

Tip #3: Location, location, location

This adage is true in real estate and applies even more so when you’re presenting online. Here are some helpful tips for looking presentable.

- **Don’t sit or stand in front of an open window with the sun shining through.** Yes, it brightens up the room, but it also casts a shadow around you, and that makes it very difficult for people to see your face. Your face is what people will use to draw an emotional connection to you and your message.
- **Don’t stand in front of a white wall while wearing all white.** Your outfit might look great in the mirror at home, but once you stand in front of the camera, it is very distracting to your audience’s eyes as you blend into your background. As a rule, you should never blend into your background. It’s distracting to your audience, and your message will be lost.
- **Make sure your room doesn’t sound like an echo chamber (very ambient).** If it sounds as if you’re talking in an empty stadium, it will sound even worse to your online audience. If you don’t have the option to use a different room, here’s a trick. Put up some curtains or some blankets in the room. This will help mitigate the echo-chamber effect in the room and get it closer to sounding the way it needs to for your presentation.
- **Declutter the area behind you.** As people are watching you, they can also see the area behind you. Keep it clean and tidy.

Tip #4: Background—virtual or green screen?

Speaking of backgrounds, there are two different options to choose from: virtual and a physical green screen.

- **Virtual background:** This feature is included with your virtual hosting apps such as Zoom. The great part about this feature is that it’s free and easy to set up.

The downside is that the computer application continuously works to try and crop out the background images—but in the process, your video image can momentarily get “lost” in the background. There will be times when part of your head or hand will look like it went missing, especially if you gesture and move while talking. This can be very distracting.

- **Physical green screen:** A green screen is affordable and is available at a price range of about \$30 to \$200. Your choice of green screen will depend on the size of your room and whether you intend to stand still or move around during your presentation.

Why get a green screen? Two words: privacy and creativity. If you have to present your message in your office or your living room, a green screen allows you to project any image you want behind you while ensuring that the public does not get a sneak peek into your working area.

A physical green screen will ensure that people won’t be playing “peekaboo” while you’re speaking. These are people who will quietly walk behind you not realizing that your audience can see them!

Of course, there’s no substitute for the real thing—meeting in person. We all understand that in these times we may not be able to congregate in our churches or meeting halls. But this doesn’t mean we can’t put forth the best presentation possible. Make sure that the quality you’re streaming is top-notch—as close as possible to the experience people would be getting if they were there in person.

Your message is important; don’t let the medium overshadow that. Presentation is everything. ■

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.

STARTING OVER WITH DIGNITY

I recently visited a friend, Jason,¹ who just got out of prison. After four long years, he paid his debt to society and was given one week's notice that he would be released. So much had changed since he was sentenced. That, of course, was before the COVID-19 pandemic. But more than that, his family had all moved out of state. He no longer had the support of family or friends to help him integrate back into society.

I've known Jason since he was a teenager. I was the pastor to his parents, even though he rarely attended church. He always had a hard time accepting mainstream ideas or fitting naturally into the culture. Over the years, I hired him to help me with odd jobs around my house. He is one of the hardest workers I have met. While he worked around my home, I spent time listening to his ideas and occasionally shared my beliefs. Unfortunately, the one thing that never wavered was his disbelief in God. His reasoning made a lot of sense as I listened to him. I listened to his arguments and tried not to be judgmental.

Last week, when I visited Jason in his new apartment, he told me with tears brimming in his eyes, "I cannot deny the existence of something greater than me." After being released from prison, he was able to find a job within a few days. He camped in a tent for a few days until his housing situation materialized. He admitted to me that most people don't find housing after prison as quickly as he did. He knew it was because of all the people who had been praying for him.

When I took a tour of his humble apartment, I was surprised by how well furnished it was. He already had a second-hand couch, bed, and kitchen supplies. He told me that a local Adventist couple has a personal ministry to help former convicts restart their lives with dignity.

Over the years, I have heard how some churches have active prison ministries. Sadly, I've never been involved in anything similar; however, I witnessed the incredible, gentle, loving presence of compassion.

What is your church doing to support those in your community who are in the margins? How can you help rebuild a person's dignity as they reintegrate into society? ■

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

¹ Name has been changed.

looking beyond the horizon

A Lament for the Known but Unnamed

215, 100, 35, 72, 70, 98.¹

Do you understand how difficult it is to define people by numbers? To not be able to say their names? These should be 590 names of children, but they're not. Hundreds if not thousands remain unmarked, unknown, unnamed. But they will be revealed.

I know this and have known for a long time. Indigenous People know this. It is not a shock; it's just a reminder of past and present realities. My ancestors are included in the rolls of the Survivors, of the named and unnamed, the unmarked. Yet is anyone really listening?²

I doubt that these 215 will actually change anyone's mind. Symptoms are easy to treat and post on Twitter, but most people lack the will to change systems and causes. First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children have always been seen as disposable and will be disposable again.

The following is just a little of what I felt when I heard that fateful "215." I thought of cousins frozen and forgotten because they ran away from "well-meaning Christians" in black robes. Others punished in an electric chair because they didn't eat all their rotting porridge. I thought of the continuing disadvantaging of Indigenous children today.

What do you do with all that?

Anger, pain, loss, frustration—and no one seems to care. I couldn't pray. So I wrote.

Words

Fail me right now, Father.

I feel more like groaning, yelling,
screaming with the echoes of David.

How long, O Lord, how long?

I should be shocked,
But I am numb.

It's not new. We, your First Peoples here on Turtle Island,
Have known.

We've spoken with no one willing to listen,
If I cried Alissapi, Mark, Sailor, Sutherland, Gibson,³
who but the wind seems to hear?

Siblings, cousins, aunties, uncles, kokums and mosoms,
parents, children

Torn from their families, their culture,

Their language, their Creator

Broken, beaten, abused, buried where no one knew.

Now,

Brought to the light. Mother Earth sharing her truth.

Wounds reopened. Atrocities revealed.

News cycles, story of the moment.

215.

A number.

Their names taken when they walked into that school.

Their names still, stolen when taken out.

They called me number 1, or 2, or 3 ...

Now they call me that again.

No longer disappeared, but still
Unnamed.

Lord, we want so desperately to return them their names
but are left with

1, 2, 3 ...

Speak their names for us, for them, for their families.

Remember their names for us, speak them to the wind, perhaps ...

Perhaps we might hear.

Who were they?

Who did you intend for them to be as they followed their Creator?

Where were you then?

Where are you now?

We need you Father.

There are more children to come. It will get worse.

Give strength to those who grieve. Peace to those
who wondered where their child lay.

Knowing she was gone, he was passed,
but nowhere to visit, to talk,
to be with, to say goodbye.

Hope to us all.

Please open the hearts of our Canadian friends
from the four directions.

Open our eyes to see the pain, the loss, the truth
that we are not who we think we are.

Unstop our ears that we might listen for our shared humanity.

Seal our lips, that the listening might be uninterrupted
by a need to deny,
discount, or rewrite history ...
again.

Jesus, burden our hearts with a ministry of reconciliation.
Canada needs healing.

There is a pain and sorrow within the hearts of the
Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation and all the
Indigenous Peoples of Turtle Island today.

Pour out your presence, your peace,
your strength, your love, that Creator
might hold them in the palm of His hand.

Heal them, heal us, heal this land.

Amen.

September 30 is Orange Shirt Day in Canada. Consider
taking part to support residential school Survivors and victims. ■

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

1 Kamloops, Brandon, Muskowkwan, North Battleford, Red Deer, and Edmonton Residential Schools. A tip of the iceberg concerning what the truth is.

2 To start a journey of listening, email 4Seasons@adventist.ca for access to a amazing online learning.

3 The names in the lament and the children referred to in the introduction are documented ancestors/relatives of the author.



Who Are You?

"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field."— Matt. 13:44, ESV

If I asked you who you are, what would you say?

Maybe you need to stop and think about it as I did when a pastor asked a few of us this question in a devotional group I attended. The answer is very important.

Who are you? What would you say?

Many people quickly respond with what they do: "I'm a nurse/teacher/mother/so-and-so's assistant," etc. But I didn't ask what you *do*; I'm asking you *who you are*.

If we identify ourselves with our work (I'm a business executive) or where we live (I'm Nova Scotian) or our family (I'm a homeschool mom), what happens when we retire, move, or our kids grow up? Who are we then? And is that really who we are, anyway? Aren't we more than those things?

I know people whose identity is wrapped up in their spouse, and when tragic circumstances occur and their spouse is no longer there, they really struggle to know who they are and usually feel they need to find another partner as soon as possible.

Our identity secures us somehow, or at least we believe it does. But unless our identity is in something or someone who never changes or disappears, we can never be truly secure.

My dad has the ability to make all of his daughters believe they are the favourite one! I had no idea that this was the case until I heard my youngest sister say that she knew she was his favourite child. I didn't bother to burst her bubble at the time, but I chuckled to myself and thought, "That's what you think!" knowing full well that *I was*. A few years later my middle sister told me quite frankly, "Well, we may as well admit that I'm the favourite!" and once again I chuckled quietly to myself.

There is something very strengthening in that certainty. People can be quite cruel, but a person who knows he or she is loved and treasured makes him or her more confident, resilient, and able to withstand mistreatment by others.

While I believe I'm the favourite daughter of my earthly daddy (sorry, sisters!), I'm also learning that I am the treasured daughter of the Master of the Cosmos as well.

Remember the parable of the man who was ploughing the field when he found something (Matt. 13:44)? He looked and discovered a buried treasure, so he hurried home and sold everything he had and bought the field.

Jesus is that man. He dug through the dirt and found you and me. He gave up everything He had to buy the field of this earth so He could claim us as His own treasure. His goal is to dig us out of the filth, clean the muck off, unlock our tightly closed hearts, and polish up the gems inside us that have been hidden for too long.

Knowing with certainty who I am in my heavenly Father's eyes is a game-changer. Knowing His love and desire for me strengthens me to deal with the dirt life throws at me.

Ask Him who you are to Him. He will whisper amazing things into your heart and give you an identity in Him that nothing can change. Then, when He comes for you, He'll give you a white stone with His pet name for you written on it—a name that only you and He know (Rev. 2:17)! ■

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



where are they now

Where Are They Now

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

Interview by Ken Wiebe, Messenger Staff Writer



Nilton and Tannia Amorim

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

Nilton Amorim: I was born on a farm in Brazil. I am the youngest of my parents' five surviving children. My parents were Roman Catholic. When I was born, my father was studying the Bible with an Adventist colporteur. I was the only child in my family not baptized as a Catholic.

My father was the first Adventist in our area. There was no Adventist church where we lived, so I grew up with only my family as my church. Later, another family became Adventist and joined us on the farm.

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

N: My elementary and secondary education took place in Adventist schools in Brazil. My father became a strong believer in Adventist education. In fact, he was so adamant about it that it was going to be either Adventist education or no education at all.

He persuaded the conference to send a teacher to the town closest to the farm. My older brothers attended it, but later it closed because it was not financially viable. My father then hired an Adventist teacher to live with us on the farm. This was my first year of elementary school. The teacher, however, stayed for only one year.

My father decided to move the whole family to another town over 260 kilometres from our farm where there was an Adventist school. Again, this lasted only

one year because the logistics of managing the farm and the family became too challenging. This, of course, affected our education. For two years we were back on the farm without a school. Finally, he decided to send the three younger children to a far-away Adventist boarding school. I was 12 when I went to boarding school to complete my elementary school education.

At the age of 15, I started canvassing during the summers and became financially independent. I did colporteur work for eight consecutive summer vacations (two and a half months each) and eight consecutive one-month winter vacations. Being financially independent, I chose to attend better Adventist academies.

I started college at our Adventist university in São Paulo but shortly thereafter moved to Salève University in France (formerly known as Collonges), where I graduated with a BA in theology in 1969. After 10 years in the mission field, I attended Andrews University, where I graduated with an MA in 1982 and a PhD in theology in 1985.

M: *What led you to choose a ministerial/educational career?*

N: I had read books about the work of missionaries in Africa and other countries, and I decided that I wanted to serve the Lord in the mission field; however, my greatest passion was the classroom. The Lord gave me the opportunity to work as a pastor for 17 years, teacher for eight years, and church administrator for 15 years.

M: *Where and in what capacity have you served in ministry/education?*

N: We started our ministerial career in Angola as missionaries. The local administration sent us to plant a new Portuguese church catering mainly to the Portuguese population (Angola was then a Portuguese colony). At our arrival, there were four baptized believers and a group of people interested in the Adventist message. We stayed there for four years and left an organized church with 50 members and a brand-new church building with capacity for 200 people.

In 1974 we went on furlough to Brazil. In the meantime, the independence war broke out in Angola. Because our original intent was to return, we had left all our belongings there. The ports were closed, and we lost all our possessions.

Unable to return to Angola, the division sent us to Madagascar. There I had the joy of training a group of young people for the ministry. I enjoyed my work in Madagascar, but my family (especially my wife and son) suffered a lot with malaria.

After three years in Madagascar, I was asked to pastor two churches in the beautiful island of Reunion, a

French Department, located in the Indian Ocean.

In 1980, we went on our own (sponsored only by God) to Andrews University, where I ended up spending five years doing graduate studies. From Andrews, we were called to the Adventist University of Centra Africa (AUCA) in Rwanda, where I stayed for five years as a full-time theology professor and department chair.

Because of our children's education, we accepted a call in 1991 to Ontario to, at first, pastor the North London and Woodstock churches and then later pastor both London churches. We stayed in London for five years before being called to work in Quebec.

In Quebec I worked as departmental director for seven months, then was elected conference president. In 2000, I was re-elected as president, but a few months later the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada called me to be the executive secretary (with a glorified title of vice-president for administration). I worked for the SDACC for 10 years before retiring in December 2010.

M: *What has been the highlight in your career or what has brought you the most satisfaction in your career?*

N: I enjoyed all three roles of pastor, teacher, and administrator. Each had its joys and challenges. However, my number one passion was the classroom, yet this was the area where I spent the least number of years.

M: *Tell us about your family.*

N: Just before finishing my college degree in Collonges, France, a beautiful young Brazilian woman arrived to study French. We started dating, and when a call came for me to go to Africa, we decided to get married. My wife, Tannia, has been my faithful companion and inspiration for 51 years. We have two children: Roger, who works in Toronto as a software architect, and Susie, who is a teacher.

Susie married a New Zealander and lives in Wellington. We have four grandchildren: Emmanuel, a senior-year student at the University of Toronto; Laura, a sophomore student at the University of Christchurch, New Zealand; Abigail, who will be attending the University of Toronto this fall; and Sophia, who is finishing her secondary education.

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

N: After retiring, we decided to stay in Oshawa. We already had our house here, and our son and his family live in Toronto. Since retiring, we have spent the last 10 years travelling around the world. We are also active in our College Park Church, involved in a ministry that endeavours to bring more friends to Jesus' feet. ■





Crispy Sunflower Bars

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups (425 ml) brown crispy rice cereal, or other puffed rice cereal
- 1 cup (250 ml) raw sunflower seeds
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (125 ml) quick oats
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (125 ml) shredded unsweetened coconut
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cups (175 ml) smooth unsalted and unsweetened peanut butter, or other nut or seed butter of your choice
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (60 ml) honey
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp (1 ml) salt
- 1 tsp (5 ml) vanilla extract

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. In a large bowl add rice cereal, sunflower seeds, quick oats, and shredded coconut. Mix to combine.
2. In a smaller bowl combine peanut butter, honey, and salt and mix well. Pour peanut butter mixture into cereal mixture and mix well.
3. Spread mixture evenly into a square baking pan (9 x 9 inches works well) and press in firmly. Freeze for one or two hours.
4. To serve, loosen sides of the cereal mixture by running a metal spatula around the sides, then carefully overturn it onto a cutting board. Alternatively, cut directly in pan. Using a sharp serrated knife, cut cereal mixture into 16 rectangular bars. Store leftover bars in freezer.

Makes 16 pieces.



NUTRITIONAL INFO:

Serving Size 33 g
 Calories 180
 Total Fat 12.4 g
 Saturated Fat 3.3 g
 Cholesterol 0 mg
 Sodium 41 mg
 Total Carbs 12.4 g
 Dietary Fibre 2.3 g
 Sugars 5.4 g
 Protein 5.4 g

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

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AMAZING FACTS

 MINISTRIES

it is written canada

Falsely Accused

“*I heard over his loudspeakers: ‘Roll down your windows.’ So I slightly turned my head and looked back, and I see him in the middle of the exit with his gun drawn,” explains Aaron Simmonds.*

The armed officer ordered Aaron to get out, put his hands in the air, side shuffle into the middle of the street, walk backwards, get onto his knees, and then crawl backwards until he came closer to where he could be handcuffed. “I was patted down and asked if I had anything on me.”

Once Aaron’s hands were restrained, he turned around to observe a swarm of police cars, SUVs, trucks, and vans; he heard dogs barking but couldn’t see where they were. “All you can really think is *What could have possibly happened ... to bring out this many cops?*”

His brother Zach wasn’t as worried: “I thought we were going to be out of there in the next 15 or 20 minutes.”

Neither of the brothers understood that they would be facing charges of second-degree murder for a crime they knew nothing about.

“What went through my mind when I first heard the news was: *Impossible! Absolutely impossible!*” says their mother, Hollace Simmonds.

Shaking his head, Norwill Simmonds, Aaron and Zach’s father, says, “I just kept asking God, ‘What happened? What went wrong?’ I knew there was an answer, but I had to wait for it. . . . The most important thing was that we had to start praying like never before.”

Zach recounts spending over three weeks in jail. “Most of that time I just spent in my head, a lot of reading, a lot of push-ups.”

“There’s not much to do in jail,” adds Aaron, “so you tend to do the things you know. So I definitely read the Bible a lot . . . just trying to make the best of a bad situation.”

With tears streaming down his face, Norwill says, “I went to the closet, . . . and I knelt there, . . . in complete tears, just bawling—this wasn’t crying, just bawling—and asking, ‘What’s going on?



Norwill and Hollace Simmonds, Aaron and Zach’s parents, were distraught to learn their children had been arrested in a horrible mixup. Watch the whole story on *It Is Written Canada’s* YouTube channel.

Give me an answer!’ And as I was there crying, crying, crying, I heard this voice in my head saying, ‘What are you doing? You asked Me for an experience, and I’m giving it to you.’ This is one of the things Hollace and I always pray for, you know, that God will always lead our kids into experiences that will draw them to Him. That has always been our prayer: ‘Lord, give them experiences that will draw them closer to You!’ And so, as I heard the voice, I got up and I said, ‘What am I doing?’ And I quickly went to the face basin, and I washed my face, and I said, ‘OK, I understand. I know what You’re doing. I got it.’”

When Norwill and Hollace met with the lawyers, they asked if they could first pray for them and the lawyers consented, so they asked God to guide their work

on this case.

Friends and family all over the world petitioned heaven to work on behalf of Aaron and Zach.

Eventually, their sons were set free and cleared of all charges. Norwill says, beaming, “I think the lawyers were even puzzled themselves how it actually all turned out, but we realize that it was more than just good lawyers. It was the power of God working; it was the most amazing thing to see how God worked!”

If you wish to hear the details of Zach and Aaron’s remarkable story, please go to itiswrittencanada.ca or *It Is Written Canada’s* YouTube channel and click on the program titled “Falsely Accused.” ■

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

Launch Out Into the Deep!

Jhose five words hit me like a truck: “Launch out into the deep!”
 Immediately, resistance reared up: Deep? Into the D-E-E-P? Nah, I don’t think so. I’ve tried that before, and it didn’t work.
 Simon Peter must have felt the same: “Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing.”

If Simon says, “This is not a good idea,” it’s just not a good idea. He’s a fisherman, so he knows how the darkness of night provides the best conditions for fishing with nets in the clear waters of a lake. After toiling all night without success, it seemed hopeless to fish by day.

Ever been where Peter was? You’ve tried something again and again, but it was just useless—useless! Nothing worked!

For me, with dyslexia, going to university was completely out of the question until God blew open one door after another and invited me to “launch out into the deep!”

Father, You know how hard it is for me to even read one chapter from my Bible, and now You’re asking the impossible?

“Deep” means not shallow, beyond where you can stand comfortably with your head above the surface. “Deep” means extending far down, where the waters grow dark, away from the edge, below the surface.

God also summons you: “Launch out into the deep!”

What’s holding you back? Apparent limitations, past failures, fear of criticism, too much pressure, setbacks, bad timing, feels wrong, makes no sense, can’t do it alone—the list goes on and on and on.

Peter’s reply? “I will do as You say and lower the nets again” (Luke 5:5, AMP). And that’s how it works: trust and obey, for there’s no other way.

“When they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their nets were at the point of breaking” (Luke 5:6, AMP).

I can hear the protests ringing in my ears: “That was then: another time, another place, another country. That can’t happen now, here in Canada.”

Excuse me for asking, but why?

“Well, we’re living in a post-Christian culture. No simpleminded fishermen here! Interest in Jesus is rock-bottom.”

Yes, some in Canada are indifferent toward Christ, and I, too, have questioned the effectiveness of launching out into the deep. René is not a fisherman, and I’m not a fisherman, but God has called us to be a fishers of men and women, boys and girls—connecting Canadians to Christ.

Daily we are seeing the effectiveness of launching out into the deep and casting our nets on the other side of the boat. Look at this response from one of our viewers: “Every time I turn on my television to watch another program, your program is like magically on ... like it was meant to be on for me. God is trying to talk to me through you two. I am a ‘non-practising’ Christian; however, I have become a believer in God. I have unfortunately suffered from setbacks and addictions. ... Thank you so much for touching me through your show. I don’t have many friends, but I don’t need a lot of friends because Jesus is my friend and the only real friend I now need. Thank you for showing me this.”

We invite you to join us by praying for *It Is Written Canada*, sharing our online messages with your friends and family on social media, sending us your story, and



watching our Virtual Partnership Event, where you will hear music and messages from God’s Word to inspire you to launch out into the deep! Premiering September 24–25, 2021, on YouTube at youtube.com/iiwcanada, on Facebook at facebook.com/itiswrittencanada, and on our website at iiw.ca. ■

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



cover story



find your
Passion.

embrace your
Purpose.

claim your
Promise.

“I have to get to the reason why God saved me,” Melane declared to herself. And with this determination, she decided she would live purposefully and nothing less.

Melane (pronounced “Muh-Lane”) Mullings was born in Calgary, Alta., to Jamaican parents who raised her in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Melane was taught the value of hard work, care for the family, and celebration of achievements. Her parents instilled in her that she would certainly become successful. Melane witnessed her mother’s drive, self-direction, and fierce love alongside her dad’s strong work ethic and compassionate and humble heart. Melane says she’s a combination of both her parents. In addition to the importance of occupational success, Melane’s parents boldly expressed their spirituality in their relationship with God. As a result, Melane has come to grow in deep intimacy with God for herself and views the Bible as a guidebook for life.

On Aug. 1, 1993, at the age of 17, Melane was diagnosed with class M3 acute promyelocytic leukemia. At the time, there was a massive nursing shortage in Alberta because of layoffs. Consequently, Melane felt she received substandard care. This significantly added to Melane’s distress during a time of severe fragility. During her second round of chemotherapy, Melane’s health was continuing to decline. In fact, doctors had informed Melane’s family to prepare for her death.

Turning to the mighty God she knew well, Melane’s mother called the Alberta Conference requesting prayer and anointing for her daughter. Select pastors visited Melane at the hospital as she felt herself dying. Then,

the next day, she experienced a sense of recovery and healing. Melane was healed from leukemia; God had done another miracle. Though she swelled with gratitude, Melane experienced feelings associated with survivor’s guilt. After all, not everyone who has prayed for a healing in the form of prolonged life has received such an answer. *Why was Melane granted prolonged life?* Melane came face to face with the question of her existence.

A year after her diagnosis, Melane found herself preparing to attend Canadian University College, now Burman University. She successfully completed a bachelor of science with a minor in chemistry. Encouraged by her parents, her goal was to become a medical doctor.

In her sophomore year, however, Melane quickly realized a career in medicine was not her dream. After graduating, she suffered with the guilt that she had attained a degree that her parents had paid for out-of-pocket but that she would no longer put to use. In tears, she cried out to God, “What am I going to do?” She suddenly felt this ethereal sense of direction, namely that if she was going to do something eight hours a day, it had to be something she was passionate about.

Breaking the news of her change in career plans to her parents was difficult. They had watched Melane study for years, and her decision left them confused and disappointed. And yet, Melane’s mother and father never stopped supporting her.

After her traumatic experience as a patient with leukemia, Melane developed a deep passion for patient care. Knowing what it was like to receive poor care in the hospital setting, Melane was determined to use her experience to help others, and so she decided she would become a nurse to care for patients the way they deserved to be treated. Two years after graduating from CUC,



cover story

Melane attended Queen's University in Ontario and obtained a bachelor's degree in nursing science. She then worked as a registered nurse (RN) in Calgary, Alta., for a year before leaving for the United States to work as a travel and per diem RN.

As an RN, Melane realized that the real issue behind the substandard nursing care she had received was the increasing patient-to-nurse ratio. It was the system that

"In a moment, Melane recalled the words her mom had told her all her life: 'Melane, you're never just anything.'"

had created inferior care, not the nurses themselves.

Melane had conducted a four-year, independent, comparative study researching the strategies being implemented to address nursing shortages in both the United States and Canada.

Three years into her research a close friend of Melane's asked, "Why don't you start a nursing recruitment business?"

Melane responded, "What can I do? I'm just a nurse." In a moment, Melane recalled words her mom had told her all her life: "Melane, you're never *just* anything." Melane repeated her mother's words out loud, and suddenly they hit her to the core. Melane came to better understand her identity in God.

Melane soon found herself starting to burn out, and being an RN wasn't as satisfying as she had hoped. On New Year's Eve 2006, Melane once again ran to her heavenly Father, expressing how tired and frustrated she was. She desired to live abundantly but was feeling unfulfilled. She cried, "God, I want to live a life of abundance, but I want that abundance to come from Your hands so that when You bless me, I can turn around and help people see they can trust You and live an abundant life too."

Later, Luke 22:32 came to her mind: "But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers" (NIV).

Melane prayed, "God, when I receive the blessing of success from your hand, empower me to turn around and pull people up." The answers to this prayer would come in ways Melane could not even imagine.

As a travel nurse, Melane was living a luxurious life. Still, she wasn't happy. She knew she wasn't yet operating in her purpose. During an eight-hour first-class flight from Chicago to Paris, Melane began conversing with an executive who was truly passionate about her own

career. This fascinated Melane, so she questioned the woman about this. The woman replied, "If you're going to do something eight hours a day, you need to be passionate about it." Melane was struck silent. This is exactly what God had told her several years ago. A short time later, God revealed Matthew 21:22 to Melane: "And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive" (NASB). She then heard His voice instructing her to quit her nursing job, move back to Calgary, and start the business.

While Melane wanted to be obedient, she was terrified. She was earning six figures and was living very comfortably. If she quit, she would lose everything. Still, a wave of peace and overwhelming calm came over her as she realized that if God was leading her, her needs would be met. So she obeyed.

Melane had no business education or training or any knowledge of entrepreneurship. What she did have was a passion to address the nursing shortage and God's direction to go. Along the way, God opened many doors and provided necessary resources. Nevertheless, it was far from easy.

After Melane moved back to Calgary to work as a casual RN while building her business, things got worse before they got better. After four months, Melane got into a car accident that prevented her from being able to work at all. This meant no income. In addition, the process of building the business itself was long and tedious. She experienced anxiety and depression. Many who witnessed Melane's struggles and deepening debt tried to encourage her to consider another aspect of nursing that she could physically handle while recovering from her injuries. But Melane was confident that God wanted her to create a business, so in faith she stuck with His orders.

Three months prior to her car accident in 2007, Melane founded pRN Staffing Solutions. This company strove to address the critical nursing shortage by providing registered nurses with long-term placements in rural communities across Canada that were experiencing difficulty staffing. After 13 years of serving as the leader for pRN, Melane successfully sold the company to begin living the request she had articulated to God years ago. Melane now uses her journey of entrepreneurial success to encourage and empower others through her new consulting company, Aere Management Consulting, by helping them build sustainably successful, impactful, purpose-driven ventures.

Melane is especially grateful to those who have covered her in prayer. This covering was something she felt intrinsically. Prayers were the spiritual fuel that propelled her forward during the many times she wanted to give up.

In addition to her enduring faith and regular study of scripture, Melane received copious inspiration from



Jack Canfield's *The Success Principles*. One quote in particular from this book has been of great influence to Melane: "The greatest gift you can give anyone is the gift of empowerment and love."

Melane sees it as a privilege to be able to witness in a business arena. She has come to see that business people have the same longing for God, contrary to what some may believe. As an entrepreneur herself, she can connect with other entrepreneurs through her own life experience. She desires for other business people to develop impactful, sustainable, purpose-driven businesses as well.

When getting to know her clients, she always asks what their understanding of their purpose is. Her specialty is to help those who already know that business is their purpose. Melane explains that you should "discern your purpose because the place of purpose is the place of promise and peace under God." Melane says success is "living your purpose under God, knowing He will supply all your needs."

As an entrepreneur, Melane Mullings empowers people to love God and have a deeper understanding of their larger purpose. "If I could do it, anyone can do it. It's only by the grace of God and by being in relationship with Him," Melane explains humbly.

Melane's parents instilled in her a spirit of friendship evangelism, which is an approach she has applied to business. She connects with people through the belief that her relationship with God translates into the

workplace. She demonstrates Christ to others through love and friendship and excellence in customer service.

Melane's success and impact have reached areas she could not anticipate. In April 2021, Melane was afforded the opportunity to be interviewed by one of her most influential sources of support, co-author of the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series, Jack Canfield himself. Canfield has even requested a submission from Melane for his upcoming book, *Living the Success Principles*. Melane attributes this as a testament to God's power.

As Melane worked to get her business off the ground, she found herself recording her journey in writing. Unbeknownst to her, she was writing the book that would later become her next business accomplishment. Melane is in the midst of launching her first book covering the entrepreneurial journey, titled *Lemonade! Squeeze Your Challenging Life Experiences Into a Successful Business*.

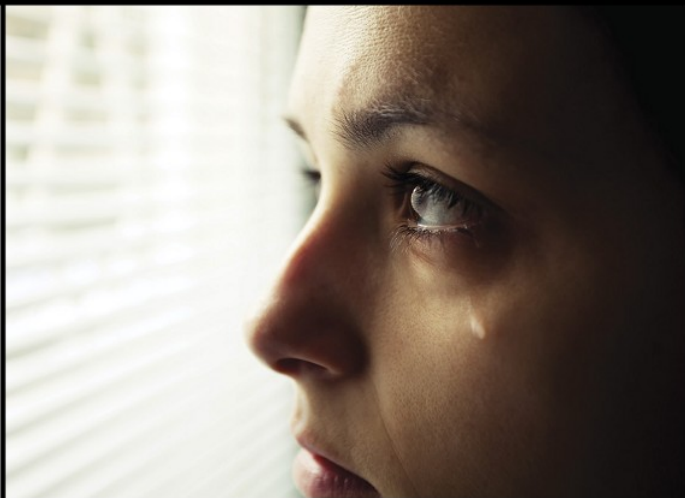
Melane currently lives with her husband and their dog in downtown Vancouver. In addition to helping people become successful entrepreneurs, Melane hopes to learn the cello and Italian, and to continue travelling with her husband.

For more information on Melane's book and consulting services, visit <http://bit.ly/363CA5e>. ■

Megan Mootoo is a freelance writer for the Canadian Adventist Messenger.

How it started vs. How it's going: Melane's first photo working on the floor as a registered nurse (left). She has now signed a book deal to publish her first book, which is scheduled to be released this year. Photo credit (right): Thomas Sorensen





You Will Get Hurt

“When you minister to others, you will get hurt. But don’t give up. Let’s not allow people’s anger to keep us from tactfully reaching out.”

Mark chose to spend his summer as a student literature evangelist in Canada. While he was knocking on doors, he met Sandie and shared with her some books to improve her health. Everything was going well until he showed her a book called *God’s Answers to Your Questions*. Upon seeing it, she got angry and exclaimed something like, “I don’t care about God!” She then started drilling Mark with questions. “If God is so good, why did He allow me to get raped when I was a child? Why did he allow my husband to leave me for another woman? Why did he allow the government to take away my kids? Why is my life a living hell?”

She went on venting her pain for some time, all the while using some very descriptive language. She was hurting, and Mark was at a loss for what to say. So he quickly offered a silent prayer and then said, “Sandie, I don’t know why you were abused as a child. I don’t understand why your husband left you or why they took your children away. There are many things I don’t understand, but there is something I know for sure. I came here to meet you this summer and to let you know that God loves you and He just wants you to come home.” Upon hearing this, Sandie broke down and started to cry. Through Mark, she came face to face with the compassionate, personal touch of God. Needless to say, she took the book and signed up for Bible studies.

Crystal, also a literature evangelist, knocked on Tony’s door but was met with an angry rejection. She felt the man needed something, so she left a small *Steps to Christ* on the windshield of his car. Having gone a few houses down the street, she saw Tony running toward

her. He was mad! “I told you I wasn’t interested! Why did you leave this book on my windshield?” He then started to swear.

Now, I don’t want to give the impression that everyone we meet gets upset, because this just isn’t the case; in fact, it’s rare. But this is simply what happened to Crystal. Tony railed on for some time before he finally paused long enough to take a breath.

Crystal then looked at him through teary eyes and said, “I’m sorry, sir. I saw that you were having a stressful day, and I just wanted to leave a little peace in your life.” Tony was quiet for a moment and then invited Crystal back to the house. He opened the door and told her to look inside.

“What do you see?” he asked.

“It’s empty!” she responded.

He went on to explain that he had just returned from a trip to find that his wife had left him and taken everything. There were tears in his eyes. He then asked Crystal what else she had in her bag. He ended up getting all her books and also signed up for Bible studies. But it was the prayer that Crystal offered at the end that led Tony to the foot of the cross.

When you minister to others, you will get hurt. But don’t give up. Let’s not allow people’s anger to keep us from tactfully reaching out. Why? Because Jesus tells us, “Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to Me” (Matt. 25:40, NKJV). ■

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



“Something better” is the watchword of education, the law of all true living. ... Let them [the students] be directed to something better than display, ambition, or self-indulgence. Bring them in contact with truer beauty, with loftier principles, and with nobler lives.

—Ellen G. White, *Education*, 296

Something Better

This year has required resilience and versatility in education. In spite of significant disruptions, Adventist education continues to make a positive impact, as shown by the following narratives that have graced the doorstep of the Maritime Conference. Our schools are exceptional because the truth and beauty of Christ is placed foremost.

According to Stephen Kibbee, principal of Sandy Lake Academy (SLA), the excitement of returning to in-person schooling was fuelled by the opportunity for spiritual fellowship. Gathering together to lift up the name of Jesus provides a consistency that many students welcome, value, and need at this time. As they enter the gymnasium to worship as a collective school body, masked, distanced—but with smiles galore as evidenced by their shining eyes—Mr. Kibbee’s heart is warmed to the core, and he remembers why he chose to work in Adventist education.

Bursting from Grade 1 student Andrii Roienko’s little mouth came words of inspiration and hope as he prayed for the day on Zoom with his classmates. It was a prayer that must have gone straight to the throne room of God. Sitting in on a Zoom evaluation for a teacher, I never expected to be so impressed and so

blessed by a little seven-year old!

Two young men and a young lady excel in a STEM world of technology and 3D robotics. Elie Urban, Daniel Botross, and Maria Barsoum became a recognized team in Nova Scotia as they represented the Maritime region at the Robofest World Championship competition. Students congratulate them as they walk the halls, proud to see their accomplishment recognized within their church community and as a testament to our little Adventist school in Bedford, N.S.

Katya McBeth enters the door to music teacher Mr. Dias’s classroom, poised, ready, elated to step into an elite world of budding musicians. With a violin in her hand and a song in her heart, Katya showcases her talent as the student selected to represent Halifax at the Nova Scotia Provincial Music Festival.

The journey was long for young Carter Noseworthy, SLA Grade 7 student, as he travelled to Ontario. The series, *All-Round Champion*,¹ showcases the athletes’ emotional and challenging journeys with all the highs and lows that come with winning and losing. In the words of Carter’s mom, “There is no way Carter would have been able to spend 10 weeks away from his Grade 7 education had it not been for this incredible school! The principal and all of his teachers

readily stepped up and faced the challenge of teaching a student virtually while also teaching full classes at the school. David and I are beyond grateful for all that the SLA community has done and continues to do to meet and exceed the academic, spiritual, and social needs of our son.”

“We are in a year of COVID; this application may take longer to process than the regular six months to a year,” said our New Brunswick Ministry of Education Quality Assurance representative. These disheartening words were spoken as a dedicated team met regularly to vision/debrief progress, work on church renovations, and, most importantly, pray together as a united body for the anticipated September 2021 opening of an Early Learning Centre (ELC) in Moncton, N.B. As the desire to see little children enter the doors of Precious Jewels ELC becomes a reality, this training ground for the young will be established as *something better*.

Let this be the watchword of all our schools, ever calling to nobler, more abundant lives in our young people, a true stamp of God’s excellence. ■

Teresa Ferreira is the education superintendent for the Maritime Conference.

1 The show premiered on March 30, 2021, in the USA and later in Canada on TVOkids (@TVOkids).



THE BURMAN EFFECT

BURMAN ALUMNI
IMPACTING THEIR COMMUNITIES

For the Least of These

When Yemurai Taranhike was invited to join the Calgary Drop-In Centre (DI) in 2017 after graduating with a psychology major from Burman University, she knew she had found her calling: *to be the hands and feet of Jesus to the homeless*. Up to 1,000 people arrive at DI every night. Emergency medical response teams bring some of them to the shelter. Police bring others. Still others find their own way.

As one of DI's mental health workers, Yemurai made sure clients had a warm meal, a listening ear, and a safe place to sleep for the night. After providing this initial essential care, Yemurai helped her clients find permanent housing suitable to their individual needs.

A couple of years ago, Yemurai transferred to Calgary's Alex Community Health Centre. Whereas DI is an emergency, short-term shelter and refers clients to other agencies in the city, The Alex is focused on changing lives. With a goal of whole health, the centre operates a community health centre (including a pharmacy), a youth health centre, and a senior health centre. Three buses—the community health bus, youth health bus, and dental health bus—take health services to where they are needed.

The Alex also operates Prelude, the housing program where Yemurai is a case manager. She explains, "Prelude is a housing-first program. We provide clients the security of a home and community before offering other services. People are more likely to seek help with social, mental health, and addiction issues when they don't feel isolated. We meet people where they're at and help them with their goals."

Yemurai works with those who have been alone and are sad, afraid, and wounded. Traumatic events such as physical or sexual abuse, neglect, or violence affect the mind and the body's capacity for physical and emotional growth. Most of Yemurai's clients have learned to define themselves by the stereotypes and the labels and blame they have lived with for years. Non-judgmental

compassion, support, and encouragement are essential for healing to begin.

"I have learned that everyone has a story to tell," Yemurai says. "People—even addicts—want to be treated as human beings. At Prelude, we practise harm reduction. For example, we recognize that total abstinence from addictive substances may not be a realistic goal for some. So we provide "safeworks" supplies to prevent disease, and we do wellness checks to prevent overdoses.

"I truly believe that God has called me to help socially marginalized, profoundly damaged, and developmentally affected individuals. Jesus accepted the weak and the outcasts. How can I do less?"

In all human interactions, we have the capacity for both good and evil. We can create and we can destroy; we can nurture and we can terrorize; we can heal and we can traumatize. Yemurai's choice, by serving even "the least of these," is clear. ■

Renate Krause is the editor of Burman University Magazine.

From early childhood, Yemurai knew she was meant to help others. First an enthusiastic volunteer and later a leader and mentor, she has always been an active member of her community.



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~ British Columbia Conference ~



ELEMENTARY

- 1 Bella Coola Adventist Christian School, Bella Coola
- 2 Chilliwack Adventist Christian School, Chilliwack
- 3 Lakeview Christian School, Victoria
- 4 Robson Valley Junior Academy, McBride
- 5 Shuswap SDA School, Salmon Arm

JUNIOR ACADEMIES

- 6 Avalon Adventist Christian Academy, Port Hardy
- 7 North Okanagan Junior Academy, Armstrong
- 8 Pleasant Valley Christian Academy, Vernon

SENIOR ACADEMIES

- 9 Cariboo Adventist Academy, Williams Lake
- 10 Deer Lake SDA School, Burnaby
- 11 Fraser Valley Adventist Academy, Aldergrove
- 12 Okanagan Christian School, Kelowna
- 13 Peace Christian School, Chetwynd

DISTANCE LEARNING SCHOOL

West Coast Adventist School

Office of Education, BC Conference
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Presentation of gifts during the Introduction.



Onyx and Jaden with food from the ADRA Uganda family.

A Village Community

In Uganda when people think of community, they think of their family, extended family, tribe, work family, and church family. It's their village. It's an amazing experience to witness major life events Ugandan-style and experience this all-encompassing sense of village community.

The union of two families is a great cause for celebration. It formally starts with the Introduction. This event is the formal introduction of the groom to the rest of the bride's family. It is also when the previously agreed bride price is accepted and presented to the bride's family.

The bride price currency comes in different forms depending on the region. It can be in the form of produce, sacks of dried goods, chicken, goats, or cattle. The groom and his family work together to collect the required bride price. It's chaotically exciting seeing the bride price presented during the Introduction.

Traditionally, the Introduction was only attended by family members but today it is celebrated elaborately with the whole village gathering at the home of the bride to give gifts, eat, and celebrate together. Special dishes of meat and vegetables are prepared and first served to the guests of honour—the groom's family.

The church wedding takes place weeks or months after the Introduction. Once again the two village communities join in celebration. It's an honour to contribute to the planning, co-ordination, and expenses of these events. Everybody chips in what they can, and together, whether in small or big ways, everything comes together. Everyone takes pride in the success of the celebrations. The support the couple receives during the Introduction and wedding gives them an indication of the support they can continue to count on as husband and wife.

School graduations have their pomp and circumstance too. When you see rented white canopy tents dotting the open spaces in the neighbourhoods, you know it's graduation season. At times the entire road

leading to the family's house is blocked by cars, people, and rented white canopy tents. Proud parents praise their children for completing their education with great hopes of a brighter future for the family and the rest of their village.

My dad recently passed away in the Philippines. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I was not able to travel to attend his burial. When the ADRA staff heard of the news, they demonstrated their support and condolences by sending food. However, they regretted not being able to be physically present and share in the burden of grieving. Pre-pandemic practices include an all-night vigil with singing, sharing stories, and just being with the family. Then in the morning the whole entourage travels to the village to bury the body.

A good friend of ours suddenly passed away. He was the bread earner of his family. His village, his extended family, and church family came together to ensure his young family would be able to survive. Someone donated land. Others contributed to build a house. Others set up a small business to sustain the needs of the widow and her young children. It's amazing to witness and be part of the level of support one's village community provides.

The coronavirus pandemic has affected the Ugandans' sense of community. A village community is crucial for survival. It signifies belonging, protection, and support. It means you will not be alone during times of joy and celebration and in times of need and mourning. I know my fellow Ugandans are looking forward to when they can celebrate weddings and graduations with their entire village, when they can spend all night comforting a family suffering loss. But more so, we all look forward to the hope of experiencing a village community with the Bridegroom when He comes to take us home. ■

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



At Shuswap Adventist School in Salmon Arm, B.C., Principal Shellie Shipowick wants her students to learn about the humanitarian and development work that ADRA does around the world. Last year the Ration Meal Challenge was the initiative to do just that.

Last fall this amazing group of students raised \$32,000 by participating in ADRA's Ration Meal Challenge to help feed the hungry in other countries.

Every student participated in the challenge. They wanted to add a personal touch to the fundraising initiative, so they each selected 10 different individuals or families to reach out to and sent handwritten letters explaining the initiative and how they could each help support the work ADRA is doing to end hunger. By creating this personal communication for each supporter, the students were able to truly connect to the cause and inform themselves about why they were raising the funds.

The students selected a day on which they would participate in the Ration Meal Challenge. To simulate what refugees must go through daily, the students made a ration meal with simple ingredients and also decided to mimic a refugee camp by setting up blankets in

the basement of the school. While eating on the floor, the students engaged in reflective discussion about what it meant to go hungry. All the activities were enjoyable for the students and also excited them for the impact they knew their efforts were making. Some students even continued eating a ration meal for dinner when they went home. It was such an impactful fundraising initiative that, when asked, students said it was one of the best days of school they had ever had.

The funds raised by the students in the challenge were matched by the Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGB) and sent to Yemen.

In June 2021, the students at Shuswap Adventist School were able to meet with a staff member from ADRA Yemen. They were eager to ask questions and learn about how ADRA was able to help others who were going hungry this year by providing basic food baskets consisting of wheat flour, beans, sugar, salt, and oil to 1,455 families. People in Yemen have been affected by war, which has limited their access to education, work, and ultimately food and has resulted in one of the greatest humanitarian crises of this time. It was touching to see the students learn more

about the work that ADRA was doing outside of Canada and how far their efforts had reached people across the world.

In partnership with the CFGB, ADRA is providing food for people around the world who are going hungry. During this past year, lockdowns due to COVID-19 restrictions have driven more families into deeper poverty as their livelihoods have been taken away.

Every year in the fall, people across Canada participate in raising awareness and support to help those around the world who face hunger due to conflict, drought, or other crises. Through ADRA's Ration Meal Challenge, every dollar donated is matched at least 1:1 and possibly even up to 4:1 to assist hungry families around the globe.

Just like the students at Shuswap Adventist School, you, too, can understand what hunger feels like for millions of people around the world. The ADRA Ration Meal Challenge is your opportunity to get sponsors and challenge yourself to use the simple ingredients included in our emergency food distributions to create three meals that will sustain you for 24 hours while raising funds to feed the hungry around the world! Visit www.adra.ca/rationmeal today! ■

Lucille Galdamez is the supporter relations intern for ADRA Canada.

The Ration Meal Challenge



Students from the Shuswap Adventist School, located in Salmon Arm, B.C., stand outside their school. In 2020, they fundraised \$32,000 for ADRA's Ration Meal Challenge.



Leaving the Muddy Grounds for a New Dining Experience in Rural Kenya



L to R: Norene, Ngaire, Keith, and Neville Clouten take part in their school opening in January 2013. ABW co-founder Eric Rajah, far right, also participated in the celebration.



Students celebrate the second opening of classrooms in 2015 sponsored by the Clouten families. The Cloutens are the major sponsors of a dining hall at the same school in Kenya.

There's an African proverb that says, "It takes a village to raise a child." It may also take a family from Canada and Australia to help.

Keith Clouten and his wife, Ngaire, plus his brother Neville and sister-in-law Norene, are improving the lives of schoolchildren in a small farming community outside Rapogi in western Kenya. Through A Better World Canada, they have completed several major projects at Rapogi Lwanda Primary School.

Their inspiration for lending a hand far away from home began many years ago. Both Clouten brothers had ties to Africa. Keith volunteered there as an academic librarian, while Neville, an architect, was sponsoring Faith, a girl living in the Rapogi area.

"When my brother first discovered this community, it was in dire need of a school and it had lots of orphaned children," said Keith from Lacombe, Alta. "My brother said to me, 'You've been to Kenya; why don't we take on this project.' I did see some of the needs in this part of the world, so we joined together."

The Cloutens became major sponsors of the school, which opened its initial three classrooms in January 2013. With the support of family and friends, the classroom project grew quickly. Today there are about 380 students attending the Grade 1–8 school.

Two other projects followed: a dormitory housing about 90 children who were left orphaned, plus the Rapogi Lwanda Vocational Centre that teaches trades to graduated students.

Now they have set their sights on a dining and special events hall, one that will be big enough to host community events like graduations and meetings. It's a \$52,000 undertaking that will

see the kitchen finished last once fundraising is complete. The hall will be versatile.

"It will have heavy-duty plastic curtaining to keep wind and dust out and can also be removed at times," said Keith. "You can also put a tent up against it if there's a really big event."

The technical school students will help build the dining hall furniture as part of a real community endeavour. Most importantly, the impact on the schoolchildren, particularly those who live there, will be huge.

"The existing kitchen is located outside the dormitory, and so the children pick up their food and eat on the ground if the weather is fine," said Keith, adding the conditions can be muddy or dusty. "But if it's raining, they'll go back into the classrooms or go back to their dormitory and eat on their beds—that's not satisfactory."

Keith said the school's future will get brighter with this hall in place by the end of this year. In a written report to Australian supporters, Neville said the school is witnessing "amazing educational outcomes." In a county of 3,721 schools, the Rapogi Lwanda Primary School placed third in recent Grade 8 achievement tests.

Faith is achieving her dreams, years after she was a student at Rapogi. She is pursuing post-secondary studies to become a music teacher combining both African and Western music. ■

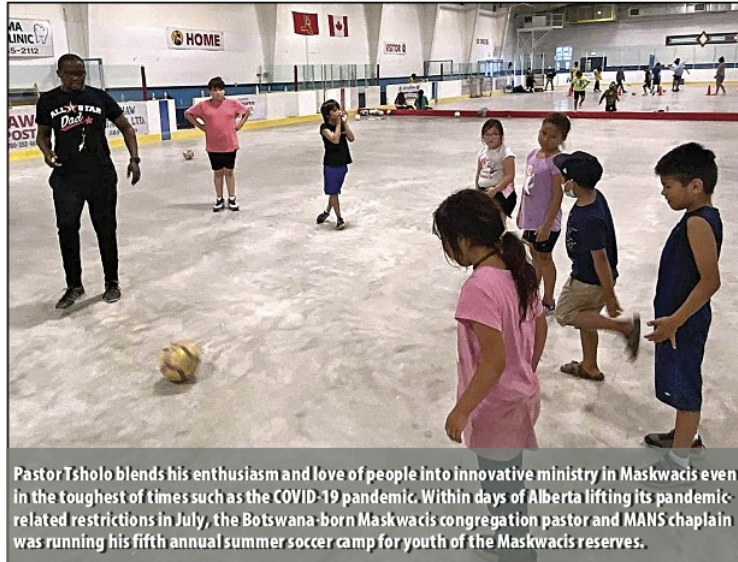
Laura Tester travels with A Better World and is a freelance writer for newspapers.

Correction: The ABW article in our August 2021 issue made a reference to Stephen Pottage, district principal for 11 Red Deer public schools. In quoting Pottage's statements, the *Messenger* incorrectly printed that his statements were from May 2020; however, the statements were made in May 2021. We regret this error.

New Pastor for Maskwacis Congregation and MANS: Tsholo Sebetlela on Hope, Soccer, and Ministering Through the Pandemic



Tsholo Sebetlela



Pastor Tsholo blends his enthusiasm and love of people into innovative ministry in Maskwacis even in the toughest of times such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Within days of Alberta lifting its pandemic-related restrictions in July, the Botswana-born Maskwacis congregation pastor and MANS chaplain was running his fifth annual summer soccer camp for youth of the Maskwacis reserves.

Tsholofelo Sebetlela, perhaps better known as Pastor Tsholo (pronounced “Solo”), is a busy man. As the chaplain at Mamawi Atosketan Native School (MANS) and pastor of the Maskwacis congregation, he balances a dual role guiding high school students as well as members of the wider Maskwacis community. Although his job comes with a lot of responsibility, to Pastor Tsholo, it is a blessing. He is thankful for the relationships he has been able to form with students and Maskwacis community members over the past year and a half, despite the COVID-19 curveballs.

He did not always see himself working in Maskwacis. He was born and raised in Botswana. His name—Tsholofelo—means “hope.” In 2008, he flew to Toronto for what he thought would be just a visit. But four months in, he fell in love with a woman named Nadine. They met at church. He decided to stay. Nadine and Tsholofelo got married and had three children before they eventually decided to leave Toronto so he could pursue theology at Burman University. Curiously, before their move to Alberta, Nadine brought up the idea of him ministering specifically to Indigenous Peoples. At first, he was not so sure.

“In my mind,” he explains, “the gospel needs to go to everybody. Why narrow yourself and your potential?” His first church service in Maskwacis changed his thinking. “That,” he says, “was an eye-opening experience for me. ... I thought of Canada as a first-world country. I thought that meant everyone had a house with lights and highrises around them. Being in Maskwacis reminded me of being back home.”

Though Tsholo describes his life back home in Botswana as “challenging,” he says that at the end of the day “home is always home.” He has not been back since he immigrated in 2008. He misses it. True to his name, he is hopeful for an eventual return.

But in the meantime his background has given him unique tools and perspectives for ministering through the COVID-19 pandemic. One of those tools is food delivery.

“I connect with people by doing stuff with them. ... [Delivering food] has been a way to visit for five minutes, socially distanced.” Another major community building tool for him is soccer.

Of his decision to combine ministry and sports, he explains, between laughs, “I wasn’t a good basketball player. Soccer, I’m OK. I realized there’s no point in trying to reinvent myself. Soccer is something that I love. I should use what I know.”

He soon channelled his love for soccer into a community soccer camp. He considers this one of the highlights of his involvement in Maskwacis.

“What I love about the soccer camp,” he says, “is the collaboration we have, the partnership we have. We had *kòbkom*s—grandmothers—making food for the kids. Every day—you can imagine, five days a week—these women made sure the children were fed. We also had volunteers from the community. And on Fridays, we have family get-togethers where parents get to play with their children. It’s so heartwarming to see them joking and playing together.”

When asked what he would like people outside the Maskwacis community to understand about the First Nations community he is involved in, Tsholo says, “Human beings are not for you to judge on the outside. ... We need to get to a place where we can be interested in each other’s stories. Let me get to know you before I can say, ‘I know you.’ Let me hear your story, and then we can grow together.” ■

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



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



September 2021

35

testimonial

A Journey of a Thousand Miles

Our goals often seem unattainable. You start and then you fail. You make progress and then you fail again. You swear to yourself that this time you will not fail, and then you fail again. The cycle continues and you wonder if it's even worth trying. The path to reaching your goals is difficult, and the journey feels like a thousand miles to nowhere. But along comes a person like Lorna Doherty-Hallwas, who took the first step on her thousand-mile journey and attained her goals. Hers is a story that can encourage us all to never give up.

Lorna's journey has been turbulent at times. Her past was not glamorous, easy, or nostalgic. Her health wasn't a priority for most of her story, mostly

because she was too consumed coping with the trauma in her life. With every step forward, Lorna faced resistance. God-orchestrated events led her to her husband of now 25 years. This marriage, through family association, led her to the Seventh-day Adventist Church. She was baptized in 2009 and was strongly impressed to give up smoking after 30 years.

Soon after she committed her life to Christ, she was confronted by one of the most trying times in her life. Taking the place of cigarettes, food now became her comfort. In 2015 she weighed 390 pounds. Her health changed drastically, and she developed diabetes. Her weight had caused people to look at her differently and mutter rude comments as she walked by them. It caused her to have low self-esteem. Lorna soon realized that it was time to lose the weight.

Every day Lorna would work hard on her treadmill, motivated to change her life and regain her health. Between 2015 and 2019, she managed to get her weight down to 265. However, she was struggling to overcome diabetes. She was exercising, but she was missing a very important element of her health journey: diet. Lorna learned that plant-based foods "are better than anything."

Changing her diet completely changed her health. Within two and a half years, Lorna lost another 80 pounds. At the time that this article was written she was 186 pounds, and she's not quitting.

Every day she gets on her treadmill at home and continues to work hard to achieve her health goals. She continues to enjoy a clean health-promoting diet. Along the way many things have kept her motivated, but the greatest inspirations are her husband, Rick; her daughter, Amanda; and her grandchildren. Her spiritual journey has also been impacted by the changes made in her life. She is prouder than ever to be a Christian. "He saved me," she said. "It's only by the grace of God that this happened. ... I'm not ashamed anymore."

Lorna's journey has been one of perseverance, one that wasn't easy but well worth it. She hopes her story will inspire you to attain your goals, to let the naysayers push you harder, and most of all to let God change your life. May Lorna's story inspire you to start your journey of a thousand miles. ■

Elijah Ramjattan is a recent graduate of Weimar College with a degree in religious studies.





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Days of Toil and Promise: Responding to the B.C. Wildfires

Don and his wife, Tricia, look over the remains of their home near Lytton, B.C.

In the weeks following the wildfires that ravaged the village of Lytton, B.C., and threatened neighbouring communities, ADRA Canada continues to support the beleaguered province. In early August, the British Columbia Wildfire Service had a dire message: With more than 30 active fires posing a threat to public safety and well over half a million hectares burned, wildfire season in British Columbia was far from over.¹

While firefighters are on the front lines battling the raging fires, ADRA, in partnership with the British Columbia Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, is also on the ground assisting in evacuee housing efforts, managing a warehouse large enough to process a sea of in-kind donations, and establishing the church's disaster emergency response capacity in the province.

After the Lytton Creek fire destroyed the town of Lytton and two First Nations communities, the Lytton First Nations Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) was moved to Camp Hope to help manage the evacuees being relocated to the camp. Brian Wahl, youth director for B.C. Conference, was appointed Emergency Management Associate to the EOC. "I connected with the ADRA team to receive

guidance on how to work in an emergency. I praise God for ADRA and the incredible support we received," he beamed.

In a discussion about the impacts of the evacuations and the loss of property, Campbell Page, SDACC Indigenous Ministries co-ordinator, noted that "after a tragedy, what is often needed is for both leaders and members to come together in a space, or more than one space, to express grief, loss, hope, and gratitude for rebuilding."

This call for space to express grief, loss, hope, and gratitude is reminiscent of the sentiments expressed in Psalm 137. The psalm is a communal lament, chronicling the Israelites' suffering following the loss of their home. Huddled together by the rivers of Babylon, they sat and wept and remembered. However,

like the Israelites of old, there is hope for the Lytton First Nations (LFN) and other residents. Page affirmed this when he said, "The Lytton First Nation, like many Indigenous Peoples and Nations in Canada, are resilient, resourceful, and able to respond to and rebuild from tragedies when they strike. When events like the Lytton fire occur, those characteristics go into action through the Nations' leadership and individual members. Such has taken place over the weeks since the fire."

It has been a busy summer for ADRA. While working in B.C., reports of wildfires in northern Ontario spelled further complications and an additional deployment of ADRA volunteer teams to the Thunder Bay area. Hundreds of active fires, many out of control, meant more First Nations and other remote communities were evacuated.

Daniel Saugh, ADRA's Canadian Programs manager, continues to be instrumental in ADRA Canada's quick response. "This work," he shared, "is beyond what we can do. But in collaboration with our conferences, churches, and members who are our volunteers, we are meeting the need and providing relief. We have witnessed the hand of God opening doors and granting us His



1 B.C. Wildfire Service, <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/wildfire-status>

2 Ellen G. White, *Christian Service*, p. 253, https://egwwritings.org/?ref=en_Ch5.253.4¶=13.1755

favour. My prayer is that we will shine and show a true picture of the character of God in our humanitarian efforts right here at home."

Back in British Columbia, ADRA Canada's experience in in-kind donation management drew the attention of the provincial government.

Alain Normand, ADRA Canada's senior emergency manager and incident commander for the B.C. wildfire operation explained that within 17 days of making the first offer to the B.C. government, ADRA was fully operational in Coldstream with a donation management warehouse. "There are three areas in the warehouse, he continued, "receiving and warehousing, assessment and triage, and the sorting and packaging areas. We have been averaging about 20 volunteers a day from the Central Okanagan area. Still, the need is tremendous, and we require many more volunteers. Training and coaching are provided, but we urge people to consider training with ADRA during peacetime in preparation for trouble. We are receiving goods from all over the province, and the warehouse is slowly filling up. If the experience of Fort McMurray taught us anything, it is that a 150,000 sq. ft. warehouse will eventually be filled.

"Consequently, we will work with shelters, evacuation centres and supporter agencies to provide them with what their clients need to get back to normalcy. Once homes are rebuilt in the final phase of operation, we plan to have an online

catalogue of donated furniture that clients will select. On a personal note, I want to affirm that my wife, Nicole, and I have been praying for almost two decades to be able to do this kind of work for the Lord. We aim to show God's love in action, not just words, encouraging everyone to help."

Home—that's what most of us call the places we live. But if "home" is gone, where do you go?

"Mountainview Camp (Camp Hope)," says Campbell Page, "was one organization asked to provide that place. The on-the-ground leaders and staff there said, 'We have to help. We have to make this home.' As cultures and faiths interact, we need to remember we are all Creator's kids. That shared gift of shared humanity is the starting point for everyone who now calls Camp Hope home. It is a call to work together for the good of the Lytton First Nation, no strings attached. We have an opportunity to welcome our new friends from Lytton First Nation in their emergency and build lasting and eternal relationships. As Lytton First Nation members pray to the Creator for all that is needed to heal and recover, may we join them and see how good and faithful our Creator is."

Wesley Torres, president of the British Columbia Conference, says, "The greatest human response that reflects the glory of God and the character of Jesus Christ is when we allow ourselves to be led by the Holy Spirit. Then, and only then, can we selflessly and genuinely

help those around us who are in pain and vulnerable.

"True Christianity is meeting others at the lowest physical, emotional, and spiritual points in their lives. It is going through personal and/or heartbreaking community experiences to become the hands and feet of Jesus Christ. The B.C. Conference Administration and Camp Hope Management used that motivation as we saw the needs of the LFN community in B.C. Our priority was to help that hurting community.

"When we do that honestly and sincerely," the B.C. Conference president said, smiling, "we not only assist others in overcoming their hopelessness, but ultimately, we point them to the One who can solve all human dilemmas."

In the book *Christian Service*, Ellen G. White wrote that "God does not ask us to do in our own strength the work before us. He has provided divine assistance for all the emergencies to which our human resources are unequal."² We know that the mission of being the hands and feet of Christ in the world will take more than just a few of us. But happily, we are not in this alone. We have been promised divine assistance, and the word of God cannot fail. It is my prayer that everyone will go to adra.ca to see how they can join in the effort to be salt and light to a dying world. ■

Peggy Caesar is a communication specialist for ADRA Canada.



Alain Normand



A new sign at the entrance of Camp Hope welcoming evacuees from the Lytton First Nation.

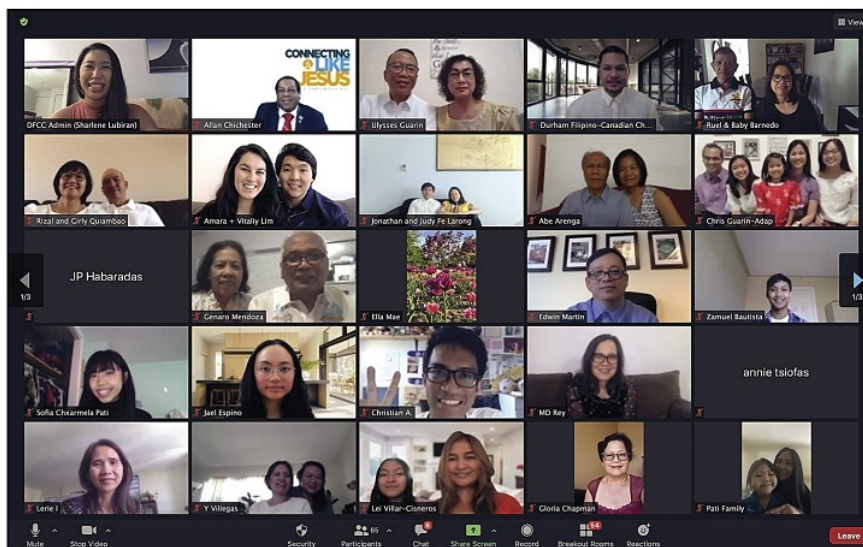
news

of Canadian Adventist members and churches in action

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Ontario

12th Filipino-Canadian Church in Ontario Organized



Allan Chichester led an inspiring Sabbath School lesson review by Zoom for members of the newly organized Durham Filipino-Canadian Seventh-day Adventist Church.

On June 12, 2021, on Philippine Independence Day, the Durham Filipino-Canadian Seventh-day Adventist members were organized and conferred church status by the Ontario Conference administrators. Focusing on the theme "Growth and Service in Christ," the Sabbath started with a warm welcome from the Sabbath School superintendent, Judith Guarin, and was followed by an inspiring Sabbath School lesson review led by Allan Chichester (Ontario Conference Sabbath School director).

The worship service was devoted to church organization, with Jakov Bibulovic (Ontario Conference executive secretary) leading the review and affirmation of the Adventist beliefs, Mansfield Edwards (Ontario Conference president) delivering the charge and the message, Virene Meikle (Ontario Conference treasurer) leading the litany of consecration, and Damson Oppong (Ontario Conference ministerial secretary) giving the prayer of dedication.

In his message, Edwards reminded the congregation on what it means to be the bride of Christ. He said, "Christ deserves a beautiful bride, a bride who respects Him, a bride who grows

to appreciate and value Him, a bride who values her walk with Him, appreciates His grace that allows for her to be accepted by Him, a bride who assumes the responsibility to represent Him wherever she goes." He closed his message with a challenge for the congregation to truly represent Christ, make a big impact, and establish a strong influence in the Durham region.

The afternoon celebration was a mix of greetings from pastors, musical renditions from various Filipino churches in Ontario, and testimonies from members. The highlight of the afternoon celebration was a message from our SDACC president, Mark Johnson, who spoke about freedom as a gift from Christ. He spoke about

freedom from sin and freedom from separation, and encouraged the members to look forward to the restoration of all things.

Made up of 88 charter members and empowered by the Holy Spirit, the Durham Filipino-Canadian Seventh-day Adventist Church is committed "to sharing the good news of salvation to everyone, nurturing families and friends to live Christ-centred lives, and equipping them to serve and prepare people for Christ's soon return."

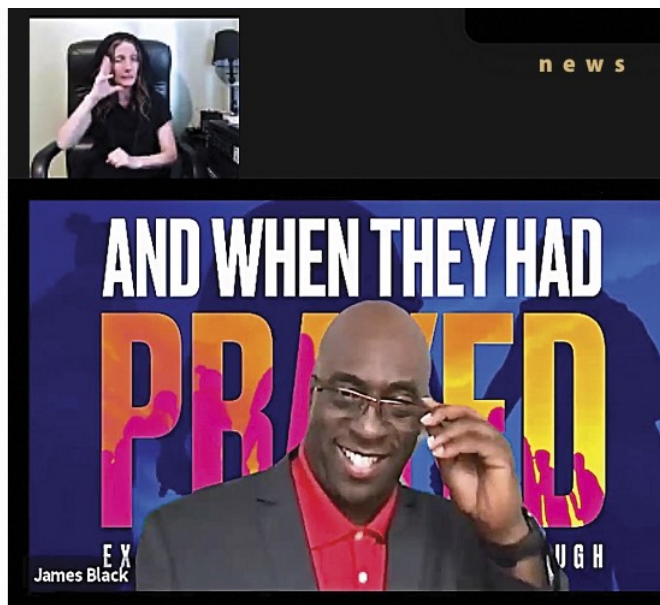
The Sabbath celebration ended with a prayer of thanksgiving by Pastor Leo Launio for the marvellous way God had led in the successful conclusion of this historic event.

After several years of working toward church status and months of planning, one Bible verse eloquently sums up the experience of the Durham Filipino-Canadian Seventh-day Adventist Church: "He has made everything beautiful in its time" (Eccl. 3:11, NKJV). ■

—Leo Launio, pastor, Durham Filipino-Canadian Seventh-day Adventist Church



Trio Ackord on set.



ASL interpretation with Chaplain James Black and Karen Diaz.

Over 102K Learn to Connect Like Jesus During Ontario Conference's First-Ever Virtual Campmeeting

For most Adventists, campmeeting is as much a staple as haystacks; so much so that in 2019, some 7,700+ Ontario church members gathered at Mississauga's International Centre for a full day of campmeeting. Unfortunately, in 2020, COVID restrictions halted campmeeting plans. But this year Ontario Conference president, Mansfield Edwards, and other conference leaders purposed to continue our annual gathering despite the pandemic. Thus, from Tuesday, June 29, to Saturday, July 3, campmeeting took on a new life with over 102,000 global visitors on YouTube streams for adults and children, youth, and young adults. Themed "Connecting Like Jesus," it incorporated our biennial Ministries Convention, with training across ministry areas.

This campmeeting was unlike any other. Instead of meeting in person, we met on YouTube chat, in digital exhibit rooms, and afterglows. Instead of a parade of nations, we viewed parade footage and members praying in different languages, sometimes in cultural garb. Live music was replaced by videos recorded in various locations. And instead of a few sessions per ministry, we had 55+ sessions with speakers from North America, the United Kingdom, Asia, and Australia. French, Spanish, and ASL interpretation was also available for adult plenaries via Zoom—another first. It was an ambitious program, which took our production team a month and a half and several sleepless nights to execute. But by God's grace, many concurred with Cheryl Bailey—"Wow! This is the best Campmeeting and Ministries Convention I have ever attended."

Lessons on Connecting With and Like Jesus

In Tuesday's opening ceremony North American Division (NAD) president, G. Alexander Bryant, stated, "Jesus wants to connect with us because when He connects with us, He transforms us. People look at us and see something different when He comes into our lives."

All week, presenters like Desiree Bryant, Tony Anobile, and Jose Cortes (NAD ministry), John Bradshaw (president, *It Is Written*), Vanessa and Jamil Hairston (pastors, Miami Temple Church), Hope Malabrigo (student chaplain, Andrews University), Joseph Kidder (professor, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrew University), and Peter Roennfeldt (church planter and author) underlined the following:

- Minimize distractions and surrender to hear God's voice.
- Church should be an ark of safety where everyone feels loved.
- Every member is called to be a missionary.

Reaching Alphas and Gen Zs

Younger generations were not left out. For children, there were daily segments in the adult evening worships and an afternoon variety show. On July 3, children's church and Sabbath school programs featured local children's ministries and Rich Aguilera, the "Mud Guy" (*Guide*). "My children are enthralled!" enthused Kristen Bailey during a children's segment.

John Scott, youth and young adult director, endeavoured to translate campmeeting to a virtual space for youth and young adults. Highlights included

- shorter training components, with more time for leaders to connect;
- rich conversations on music, social justice, campus ministry, and Adventist education; and
- age-appropriate Bible studies.

Attendees were also blessed to hear from relevant, ministry-minded young people, including Sabbath keynote speakers George Tuyu (youth pastor, ReLove Church, Calif.) and Jordane Smith (associate pastor, College Heights Church, Alta.). "All our speakers were timely, creative, and practical; and they allowed God to use them powerfully," said Scott.

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



September 2021

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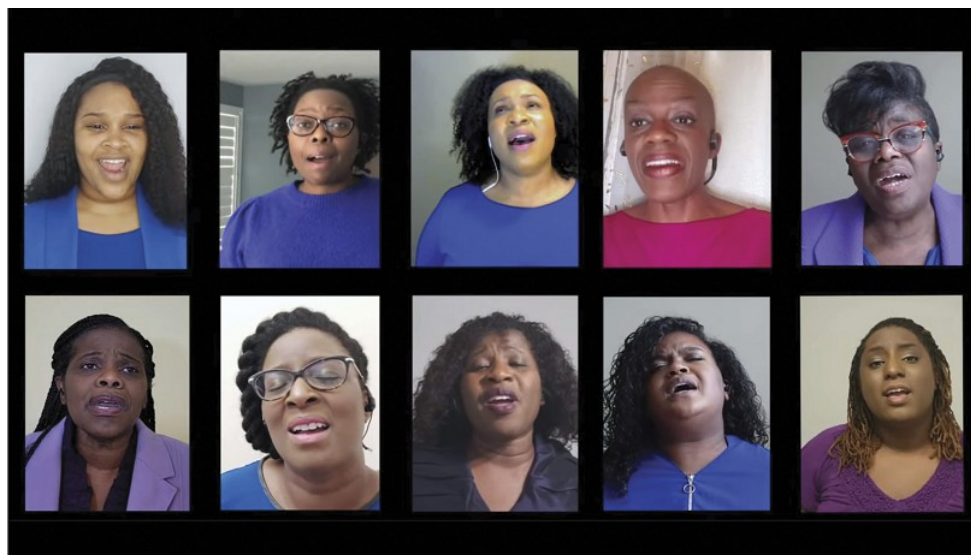
news

Here Am I. Send Me.

On Sabbath, following a rousing charge for workers by NAD chaplain James Black, Ivan L. Williams (director, NAD Ministerial Association) challenged us: “Commit to connecting with people like Jesus did. Desire their good, show them sympathy, help them when they are down and out, then encourage them to follow you as you follow Christ.”

The response was strong: “Each of us needs to know the voice of God and to respond by saying ‘I will serve,’” concluded Errol Lawrence, pastor at Toronto East. ■


— *Christelle Agboka, communications director, Ontario Conference*



London Trio Plus performing at campmeeting.


Where to Watch 2021 Connecting Like Jesus Campmeeting

- Adults and children: youtube.com/adventistontario
- Youth and young adults: youtube.com/adventistyouthontario
- Ministries Convention training: connectinglikeJesus.org



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World Budget (General Conference)* September 11

Local Church Budget September 18

Conference Advance September 25

OCTOBER

Local Church Budget October 02

Conference Advance October 09

Local Church Budget October 16

Conference Advance October 23

Burman University* October 30

*Special materials provided.



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SDACC REVOLVING FUND REPORT: As of July 31, 2021, there were 378 depositors with a total deposit of \$31,824,324. There were 88 loans with a value of \$29,127,244.



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announcements

■ Announcements

PROCESS:

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

■ Anniversaries

Ken and Bernice Fox of Kelowna,



B.C., celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on June 11, 2021. They were married in Calgary, Alta., and have made their home in Kelowna. The Foxes have two children, Shonna and Todd; four grandchildren; and one great-grandchild. The anniversary celebration had to be scaled down due to COVID, but the family got together near Kalamalka Lake with balloons and cake.

■ New Members

Renny Yougi Ingabire was baptized in Edmonton, Alta., on April 17, 2021, by David Hamstra. This was a result of continuing Bible studies online with Pastors Hamstra and Roberson Dorelus. He is now a member of the Edmonton Central Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Enzo Pirmin Mugwiza was baptized in Edmonton, Alta., on April 17, 2021, by David Hamstra. This baptism was the result of online Bible studies with Pastor Hamstra. He is now a member of the Edmonton Central Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Enza Choe Mugwiza was baptized in Edmonton, Alta., on April 17, 2021, by David Hamstra. This baptism was a result of ongoing Bible studies with Pastors Hamstra and Roberson Dorelus. She is now a member of the Edmonton Central Seventh-day Adventist Church.

■ Obituaries

Florence (née Jasman) Guinet was born March 21, 1930, in Three Hills, Alta., and died June 13, 2021, in Lacombe, Alta. Florence was a nurse, working first as a psychiatric nurse, then managing a nursing home in Rosedale Valley, then working faithfully for the last 24 years of her career in the offices of two doctors. She loved attending the weekly prayer group meetings and was a presence at the College Heights Church for many years. Her sweet nature remained until the end. She was predeceased by her parents, Albert and Minnie Jasman; and sister, Hilda Jasman. Surviving: daughters, Judy (Jerry) Nabess of Ardmore, Alta., Georgie (Skip) MacAulay of Lacombe, and Tami (Bernd) Becker of St. Albert, Alta.; sister, Sandra (Jack) Gallop of Toronto, Ont.; three grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren.

Pierre Prévius Jean was born Nov. 10, 1937, in Le Prêtre, Cayes, Haiti, and died May 20, 2021, in Ottawa, Ont. Pierre was licensed to work as a

literature evangelist and immigrated to the Québec City region to carry out that work. In 1987 he moved to Ottawa to continue the literature evangelism work as well as evangelism in other cities and countries. He was predeceased by his parents, Francius Jean and Céliia Duverseau. Surviving: son, Joël-Pierre Jean; daughters, Ghislaine Jean, Pierrelaine Jean, Dureine (Marlon) Jean-Sargeant, and Michaëlle (Philippe) Jean-Ferrus; and eight grandchildren.

Marion (née Gill) Reimche was born on Dec. 21, 1934, in Botwood, N.L., and died on April 24, 2021, in Lacombe, Alta. Marion cooked for 12 years for campmeetings and junior camps in Newfoundland. She provided foster care for 24 children. Marion served as church treasurer for a few years and in community services for many years. She had a heart for people. Marion is predeceased by her father, Ford Gill; mother, Muriel Gill; and stepmother, Isabelle Gill. Surviving: spouse, Edward Reimche; sons, David (Angela) of Surrey, B.C., and Ronald (Natasha) of Lacombe; daughters, Carolyn (Terrence) O'Neill of Lacombe, and Laura (James) Mezei of Enderby, B.C.; foster children, Lily Matthews, Rosalie Case, Cory Scott, April Kirby, and Keith Sawyer; brother, Victor (Nettie) Gill; six grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

Donald W. Upson was born Sept. 22, 1950, in Jay, Okla., and died April 11, 2021, in Joplin, Mo. For 42 years Don was an avid, dedicated worker for the church. He held 21 different positions located in 11 states and three countries, six years of which were in Canada as treasurer of the Ontario Conference and at the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada. He was predeceased by his parents, Edgar and Harriet; brothers, Edgar Jr., Robert, and Richard. Surviving: spouse, Janet; sons, Donald W. Jr. (Deborah) of Jay, Okla., and Michael S. (Rebecca) of Hico, Tex.; daughter, Traci C. (Jason) Jamieson of McCall, Idaho; sisters, Joan Tomer of Englewood, Colo., and Dorothy (John) Carter of Ooltewah, Tenn.; 10 grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

■ Tributes

Adam Ryszard Bujak



The Lord laid Adam to rest on June 20, 2020, shortly after his 70th birthday. He is still greatly loved and missed by his beloved wife, Sigrid, of 48 years; his son, Oliver, with Hannah and their children, Katiana, Anika, and Natacia; daughter, Lexi (Nicola), with Reggie, and their children, Emily and Derian.

Adam started the pastoral ministry in Chatham, Ont., in 1976, after his M.Div. graduation at Andrews University. On to Belleville, Kingston, Willowdale, other greater Toronto congregations, Hamilton district, Salem, Cobourg, Stewardship & Communication at the Ontario Conference.

Adam was a loving force of energy, enthusiasm, encouragement, and support in all relationships. He was especially gifted in engaging with people, getting involved, always willing to help. Adam was innovative and creative, recording life in photos. He loved music, supporting church choirs and orchestras; vegetable gardening and the latest technology were other interests. He enjoyed playing with his children and grandchildren. He was a loving husband, always involved in our lives.

In 1993, Adam completed his Doctor of Ministry studies, a longtime aspiration. Eventually, Adam was called to initiate the AMiCUS ministry at secular Ontario universities, instituting student support groups from Windsor to Ottawa, to the north and south of the province, with newsletters, annual camps, and great student appreciation and support. AMiCUS is still active today.

In 2009, Adam's dedicated



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service came to a devastating end when he began transitioning to disability, due to early-onset dementia. A vibrant, successful life deteriorated slowly but progressively over many years. Despite dementia, Adam remembered Jesus, his Saviour.

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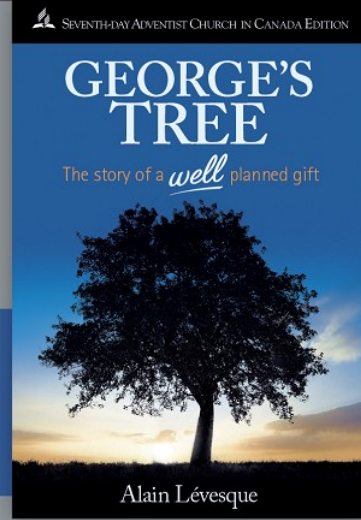
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from the editor

LAST MONTH I CELEBRATED another complete trip around the sun. The joy of making this trip is that we get to see how others age and grow.

Melane, from this month's cover story, is one of many young Adventists I've seen grow from a single digit age into a person who is making a significant difference in the lives of others. Her book, *Lemonade! Squeeze Your Challenging Life Experiences Into a Successful Business*, should be coming fresh off the press soon. She will help people she has never met and may well have her first contact with them only in the New Earth.

The joy of aging and watching my children grow up to become who they are lets me sleep so well at night. Unfortunately, growing older also comes with disappointments of watching some friends and family close to my heart age in a way I would not prefer.

In this past trip around the sun, I came across even more Bible and Spirit of Prophecy passages. I devoured so many gems that are profound and relevant. I also celebrate the growth that the Adventist Church has experienced, such as its success in sharing Christ in areas of the world where fulfilling the Gospel Commission is especially challenging.

I've seen Brad and Kandus Thorp turn our official Adventist television network, Hope Channel, into one with 50 different channels in more than 40 languages, covering 99+ percent of the earth with the Adventist message.

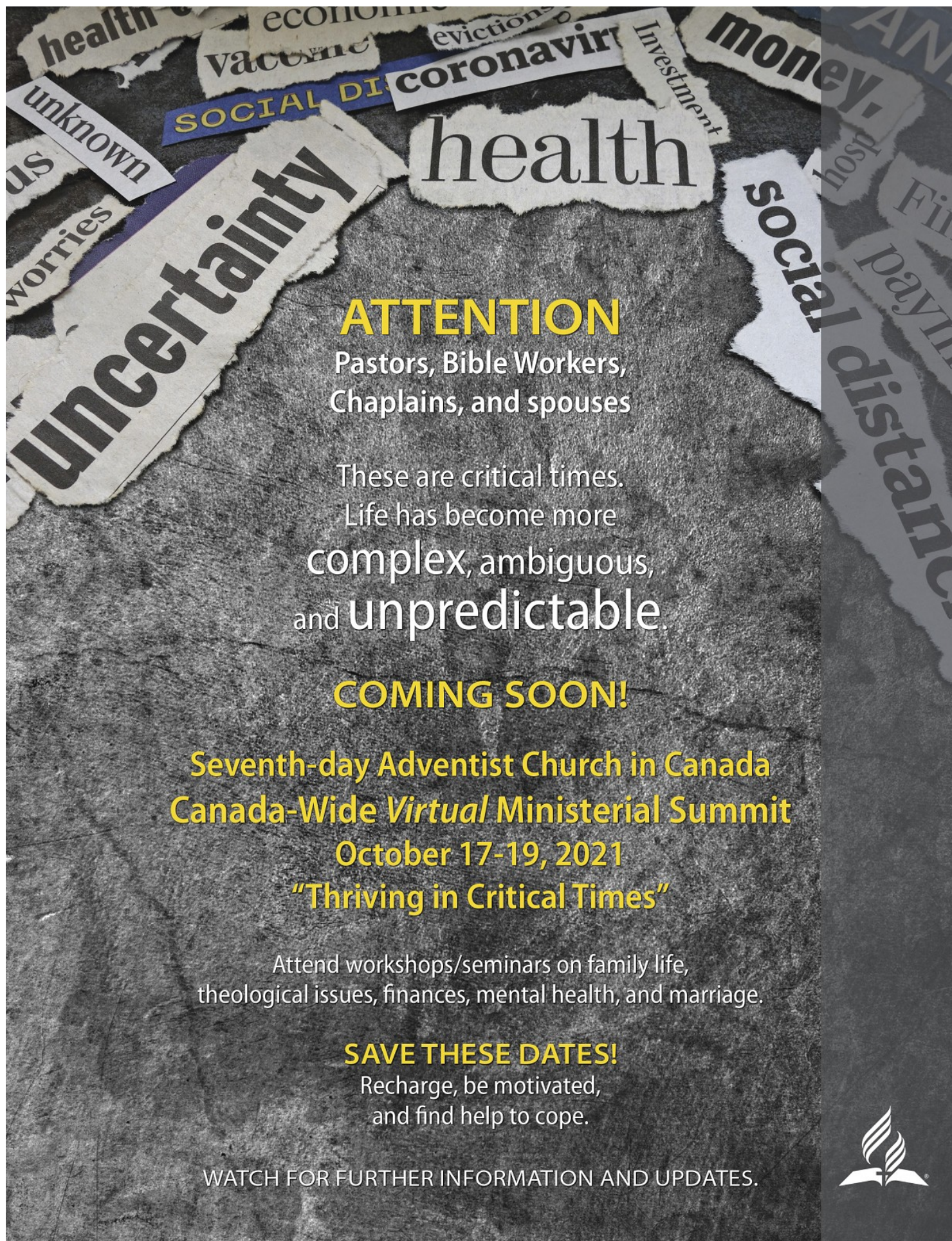
Watching ADRA incubate and unfold from a dream of John Howard and Jim Wilson's into one of the most respected charities in Canada over the past 40 years has been nothing short of amazing. Hearing the exciting news of the government assigning ADRA Canada as the senior agency to look after people who have been displaced by the British Columbia fires was thrilling.

I am grateful for this past year of my life and I hope you are able to realize your blessings as well, even during these difficult times. ■

from the editor

Another Trip Around the Sun





health

uncertainty

social distancing

ATTENTION

Pastors, Bible Workers,
Chaplains, and spouses

These are critical times.
Life has become more
complex, ambiguous,
and **unpredictable.**

COMING SOON!

Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada
Canada-Wide *Virtual* Ministerial Summit
October 17-19, 2021
"Thriving in Critical Times"

Attend workshops/seminars on family life,
theological issues, finances, mental health, and marriage.

SAVE THESE DATES!

Recharge, be motivated,
and find help to cope.

WATCH FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND UPDATES.





LAUNCH OUT

into the

DEEP



PLEASE PLAN TO JOIN US FOR OUR VIRTUAL PARTNERSHIP EVENT WITH
MIKE AND RENÉ LEMON

Premieres: September 24 at 7:00 P.M. EST

Sabbath Worship: September 25 at 11:00 A.M. EST

Premiering on YouTube at: [YouTube.com/IIWCanada](https://www.youtube.com/IIWCanada)

[facebook.com/ItIsWrittenCanada](https://www.facebook.com/ItIsWrittenCanada)

Go to [IIW.ca](https://www.IIW.ca) for more information.