

Ends and Beginnings (p. 3), A Year in Review (p. 15),
Life After Graduation (p. 30), Bags of Love (p. 34)

december 2021

canadian adventist

Messenger

Christmas in the Arctic

*Nella Mwamuka endures the frigid
arctic cold to bring warmth to the Inuit
community during the Christmas season*



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

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

Art Director Aimee Perez
perez.aimee@adventist.ca

Copy Editor Vesna Miroslavjevic
messenger@adventist.ca

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Seventh-day Adventist

Church in Canada

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

President Mark Johnson
johnson.mark@adventist.ca

VP Administration Paul Llewellyn
llewellyn.paul@adventist.ca

VP Finance Paul Musafili
musafili.paul@adventist.ca

Conferences

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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“So teach us to
number our days that
we may get a heart
of wisdom.”

—Psalm 90:12, ESV

Ends and Beginnings

What are some of your end-of-the-year traditions? I've known of families who enjoy staying up on New Year's Eve for the hour of midnight and the ushering in of the new year.

Then there are those who pay no special attention to the end of the year. For them it's just a night like all other nights.

I've met some who take the time to reflect on the year and plan for the incoming year of life. I like that approach. I wonder if God doesn't think it is a good idea too?

Our passage from the book of Psalms is an interesting one for several reasons. First, the writer appeals to God for instruction in taking stock of time. That's helpful. We may discover that certain parts of our day could be put to better use.

Second, notice the emphasis on reviewing our days. I've heard it said that if you take care of the days, the years will take care of themselves. That seems to make sense, doesn't it?

Third, the purpose of taking stock of our days is to gain wisdom. Wisdom is important. Each one of us needs it—more of it than we have, most likely.

As we approach this new year, with all that it brings, we will need a lot of wisdom. Wisdom in how we relate to the unexpected. Wisdom in how we handle disappointment. Wisdom to know what matters most in each day that God gives us.

As we review the past and then look ahead God will give us wisdom. Scripture calls it a blessing: "Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding" (Prov. 3:13, ESV).

I invite you to take time in the last days of this year to reflect and then to organize for the days ahead. Wisdom will help us in the days ahead. God promises it if we'll take time to reflect on the days behind and pray for the days ahead. May God bless your coming year with wisdom from above. ■

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



THE POWER OF GLOW

DOMENIC - "I am a bit confused about the Sabbath. I grew up Roman Catholic but I am searching for more."

MOHAMMED - "I am very interested in what you believe."

THOMAS - "I am just looking for more information about God."

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AGNES - "I want Bible studies."

ADRIAN - "Can I study the bible?"

ANDREA - "Where are the Sabbath church services held? What time?"

These are just samples of the messages we get from GLOW tracts distributed all across Canada by people just like yourself. At Lifestyle Canada, we can attest to the fact that, *"The publications sent forth from our printing houses are to prepare a people to meet God. Throughout the world they are to do the same work that was done by John the Baptist for the Jewish nation."* - CM 3

John the Baptist preceded Jesus. Literature is one means of planting seeds and precedes, in many cases, Christ's method of mingling with people.

If you have questions or would like more information, please contact Jonathan Zita.

Phone: 905-576-6631

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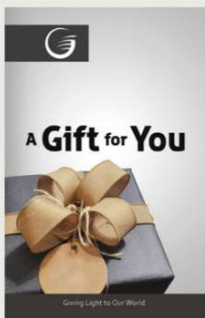
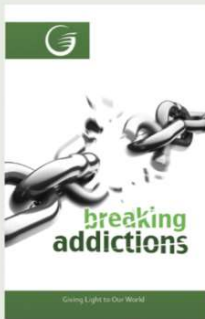
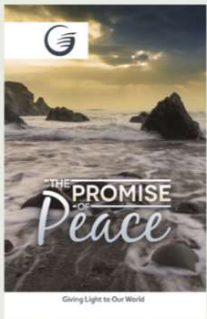
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WHAT'S INSIDE

December 2021



ADDRESS CORRECTIONS: Members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada (SDACC) should contact their local church clerk directly for *Canadian Adventist Messenger* address changes. Contact information for each conference is listed on page 3. If you are a member but are not receiving this magazine, please request it through your local church clerk or conference office. Non-members receiving this magazine in error should contact the *Messenger* office listed below.

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WHAT'S COMING The *Canadian Adventist Messenger* commemorates the 30th anniversary of the story of the Adventist worker reinstated to his former job that became a landmark Supreme Court ruling.

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FREEDOM OF RELIGION



Q: *During the pandemic, governments have shut down churches seemingly without much concern for the spiritual health of members. I thought we live in a free country. Does Canadian society no longer value religious liberty?*

A: This is the final of three instalments in response to this question. In the first instalment, I posited reasons for why religion isn't deemed as beneficial as it once was. In the second, I gave a couple of reasons that religious liberty does not enjoy the same protection that it once did. This month I'll speak to what we should do to respond to these trends.

First, we need to be as wise as serpents but as harmless as doves (Matt. 10:16). In a lot of respects, the former is easier than the latter. Seventh-day Adventist Christians should be communicating why the gospel is beneficial to individuals and to society. This message should be shared not only in print but also in deed. It should not be done to gain a societal advantage by showing how wonderful we are. Rather, it should be done humbly, in the spirit of Jesus' admonition in Matthew 6:3 and His sobering parable of the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25:31–46.

Second, it is important to focus on religious liberty cases that properly delineate the rights in issue. Christians and their organizations may be tempted to litigate every case that might have implications for Christians. That approach communicates that Christianity refuses to concede that it is no longer the dominant societal force in Canada. Instead, the Christian community should focus on cases that truly negatively impact individual or collective religious beliefs and practices.

Let me give you an example. Same-sex marriage was legalized after the Supreme Court of Canada decided *Reference re Same-Sex Marriage*. Some Christian groups argued that the redefinition of marriage would impose a dominant social ethos that would limit the ability to hold religious beliefs to the contrary. This was, in effect, another

way of arguing that marriage should not be redefined because it contradicts Christian views of the subject. I thought, then and now, that was the wrong approach. Protecting freedom of religion should not be used as a tool to impose religious standards on the secular community around us. That would justify, for example, a government influenced by a majoritarian religious group to impose Sunday closing laws for religious purposes.

Instead, our efforts at protecting the right to hold, communicate, and practice religious beliefs should carefully draw a line around individuals, homes, churches, and related institutions. We should focus our energy on cases in which the dominant and secular (often anti-Christian) social ethos, and the legal rules that spring from it, actually hinder our ability to pursue the Great Commission. In the case of same-sex marriage laws, it's entirely appropriate and necessary to protect individuals and churches from being forced to accept a redefinition of marriage within their community or being penalized because they maintain a traditional biblical definition of marriage.

The line we draw will not be impermeable, nor should it be. Society will continue to influence the church, and it is our responsibility to stay close to God's Word within our homes, churches, schools, and institutions. However, we also have to preserve our ability to influence (but not control) society around us, always with the goal of communicating Jesus' love, compassion, and saving grace. This is one of the most important reasons for religious liberty. ■

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



Glory to God in the Highest

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!”

—Luke 2:14, RSV

The sun had set. The shepherds were sitting around the campfire warming themselves. As they often did, they were talking and praying about the coming of the Messiah. When would He come and relieve them from Roman oppression? (Not that the Jews were treating them much better than the Romans were. In fact, everyone seemed to look down on the shepherds.)

As they were sitting and talking about the coming Messiah, something in the sky suddenly became bright like day. At first, they were blinded by it! As their eyes adjusted to the brightness, they looked to see what the source of this brightness was. Shielding their eyes as they looked up to the sky, they saw that the light was coming from an angel. Terrified, they gazed upward, frozen in fear.

Then they heard a calming, soft angelic voice saying to them, “Please, do not be afraid. I have great news for you and for the whole world! The Saviour—yes, the very Messiah you were all just talking about—was born tonight in Bethlehem, the city of David. However, I want you to know that He didn’t arrive the way you might have been anticipating. You will know it is Him by this sign: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.”

As the angel was finishing the announcement of the birth of the Saviour, a whole multitude of angels took their cue to appear above the hills of Bethlehem. They were praising God, saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased.”

After the heavenly host returned to heaven, the darkness resumed, as well. As the shepherds reflected on what they had just seen, they decided they had to go at once and see for themselves. Immediately, they hurried into town. Sure enough, they found Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus.

It was just as the angels had said! The Messiah had been born! He was lying in a manger and wrapped in swaddling cloths. What a privilege it was to see Him in person. They couldn’t contain it any longer. After

they left, they told everyone they saw the good news concerning what the angels had said. All who heard the shepherds’ story were amazed. Well, everyone except for the priests and rabbis; they were sure God would not have passed them by in favour of the despised shepherds.

As I read this story, three points about the shepherds rose to the surface for me:

1 In *The Desire of Ages*, we are told that the shepherds were praying and talking about the coming of the Messiah. I wonder how many people today are taking the message of His soon return seriously and are studying and preparing as if they believe it. I also wonder how many of us have wandered into Satan’s snare and have become distracted by things that have no heavenly value.

2 The shepherds acted right away. They hurried into Bethlehem. I imagine them almost running to see this new baby that they were told was their Saviour, their Messiah, their God. Then I wonder, have we lost that urgency? Far too often I hear, “When this pandemic is over, I’m going to ...” while talking little about what they could be doing now.

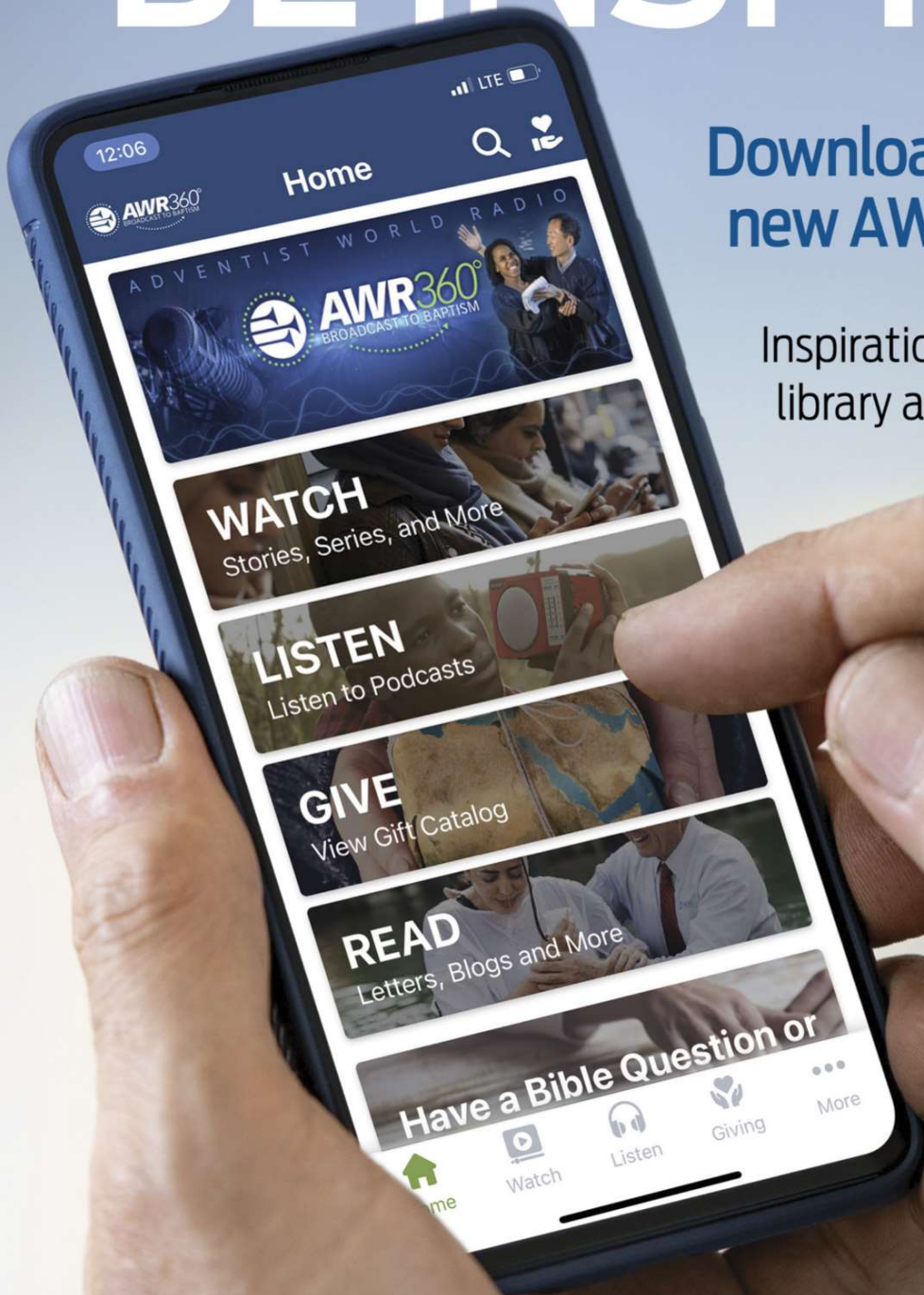
3 After the shepherds saw Baby Jesus, they couldn’t keep quiet about what they had seen and heard. I love that. *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* says, “All who find Christ born anew in their hearts today will, like the shepherds of Bethlehem, make the good news known to others.”¹

This Christmas season, and throughout next year, let’s follow the shepherds’ example. Let’s commit to sharing the good news about the Baby Jesus who was born in a manger. He came so that we can have eternal life with Him. ■



Dave Miller is the president of the Manitoba-Saskatchewan Conference.

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Let's Connect!



White-Throated Sparrow

One cold winter day, I looked out my window and saw a small brown bird with a white bib under its bill, a white-throated sparrow. The soft, whistled song of the white-throated sparrows tell us when they've arrived in the northern forest in the summer to raise their young.

They build grass nests close to the ground and line them with deer hair and soft grasses. The speckled blue eggs hatch in about two weeks, and both parents work hard to feed their babies bugs of all kinds as they grow.

We enjoy watching these busy little songbirds all through spring and summer around our yard. In the fall, we often see them in small flocks around the bird feeder as they get ready to fly south to warmer places.

But we never see white-throated sparrows in the winter. And this one looked so alone. The plump chickadees and robust grosbeaks jostled with each other for seeds at the feeder. This little fellow hopped along the snow-covered ground, pecking at seeds the others had scattered.

Think about it.

Like an out-of-place summer visitor in the snowy, cold northland in winter, sometimes it's easy to feel alone, even with other people around.

Sometimes it's easy to feel like nobody understands, nobody cares, nobody even sees you. But you are never alone because God said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Heb. 13:5, NKJV).

Do it!

Get to know Jesus. Read and pray through the Gospels. Ask Him to be your best Friend forever.



HARONG NI NANAY



These
Sisters
of Mine



One of the halfway homes built by ADRA Canada. Inset: Mary Ann and her daughter.

Another contraction seized her body, and she doubled over the donkey’s neck. Mary and Joseph were still on the road to Bethlehem, but Mary could see the city gates just ahead. Relief washed over her at the thought that she might not deliver her baby on the roadside after all.

The story is familiar. Mary did not deliver the Redeemer of the world on the roadside. But her situation was only marginally better. Mary’s birth experience was in an animal shelter, with only a carpenter in attendance.

Not many mothers in Canada could relate to this experience; however, there are mothers in the world today who *do* understand. These mothers are faced with either an arduous trek to a facility or remaining at home to deliver in unsanitary conditions, unprepared for potential emergencies. Many take their chances at home instead of risk a delivery along the way in a hammock, on the back of a motorcycle, or on a boat. As might be expected, the tragic consequence of this dilemma happens often. Mothers and babies are lost to complications or infection.

Around the world a lack of quality healthcare for expectant mothers and their children is a cause of avoidable death. It’s a challenge that ADRA took on over the course of four years in four countries. As a result, pregnant women and their children in vulnerable communities have better access to safe and sanitary birthing conditions. Mothers and children are being saved from preventable deaths in the Philippines, Cambodia, Myanmar, and Rwanda.

In the Philippines, ADRA worked with local governments and communities to build short-term stay homes dubbed “halfway homes.” These homes are located between the communities and the nearest birthing facility. Mothers are

invited to stay there in the days leading up to their due date, free of charge. This places them close to safe and sanitary health care once they begin labour. Additionally, maternity wards in local clinics were refurbished with new equipment such as birthing beds and solar power systems and an increased stock of supplies. Together with the short-term stay homes, these simple yet essential supplies allow mothers to have the care they need.

Mary Ann was one Filipino mother who took advantage of a home. “The place is very cozy. I’m very thankful for the halfway home, and I know others are thankful, too, especially pregnant women. There are no longer any worries, thanks to the halfway home. I think it’s a good idea to have built it.”

It’s painful to think of what Mary and Jesus endured. We can’t change their circumstances today. However, Jesus tells us that one day He will say, “Whatever you did for the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me” (Matt. 25:40, NIV). Jesus’ sisters are in the hills and on the islands of the Philippines and around the world. We can change their circumstances for the better.

The halfway homes and the services available to Philippine mothers were made possible in part by your generous gifts through our annual Gift Catalogue. Your support is improving the lives of the “least of these” and touching the Saviour’s heart.

For ideas on how you can continue to show God’s love to the most vulnerable, we invite you to visit our Gift Catalogue at www.adra.ca/giftcatalogue/. ■



Heather Grbic is a writer for ADRA Canada.



FRESH FAITH

35 & UNDER

In 35 words or less, do you think Christmas has meaning and why?

Beatriz Martins

Christmas has meaning to me because in it, I am reminded of the day in which an all-powerful deity decided it would be better to die than to live without me.



Elianna Fisher

For my family specifically, the meaning behind it is just family gathering. The tradition is what has created meaning for us.

Laura Oliveira

I think it's important because it brings family together. I'm able to see relatives I don't get to see a lot, and we're able to spend time with each other.



Melanie Taina

I think Christmas has meaning, not because of the symbolized date, but because of the symbolized action. Because of that, it should be celebrated year-round, not just during one season.

Taylor Uphus

Christmas has meaning to me because it is the time of year that we celebrate the greatest gift in the universe, God sending His Son.



Malachi Petitdos

I don't think so. Not everyone really celebrates it, and if it really did have meaning, I think more people around the world would celebrate it as a more major holiday.

The Language of the Heart

by Alannah Tjhatra



Music has always been a constant companion for Sean Kapakasa. From the time he was a boy in Zimbabwe, playing football barefoot in the street and making cars out of wires, to the time he reunited with his family in Canada in 2009, Sean's life was filled with music.

Sean attended Crawford Adventist Academy East for elementary school, where he discovered additional parental figures that guided and inspired him. It was also here where he sang his first solo for a Christmas concert and continued cultivating his music abilities.

As he moved from Crawford's east campus to its main one, Sean learned to serve

and worship God through leading praise teams—something he continued to do as he moved to undergrad at Burman University.

"My experiences at these three schools cultivated my gifts and gave me confidence in the gifts that God has given me," says Sean. "I learned to trust in a God who is my Friend as well as worship Him in truth and spirit."

Now, Sean is the director of Ubuntu, a choir he and his best friend co-founded. He explains that the group came out of a desire to have a choir that celebrated Black, African, Caribbean, and African-American musicians on the Burman University campus. Sean calls it a "fusion of [different] approaches," each person singing the same musical language in their hearts. Ubuntu has been singing for church services in Lacombe and all around Central Alberta. Performing mostly through virtual performances in the past year and a half, the choir is looking forward to launching their inaugural concert in February 2022.

"[Ubuntu] is a witness to the power of the gospel, which brings all nations together under the unity of the body of Christ," says Sean.

As a young person still figuring things out in his life, Sean still has some doubts about what God wants for Him. But he doesn't allow these to thwart him or disrupt the plan set before him.

"I am still searching for the path that God has set for me, but I know that I am going in the right direction because I still find comfort and strength in His Word. I will continue to wait for Christ's second coming, but I will also do my part in spreading His message while I wait." ■



Ask Me Anything

Q: I feel very stressed with my faith lately because I keep struggling with sin, I keep struggling with consistently reading my Bible and praying, and I keep worrying about not making it to heaven. I want to be close to God and have a true relationship with Him, but it almost feels like I can't. Please help me.

A: Thank you so much for sending your question. It's such a beautiful, raw, and honest depiction of what a lot of us struggle through.

Another way to think about faith is trust. This means it's something we can build and work on, and it's something that grows.

Having faith is a practice, like riding a bicycle. I remember learning to ride my bike. I kept falling off and losing balance. It was so hard and frustrating. As I leaned into building this habit, I slowly started to enjoy riding. I even noticed the time spent practising made going on bike adventures so much easier and fun. Even riding uphill was not as difficult.

The questions we can ask are:

How can we designate time every day to make building a relationship with God a habit?

How can we develop different methods of spending time with God that keep the Bible interesting and engaging?

Alternate with prayer journaling, listening to sermons, worship music, following a devotional, or listening to

the Bible on audio. Alternating between different methods of devotional time helps a lot with consistency.

My friend, Jesus loves you deeply. Struggling with sin happens to all of us as people who love Jesus and want to be close to Him. He doesn't judge us; He understands and desires the best for us. He doesn't want you to find yourself drowning in guilt when you don't get things right. He wants you to go to Him directly for forgiveness.

The enemy of God tempts us daily with guilt and thoughts of unworthiness—that we'll never get it right or be good enough to deserve God's love. But the Word of God says in Romans 5:8, "But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (ESV).

This powerful proclamation comforts our hearts that we are never rejected or abandoned by God. The first step of living like we believe this is to remind ourselves of that constantly and to battle for our minds when the enemy tries to convince us otherwise. This is the practice of building faith. ■

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

Growing Up

Millennial



"Life changes are happening, and it's a little scary, especially around Christmastime, because Christmas has always been the time for feeling safe and warm in family traditions."

A Changed Christmas

Last year, Christmas looked a lot different. My parents flew to Washington State (not being able to cross the land border) to meet up with my brother, his fiancée, my boyfriend, and me. It was the first year that I wasn't at home when I woke up on Christmas morning.

We did our best. We still had Christmas morning with treats and opening gifts as a family, we still ate Christmas dinner, we still wore new pajamas on Christmas Eve, and we still spent time together, but it was different.

And this year it'll be even more different. My brother is married and living in Florida, and I'll be spending Christmas Day with my boyfriend's family instead of my own. I'll be in Portland for the first time for Christmas. I might not be able to go home to B.C. during my winter break from school because my parents might fly down to Florida, where I'll meet up with my family after Christmas.

I feel all over the place in terms of making plans for holidays. Some of what's to blame for all the complications is COVID. The border is way harder to cross than it used to be. Anxiety surrounding the possibility of getting the virus is still real, too.

But some of the changes are just life changes. My brother's marriage was going to happen regardless of the pandemic. Me going to my boyfriend's family's home for Christmas was going to happen no matter what. Life changes are happening, and it's a little scary, especially around Christmastime, because Christmas has always been the time for feeling safe and warm in family traditions.

It's hard to accept new traditions. It's hard to create new meanings and new memories if you're anything like me—someone who, despite their love of new adventures, struggles

on certain occasions that once used to be reserved for special events or distinct family traditions.

We pressure ourselves to just accept these new things, too, because we don't want to be a killjoy or party pooper, for lack of a better phrase. But we're allowed to feel upset. We're allowed to feel a sense of events being bittersweet, because change is hard, especially when it comes to family changes. These developments are exciting and new and great, but I'll feel a little sense of sadness that things are so different than they used to be.

I'm allowed to feel this. I'm allowed to grieve a little bit for how Christmas used to be. That doesn't mean, though, that I shouldn't look forward to all that's new to come. Yes, there is beauty in what was, but change is inevitable. We're growing, we're changing. The fact that it's Christmas (a.k.a. the best holiday of the year!) doesn't mean the changes stop. It's just that those are the times you might feel these changes the most.

What is getting me through these changes is God. It's easy to forget that I'm not navigating the emotions that come with this holiday season on my own. But He is there, He is guiding me through, and He knows how I feel. He came to this earth as a baby to save us, He went through changes, and He brought about change to the world.

God knows change. And God will walk me through my struggles with change surrounding Christmas traditions this year and the next. ■

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



Tech SAVvy

BY SANDY AUDIO VISUAL

The Importance of Graphic Design in Church Media Ministry (Part 2)

Last month we spoke about three ways good design can impact your church's ministry. We discussed the fact that good design has the power to effectively communicate your message, draw attention, and evoke emotion. This month, for Part 2, we share six tips for good design and tools you can use to create them.

Tip #1: Create a visual hierarchy

When it comes to good design, knowing the order of importance is crucial. Hierarchy in graphic design helps viewers see a clear layout of what you're wanting to portray, and it makes it easier for them to understand. Vital information must be prioritized and should stand out.

Tip #2: Always think about your primary audience

Whenever you're creating a design, you must keep your target audience in mind. Design ideas created for adults will be different from designs created for children. Therefore, font, theme, colour scheme, and images must always be consistent with the subject and audience.

Tip #3: Use a colour palette to select contrasting colours

To capture your viewer's attention at first glance, you can use a colour pop technique. It will subconsciously interest viewers and is pleasing to look at. A bystander may stop to see what you have to say, even if it has nothing to do with them, for the simple fact that it is beautiful to look at. Check out Adobe's online colour wheel tool¹ to pick an appealing palette for your design.

Tip #4: Select the right fonts and give your text structure

Clarity in design and readability is highly important. Use alignment tools to your advantage. Aligning your text, choosing an appropriate font, and giving it a beautiful structure will maximize readability for your viewer. Keep text to a minimum, because the attention span of viewers can, unfortunately, be very short.

Tip #5: Select consistent images

Make sure the quality of your images remains consistent throughout your design. Also, the images must be relevant to the theme of your project. Always try to avoid hard edges, by blending those images using blending modes and your eraser tool.

Tip #6: Adjust images and backgrounds so that the text stands out

Images should not compete with your text. Whenever you put text on top of an image, it's important that your viewers can understand the text. If the opacity of an image needs to be reduced for text to be visible, please do so.

Design Software and Online Tools

By far the most popular software for graphic design is **Adobe Photoshop**, an application that is part of a suite of products called Adobe Creative Cloud. That said, it can be complicated to use and expensive.

If you love the layout of Adobe Photoshop but not the price tag, **Photopea** is a great alternative—and it's free.

Fiverr is an online portal where you can hire a freelance graphic designer to produce designs at a nominal cost. There is also Fiverr for non-profits; while the services won't be free in this case, they will be discounted.

Canva is an online application that has become very popular because you don't need any graphic design experience to create attractive pieces, but for you to take advantage of all its features, you have to upgrade to a paid "pro" version. There is, however, provision for non-profits to use it for free.² ■

Troy Clarke (Troy@savweb.com) is head of the media team for the Scarborough church and has been working for Sandy Audio Visual (SAV) for the past four years.

¹ <https://color.adobe.com/create/color-wheel>

² To apply, visit <https://www.canva.com/canva-for-nonprofits/>



A YEAR IN REVIEW

Some people thought nothing could beat 2020 for a terrible year. How about you? Was 2021 any better? Incredibly, we are still living in a pandemic, and so much of our world continues to remain at pause.

During the first few months of the pandemic, my friends looked at the bright side and welcomed this “time off.” People posted photos on social media of their attempts to put puzzles together, while others had regular game nights.

After six months, however, the zeal was almost completely gone. More and more people were becoming frustrated by the lasting effects of the pandemic, and their initial enthusiasm had waned.

Churches also faced a new reality. They experimented with the “online” service option, hoping to engage their regular church members. We experimented with preaching sermons from our living rooms and incorporating prerecorded elements like prayer and children’s stories into the experience. According to reports from the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, tithe had increased, which surprised many leaders.

Perhaps the most noticeable change was the downward trend of people coming to the church through evangelism. While online viewership was steadily climbing, the number of new people remained stagnant.

Some observers lamented that online worship would grow only among the well-equipped churches, that members would quickly leave their home church for a better virtual experience and a better sermon delivered with polish.

A recent article titled “They’re Not Coming Back” bluntly asserts that the fringe members that occasionally attend your church are long gone. The author argues that many congregants were never thoroughly disciplined—hence their rapid departure from church.¹ I tend to agree with this conclusion.

There does seem to be a “remnant” that has remained. But people have become accustomed to “church on demand” and spirituality that may not include the church. So how do we address evangelism in the time of COVID?

First, the church must recognize its diminishing influence on society. Once the stalwart of the community, the church no longer holds rank in the local community.

Second, the church has gained a reputation as a viper, of sorts, filled with judgmental disdain. This is an identity issue that could be cleansed (with careful humility).

A final observation is that the church must spend equal time on discipleship as it does on evangelism. Jesus said, “Go make disciples.” I think the church has lost this sentiment to the influence of consumer culture. We love numbers! However, if we become more intentional in helping our members grow deeper in their faith journey, perhaps their new, deeper love for God will naturally transfer into organic evangelism.

As you look back at this last year, what is the one spiritual accomplishment you’re grateful for? ■

Kumar Dixit, D.Min., serves people through ConciergeMinister.com, an online platform that provides pastoral care to people who are on the margins of faith.

¹ Rob Dyer, “They’re Not Coming Back,” *Ministry Architects*, 2021, <https://ministryarchitects.com/theyre-not-coming-back/>

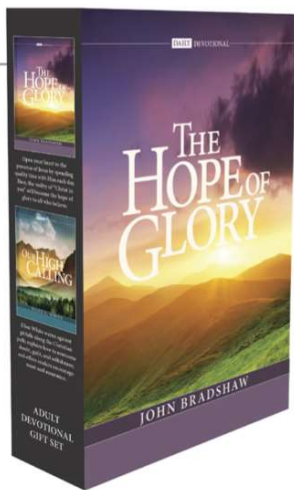
devotional (noun)

a short religious or prayer service

Like dates with your spouse, special meals with friends, or snuggle time with your children, personal devotions can deepen your relationship with Jesus and build your spiritual muscles.

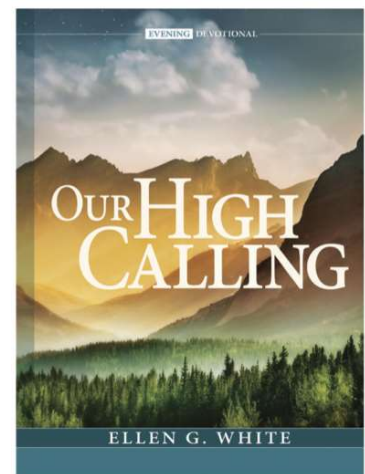
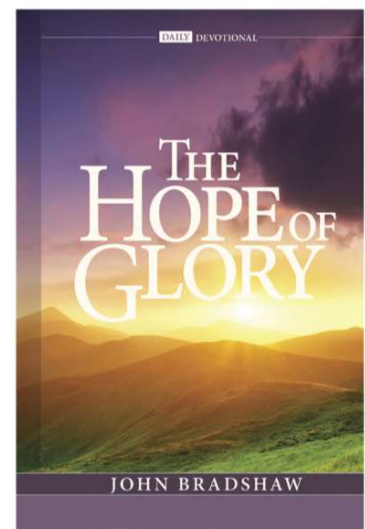
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—Ellen G. White, *Messages to Young People*, 247



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Be Still, Soul ...

“Jesus’ goal for us is that we are at perfect peace no matter the circumstances around us.”

As another year draws to a close, I wonder how you are. I wonder where your focus is. It can be so many places and involved in so many things. ... So much has happened. How still is your soul?

I admit that mine has fluctuated from stillness to clamour and back again, cycling through everything in between, numerous times. I wish it were always at peace, as Jesus’ was, but I’m still on the journey. Perhaps you are as well.

In the heart of Christ, where reigned perfect harmony with God, there was perfect peace. He was never elated by applause, nor dejected by censure or disappointment. Amid the greatest opposition and the most cruel treatment, He was still of good courage.¹

Jesus’ goal for us is that we are at perfect peace no matter the circumstances around us. Think of Jesus standing peacefully as soldiers mocked Him, struck Him, and tore out His beard. No fear in His eyes, no act of retaliation, no closing His heart to his abusers. Just love and peace from an open heart willing to pray for them.

It was in Gethsemane that He gained that peace and that stillness of soul—talking things out with His Father, giving over His fear and other negative emotions, and receiving that peace, courage, and strength in exchange.

This is where we receive it as well, and in the same way. It brings us great joy and peace to exchange anger, bitterness, fear, hatred, and stinky attitudes for all those fruit of the Spirit that Jesus holds out to us!

The greatest gift of eternity was Jesus—that little innocent baby born to demonstrate the immeasurable love of heaven by being the sacrificial Lamb to die in our place. What a destiny! What an exchange He made in order to pull us out of the pit of fear, anger, or ambivalence.

The gift of Christ reveals the Father’s heart. It testifies that the thoughts of God toward us are “thoughts of peace, and not of evil.” Jeremiah 29:11. It declares that while God’s hatred of sin is as strong as death, His love for the sinner is stronger than death. Having undertaken our redemption, He will spare nothing, however dear, which is necessary to the completion of His work. No truth essential to our salvation is withheld, no miracle of mercy is neglected, no divine agency is left unemployed. Favor is heaped upon favor, gift upon gift. The whole treasury of heaven is open to those He seeks to save. Having collected the riches of the universe, and laid open the resources of infinite power, He gives them all into the hands of Christ, and says, All these are for man. Use these gifts to convince him that there is no love greater than Mine in earth or heaven. His greatest happiness will be found in loving Me.²

Love to man is the earthward manifestation of the love of God. It was to implant this love, to make us children of one family, that the King of glory became one with us. And when His parting words are fulfilled, “Love one another, as I have loved you” (John 15:12); when we love the world as He has loved it, then for us His mission is accomplished. We are fitted for heaven; for we have heaven in our hearts.³

May you receive the gift of the lasting stillness of heaven into your soul today. ■

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

1 Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, 331.

2 Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, 57.

3 Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, 641.

Where Are They Now

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

Interview by Ken Wiebe, Messenger Staff Writer

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

John Wesley: I was the firstborn of five boys, to my parents, Dorothy Nina (née Clark) and John Arthur Wesley, in Halifax, N.S., in 1949. My father served in the Royal Canadian Navy during the Second World War until his honourable discharge after serving in the Korean War in 1953–54.

When I was only five years old, I had a brush with death when our rented home burned to the ground. I was the last terrified child pulled by the fire rescue squad from the smoke and flames; they had found me hiding under a bed and unconscious due to smoke inhalation.

Unfortunately, my dad was away on deployments most of this time, and my parents divorced when I was six years old. From then on, I was raised as a lone child by my paternal grandparents. My four younger siblings were raised by my mother, who later remarried.

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

J: I attended elementary and high school in Halifax and then obtained my first job with Canada Post's regional office for the Atlantic provinces.

After about three years, I went to the Coast Guard Academy in Cape Breton, N.S., where I took a tech course in Short Range Electronic Navigation Systems



Maisie and John Wesley

(SHORAN), in preparation for employment with the then promising offshore oil exploration on the east coast.

Two years later I returned to shore life and began a real estate career with one of the big trust companies of the day. After two years as a commissioned sales rep, I was “noticed” by one of the branch managers of the parent corporation’s retail banking and mortgage department, and while working through their internal training courses, I also enrolled in additional distance learning with the Appraisal Institute of Canada to become a certified residential appraiser.

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

J: While working in mortgage lending and property management for about 10 years, Maisie and I took Bible studies with Pastor Barry Hubley of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Moncton, N.B. Praise the Lord, we were both baptized on Oct. 22, 1982.

I took my stand to “not work” on the Sabbath, and within three months this cost me my career at the bank, which in those days required me to be available six days a week.

Within my first year as a new church member, Pastor Hubley and an evangelist, Lawton Lowe, recruited me to assist them in public evangelism. Three years later I was “noticed” again, this time by the president of the Newfoundland Mission, Dave Crook, and spent three-and-a-half years there doing door-to-door work as a Bible worker.

After all of this I received several offers to pastoral ministry, and so Maisie and I took this to the Lord in prayer to see if this was His will for us as a little family with two wee boys. Thus, we felt impressed to sell all but some basic possessions and rent a U-Haul to journey across Canada to Alberta and enrolled in the theology program at Canadian Union College (now Burman University) in Lacombe, Alta.

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

J: After graduating from CUC in 1991, I received a call from Lester Carney to serve in the Manitoba-Saskatchewan Conference as pastor of the Swift Current and Maple Creek district. We rented a house and homeschooled our little boys successfully for about four years.

Our next call was to be the pastoral couple in Winnipeg, Man., for the West Park and Mountain-Andrews congregations for about 10 wonderful years. How fondly we *still* praise the Lord for the German and

Filipino members in those two churches!

In God’s wisdom, our next call to ministry came from the Alberta Conference in 2001 to serve as senior pastor at the Edmonton Central Seventh-day Adventist Church. We enjoyed another 18 years of service to God’s people in the capital city.

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

J: The most satisfying highlight of my 30-year career in the church would have to be the consistent blessing of the Lord in allowing all our churches to have evangelistic campaigns each and every year, including church planting.

M: *Tell us about your family.*

J: Both of our sons, John Matthew and James, are graduates of Parkview Adventist Academy (PAA) and CUC (now Burman University). Our older one, John Matthew, graduated from the dental program at Loma Linda University. “Our dentist” and our daughter-in-law, Elisabeth (née Erdosi), along with three grandchildren—Liam (15), Alena (12), and Ruby (11)—reside in Pullman, Wash.

Our younger son, James, and his wife, Chiara, are the pastoral team in Lethbridge, Alta. In July 2020, they blessed us with our fourth grandchild, little Finley!

On top of all this, we all met together in Lethbridge for a week as a family for the first time in over one-and-a-half years due to COVID-19 border closures. It was an emotional but enjoyable time had by us all, especially the older “G’kiddies,” who just loved the daily motorcycle rides with their Grampy!

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

J: We are still regularly preaching and helping out God’s people in smaller districts, including a recent stint as interim pastor. And at the same time, we will be providing several scheduled “childcare” dates each month as needed for our little Finley (five hours away), as his mommy works hospital night shifts and while his pastor daddy is away doing Bible studies.

We have also scheduled quarterly flights to Washington State to see our older G’kiddies, before they are “all grown up.” And whenever the US government allows Canadians to enter via land crossings and the weather is warm, I’m just taking the bike across! Any excuse to ride. God is so good! Amen. ■



Aleper and her children

Aleper's Journey With Lorukumo

Although poverty has declined nationwide in Uganda, Karamoja, a semi-arid region, continues to struggle with poverty due to a lack of employable skills among youth, restricted market access, lack of access to clean water, and an exceedingly high dependency ratio—141 percent compared to the national average of 97 percent.¹

Aleper Margaret is a mother who only wants the best for her seven children. When Aleper was a child, there was a time when her village experienced a severe drought. Her family went without food for several days. The livestock died from diseases, and there was a considerable dependence on food from markets. Only families with thriving businesses and animals could survive that period.

The experience from that deadly drought made Aleper want to learn proper agronomic practices, specifically on vegetable growing and financial literacy.

However, being a mother with no formal education and raising seven children proved very challenging for Aleper. She can't raise enough money to start up a business and meet household food requirements.

"I was looking for solutions because I wanted my family to survive in the event of a severe drought," says Aleper. "I wanted to have an income-generating activity that would sustain my family. I attempted to seek casual employment at the trading centre, but there

was nothing available. I tried to contact the local government for financial assistance, but the officials said they could only provide financial assistance for people in organized and functional groups."

So Aleper joined Lorukumo, a community-based organization where members are taught functional adult literacy, which includes financial management through the Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) program by ADRA.²

Before she joined the group, Aleper had neither a goat nor money. I recently visited Aleper and now they have six goats. She has sold one goat for 102,000 shillings (\$35) and purchased 200 kilograms of sorghum, enough to sustain her family for several months.

Aleper says proudly, "Despite COVID-19, my group continued to save. This year we saved close to 10 million shillings [\$3,400]!"

With ADRA's empowerment, Lorukumo Group was able to gain access to grants from the local government, up to 20 million shillings (\$6,800), as a boost to their savings.³

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go" (Josh. 1:9, NIV). ■



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

¹ The Republic of Uganda, *Uganda National Household Survey 2016/2017*, Jan. 2018, <https://bit.ly/3BepQG8>

² One of ADRA's objectives in Karamoja is to help people living in poverty have the structures and skills to access and manage financial resources responsibly.

³ The government requires for each group to have a proper set of governance documents, to be legally registered, and to practise financial transparency to obtain grants and funds.





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RAINMAK



Singing a Song the Heart Knows We

Sandra Griffith Bonaparte has an idea of what a rainmaker is. “When the rain falls, the earth sucks it up. Plants collect water and they grow. People, too, need water to have healthy minds and bodies. But more than that, when the rain beats on the roof, it makes us want to cuddle, to wrap ourselves in something cozy and serene. So, by extension, for me, a rainmaker is a path that will lead me to success, a path of growth and realization, and a path that will finally lead me to a place of quietness and calm, a haven, the path to God.”

Born on the “Spice Island” of Grenada, Sandra immigrated to Canada in 1988 and enrolled in sociology and anthropology at Carleton University in Ottawa, Ont. After graduating, she entered the federal public service, where she worked for the next 20 years.

“Then I realized I wanted to continue my studies, so I went back to school and earned a Master of Arts in Public Ethics because I wanted to understand human behaviour and motivation. I was raised in a Christian home, attended the St. George’s Seventh-day Adventist Church on Archibald Avenue in Grenada. It’s a large church, and I learned many skills but especially in singing. If there is one place you can learn to sing, it’s at St. George’s SDA Church.”

Sandra also attended the local Seventh-day Adventist school. “So at a certain time, every child, every class, would assemble and sing for almost an hour. We learned the hymns for introit, for the benediction, and for general service.” She adds, “There was a song we used to sing to help develop the voice.”

At this, Sandra quickly recites, “Inchworm, inchworm, measuring the marigolds. You and your arithmetic, you’ll probably go far,” a poem made famous by actor Danny Kaye in the 1952 film version of *Hans Christian Andersen*. Gifted from an early age, Sandra was nominated and became choir director at the St. George’s church for a short period of time at the age of 13.

“This was an extraordinary opportunity that shaped my early life in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. I believe that having an experience of leadership at such an early age made me into who I am today. From there I went on to take vocal lessons and was encouraged to take the Royal Conservatory of Music (England) exam, which I did.”

Sandra explained how a Royal Conservatory of Music adjudicator arrived in Grenada and told her, with a passing grade, that hers would develop into a beautiful voice. Years later, the same was said again as she went on to pass the grade 9 singing examination at the Royal Conservatory of Music Canada.

“But I could not see it. I never understood what they meant until now. I just wanted to sing. Coming from the Caribbean, we learned everything by rote. So there was no need to learn how to read music. Now, after grade 9, I’m being told that I would need to learn to see the notes and sing them. But thankfully, it has never held me back. Singing is, I believe, a natural gift of God to me. I’ve taken many, many vocal lessons and have found myself thinking about how I would teach a particular lesson or technique. For example, there

are times when you will find yourself singing from your throat or nose. And rather than a teacher saying, ‘You’re singing in your throat or nose,’ I believe a more helpful way is to recognize that the student is singing in their nose or throat and assign exercises designed to take them away from the nose or throat. In that way, students come to recognize when they are deviating from good vocal technique and will then self-correct. I have an 11-year-old student who recently did this, and when I saw it, I said, ‘A-ha! She got the concept.’

“So, it makes me happy that I can teach my students foundational vocal techniques. When someone first comes to me, I ask them to sing. Then I look and listen, and just like a doctor, I diagnose the problem and outline techniques for improvement.”

Often Sandra will prescribe a link and a week’s worth of listening. “Yes, I will point them to Kathleen Battle (operatic soprano) or Denyce Graves (operatic mezzo-soprano) because there you will find the elements of good singing. My aim is for my students to see where they were when they started and where they are after a while. I had a student with me for a year and recorded him in the first and last half of the year. When we played back the recordings, he was surprised at the level of improvement. This is my desire for all my students.

“The lessons I give are God-fearing lessons. You cannot pray with all students, but if you know the student is a believer, then you can say, ‘Let’s pray,’ because the greatest teacher is our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.”



ERS

Throughout her 25-year teaching career, Sandra has touched the lives of many throughout the Caribbean and Canada. Recently, she was contacted by a parent from Jamaica who was looking for a voice teacher to prepare their 18-year-old daughter to audition for entry into a Canadian university but just could not find anyone they were comfortable with. Sandra met her, and after six months of training, the young woman auditioned and was accepted into three Canadian universities.

But the road has not always been easy for Sandra Griffith Bonaparte. Five years ago her evangelist husband, Fabian, who for years never had so much as a common cold, was suddenly diagnosed with cancer. His journey back to health was slow and arduous, but today he is cancer free. Praise be to God! Then, last March, Sandra suffered a stroke that affected her right hand. So, to regain the strength in her hand, she picked up her guitar and started playing again.

"The music has brought me peace in the midst of a storm. You know a sailor once told a tale of being on a ship that was caught in a violent storm. The ship was being tossed to and fro, and he thought that they were going to crash on the rocks. As they drew near to the rocks, he saw this little bird, nestled in the crevice of the rock, being sheltered from the raging sea, the raging storm, and the winds.

"The sailor suddenly realized that if God could protect that little bird, He would protect the ship from being smashed to pieces. The sailor lived to tell the story. Just as I am living to tell

my story—a story of music and love. Through the storms in my life, my Jesus was sheltering me, just like that little bird, giving me hope, joy, peace, music, and an expected end."

You can contact Sandra Griffith

Bonaparte at SGBVoice@gmail.com for Bible-based, spirit-filled vocal lessons. ■

Peggy Caesar is a communication specialist for ADRA Canada.



Sandra Griffith Bonaparte



Christmas in the Arctic

—by Clesha Felicien

Her heart nearly springs out of her chest. Her eyes dart left and right through the obsidian darkness as her fingers desperately search for the source of the obnoxious ringing. The numbers on the screen are barely visible, like she is looking through a foggy window. She sits up and slowly rubs her eyes, demanding them to focus. The time is now 5:40 a.m.

The soft, luminous glow from her white honey wildflower candle cast small dancing shadows across the off-white walls. The sweet aroma quickly envelops the room, creating an atmosphere of warmth and comfort while Nella Mwamuka gets dressed for her sixth 12-hour shift of the week. There are 9 minutes and 58 seconds left. The countdown has begun. Nella hops around the room frantically putting her thermal pants on. Layer one is complete. Only two more to go. Next come her favourite navy-blue scrubs, followed

by matching snow pants, a grey jacket, hat, gloves, ski mask, and goggles. Her shoulders slump and she allows her body to gently sink into the mattress one last time while she slowly inhales the memories from home.

"It gets really lonely out here," says Nella. "So, the days I am feeling depressed I burn my little candle so my room smells good, as something to remind me of home." It has been almost four months since Nella's last reunion with her friends and family.

Nella works as a nurse in the small community of Igloolik located in the Qikiqtaaluk Region of Nunavut. She has been serving the Inuit community since March 2020. She works four months at a time, returning home for one month before going back to her service. Saying goodbye to her husband and friends gets harder and harder each time. Travelling far away from home requires a great deal of courage and strength. Working as a full-time nurse is tiring, and each day presents its own package of sorrows, challenges, and frustrations. Yet God never fails to deliver healing, peace, and comfort





Nella Mwamuka endures the frigid arctic cold to bring warmth to the Inuit community during the Christmas season

anew each day.

“My job here has changed me as a Christian,” says Nella, raising her voice with confidence. “I tell God to help me, because I can’t do this, and I actually see Him working.”

At exactly 6:55 a.m., the obnoxious ringing pierces the silence once again. It’s time. Her fingers curl around the edges of the doorknob, and she squeezes her eyes shut in anticipation. That’s when it hits. The icy wind causes the animal fur lining her hood to lean back in defeat. The snow looks like a never-ending white cloud beneath the glow of the streetlights. The mountains standing over the frozen lake are barely visible through the darkness.

Nella must dig her way through the snow as she passes numerous dark oak wooden houses placed on metal stilts. In a week’s time these houses will be filled with family, friends, food, and Christmas cheer.

“The Inuit Christmas traditions are very similar to the western lifestyle,” says Nella. “They decorate the inside

of their house, have a family dinner, and participate in gift giving. The main difference is the food.”

Christmas Day is a national statutory holiday, and it is observed in Nunavut. Some Inuit families store up food for months in preparation for Christmas Day. Elders, parents, children, and other members of the community gather to enjoy large portions of raw seal, fish, caribou, and muktuk (whale). Nunavut does not have any trees for firewood, so the Inuit ancestors ate their food uncooked. This is a tradition that has been passed down through generations.

Some Inuit of today, like their ancestors, celebrate a winter festival called Quviasukvik. The festivities would start on Dec. 24 and end around the second week of January. This was considered the beginning of a new year. Community members would gather to build an igloo big enough to fit everyone inside. The head elder would then say a prayer to ward off any evil spirits in the upcoming year. After the ceremony each family would bring food and the community would have

a feast. However, traditions have changed since residential schools forced Christianity upon the Inuit community. As a result, the igloo is replaced with houses and the new year's prayer is substituted with a Christian blessing.¹

Sadly, there were other changes that brought various problems. Due to the forced relocation by the RCMP of almost every Inuit community, Christmas Day rooms are often extremely overcrowded, and families are forced to sit on the floor. This problem is systemic and extends far beyond the holiday season, as it affects their daily life. It is not uncommon for a two-bedroom residence to house up to 11 people or more. Families live close together in houses that are often deemed "unlivable" due to mould and other structural issues.²

Despite their struggles, the Inuit are a remarkably strong and resilient community. They know how to adapt and find joy in friends and family amidst their daily hardships. When one looks around the room, they see children playing, parents dancing, and elders eating. All current issues are forgotten as the holiday season evokes a sense of love, peace, and unity among community members.

The clock steadily stretches its long arm toward the 6, and the short hand points at the 7. The time is 7:30 a.m. Nella enters the long-term care facility and immediately scans the floor in search of the outgoing nurse to get her daily report. The corners of her mouth turn upwards, causing her eyes to squint and form little

friendly creases. The rectangular ceiling lights reflect off the floor as her shoes silently squeak down the hallway. Her steps are slow but purposeful as she briefly lingers beside each patient to uplift them in prayer. She quietly hums to herself as she assesses all 10 of her patients.

"I just live my Christian faith," says Nella. "My co-workers ask why I'm so happy or why I don't curse. That is when I tell them about God."

There aren't many Seventh-day Adventist churches in the territory of Nunavut. Although the Seventh-day Adventist Church has had active workers in Nunavut, it is hard for new converts to sustain their faith when they don't have a place to congregate and ask further questions. There are Nunavut residents who earnestly desire the love, comfort, and reassurance that can only be found in God. However, their previous negative experiences with Christianity have skewed their perception of Jesus.

"A lot of my co-workers have come and told me their prayer requests, and when they are depressed, I pray with them," says Nella.

Nella recalls her first work encounter with a fellow Seventh-day Adventist believer. She remembers the way the woman's face lit up when she realized they shared the same beliefs. But the woman's joy was quickly followed by shame as she looked at the floor and pronounced herself unworthy of God's love because of her smoking habit. The light quickly returned to her eyes when Nella explained God's grace and compassion.

Nella Mwamuka,
a long-term care nurse
in Igloolik, Nunavut.



"It's all about planting seeds. I may not see the end product and I may not see the difference I'm making. I just plant the seeds. God is going to water it one day."



Nella took the time to answer all her questions and promised to stay in touch.

"Maybe we are going to meet down the road and she will tell me, 'Remember when you prayed with me and that made a difference?'" says Nella.

The time is now 4:30 p.m. Nella sinks further into the brown leather chair until her feet are slightly lifted off the ground. For the first time today, she can sit down and start her university assignments. There isn't much time. It won't be long before she must return to her patients. Her eyelids drop like a heavy curtain and her body flinches as she forces herself to stay awake. Nella has not gotten a break in two weeks. The nursing home is short staffed, and her help is desperately needed.³

Nunavut is constantly suffering from a shortage of medical staff. It's not uncommon for medical centres to close their doors when there aren't enough staff available. The COVID-19 pandemic has amplified the problem, and nursing staff try their best to compensate by working long hours for multiple weeks in a row.

"I would love to work fewer hours, but I'm passionate, and I love what I do," says Nella. "This experience has made me stronger because when things get tough, I go on my knees."

Nella slightly points her toes as she slowly steps into her favourite navy-blue snow pants paired with a black coat lined with real animal fur. With slow and steady steps, she lingers by each patient's bed one last

time to say goodbye and offer concluding prayers.

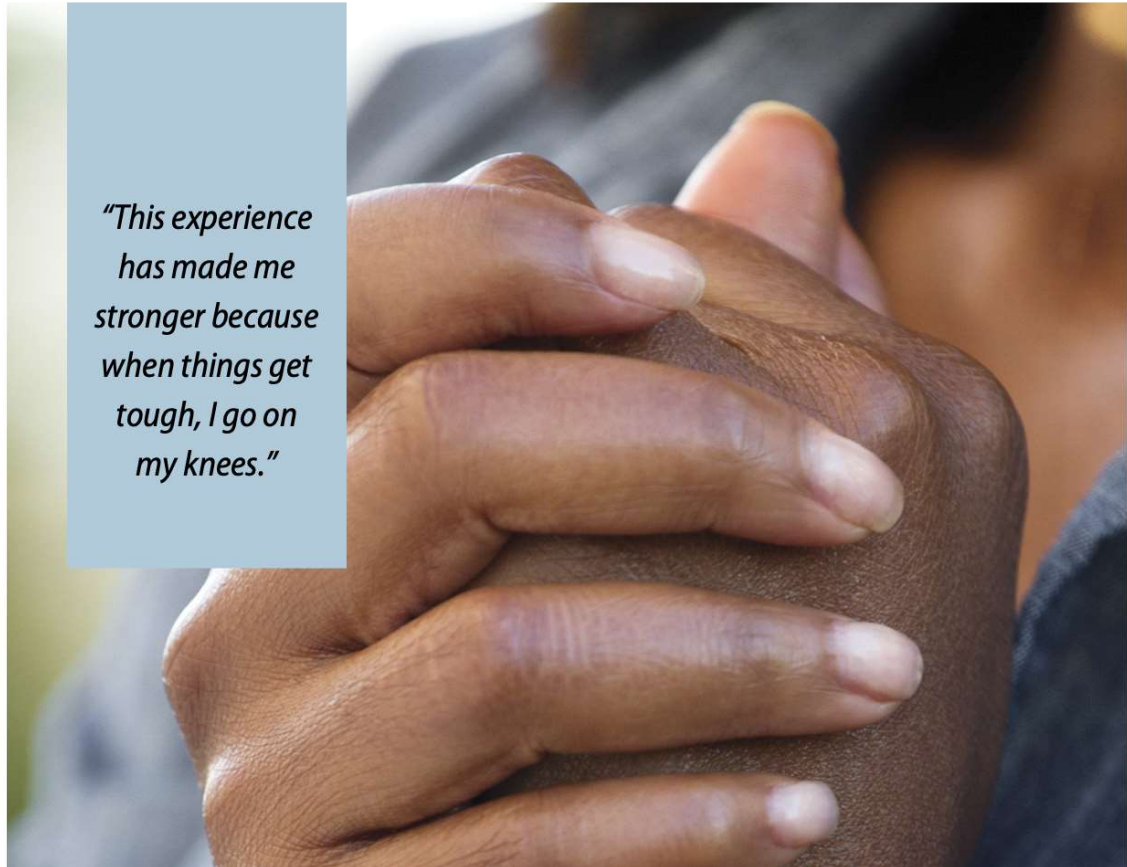
The countdown begins. There are one and a half minutes left. After one last look over her shoulder, she takes a deep breath and steps into the still night air. Guided by the pale-yellow streetlights, Nella walks past the houses on metal stilts, the frozen lake, and the mountains towering above. Her thoughts reflect on all the people she has encountered today. She hopes God's love radiated through her this Christmas season.

"It's all about planting seeds. I may not see the end product and I may not see the difference I'm making. I just plant the seeds. God is going to water it one day," says Nella.

The alarm on her phone rings one last time. The time is 7:45 p.m. Work is done. ■

Clesha Felicien is a member of the College Park Seventh-day Adventist Church in Oshawa, Ont., and a journalism student at Ryerson University in Toronto, Ont.

- 1 Arctic Kingdom Inc., "Quviasukvik: The Inuit Winter Festival and Christmas," Dec. 20, 2019, <https://bit.ly/3GCq0Lk>
- 2 Mélanie Ritchot, "Nunavut MP Releases Report on 'Deplorable' Housing Conditions," March 25, 2021, *Nunatsiaq News*, <https://nunatsiaq.com/about/>
- 3 Emma Tranter, "'There's a Risk of People Dying,' Says Clyde River SAO as Nunavut Nursing Shortage Continues," Aug. 9, 2021, *CBC News*, <https://bit.ly/3CHQbxK>



"This experience has made me stronger because when things get tough, I go on my knees."



A Blind Believer Brings Spiritual Sight

“But most importantly, God blessed her efforts to lead spiritually blind people to the light.”

Some time ago Keanna¹ contacted us and asked if she could participate in our summer student literature evangelism program. We are always happy when we hear of young people who have a desire to serve. This time, though, our excitement was accompanied by concern. Why? Because Keanna is legally blind. As a result, so many questions came to mind. How will she find the door? How will she know which book she is showing the people? Will people be dishonest when paying for the books and give less? It was her safety we were concerned about.

Although we had these and other questions, the Holy Spirit reminded us that with God, nothing is impossible. We accepted her application on one condition: she could join the program for the first couple of weeks, but if she changed her mind, she would be free to leave after the trial period.

Keanna was an inspiration to all of us. She memorized the order in which the books were placed in her bag. She used her walking stick to find her way to the doors as a partner kept an eye on her from the other side of the street. She used the raised dots on the dollar bills to determine what denomination was given to her. She wrote emails using accessible software on her computer. Many days, Keanna did better than her co-workers! But most importantly, God blessed her efforts to lead spiritually blind people to the light.

One day Keanna went to a door and shared literature with a woman while her working partner, Shawn, knocked on doors across the street. Having lost track of the homes that were already contacted, Shawn knocked on the same woman’s door later in the day. The woman responded by saying that Keanna, and the tall man that

was with her, had already come to the door sometime before. Shawn couldn’t think of any tall man who could have been working with Keanna. He questioned the woman some more to see if she had been mistaken, but she finally said, “I know what I saw!”

Shawn thanked the woman and ran down the street to find Keanna. When he found her, he explained to her what had happened and asked her if she had been working with a tall man.

“Of course not!” Keanna answered. “The only man working around here is you, and you certainly weren’t with me when I knocked on that door.”

The only explanation they could think of was that the tall man had been an angel whose presence was still there!

Keanna has had to surmount many obstacles throughout her life. Yet, in this humble servant, God found someone with a dedication to serve Him and others. He then chose to reveal to Keanna that she is not alone. His presence, though unseen, is always with her.

The good news is that this blessing is not reserved for Keanna. To all of us, the promise is “Those who labor for the good of others are working in union with the heavenly angels. They have their constant companionship, their unceasing ministry. Angels of light and power are ever near to protect, to comfort, to heal, to instruct, to inspire.”² ■

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

¹ All names have been changed.

² Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 6, 308.





JOY COMES IN THE MORNING

It seems that

most everyone is ready for a fresh start, a new morning to offer them both hope and joy. One of my favourite times of the year is the beginning of a new school year. The idea of new opportunities and new lessons makes me ready to bounce out of bed and grab the joy waiting for me.

At the beginning of each new school year, the British Columbia Conference Office of Education hosts a three-day orientation for new educators coming into the province. Time is spent on introducing provincial curriculum, job expectations, and getting to know each other. Mixed in with the intense information overload sessions are many moments of fun and laughter. By the time our new B.C. teachers leave us for their schools, new friendships have been formed and there is great anticipation of the new experiences waiting for them.

When looking back on those three days of orientation, we found there are five key focus points we share repeatedly with our new teachers, five points that can change a person from just being a teacher into being a servant leader who brings joy to those around them:

Be Prepared. Spend valuable time getting to know the direction you want to go and planning how you're going to get there.

Fill the Day With Jesus. Spiritual inspiration should be part of learning throughout the day, in various ways, in various circumstances.

Get Involved in Your Church. Attend and participate in programs and services as you're able to. Embrace the opportunity to spiritually recharge and be supported by your church community.

Be Flexible. Even the best developed plans can change suddenly. Be willing to "go with the flow" and change surprises into opportunities for learning.

Safety and Personal Self-Worth Come First. Education is more than just academics. Establishing a safe classroom environment where students' immediate life needs are recognized and addressed is vital. Just as Jesus met personal needs before presenting spiritual lessons, our educators also need to recognize the personal needs of their students before expecting them to achieve academic success.

Looking back at the focus points of our orientation session, I realized the following:

- Each one of us needs to be prepared for the work God has given us to do.
- Everyone should fill each day with Jesus and His love.
- We all need to embrace their church and be active in that community in whatever ways we can.
- We are stronger and happier when we learn how to be flexible.
- Everyone needs to feel safe and prepared to meet life.

We are facing a new morning, a new year, new possibilities of joy. As we navigate through the continual changes that come with living and teaching in a pandemic, every one of us needs joy. We all need Jesus to live in the depths of our soul. Let's embrace the joy that comes in the morning, the joy of the Lord. ■

Cathy Domke is the associate superintendent of education for the British Columbia Conference.

THE BURMAN EFFECT

BURMAN ALUMNI
IMPACTING THEIR COMMUNITIES

Life After Graduation

“The thrill of encouraging someone to listen to God’s call never wore off.”

At the age of 94, Lewis Shipowick is still enjoying the abundant life.

When Lewis first arrived at Canadian Junior College (now Burman University), his goal was to become a doctor, the perfect career for a farm boy who found it difficult to talk to more than one person at a time. So he enrolled in pre-med classes. But God had other plans.

One Friday evening Lewis was sitting beside his friend Dan Skoretz at a Week of Prayer meeting when the speaker invited all to come to the front of the chapel to dedicate their lives to God. Lewis knew Dan was on the verge of making a decision. So, to encourage him, he put his arm around Dan’s shoulders and whispered, “Come. I’ll go with you.” And Dan did. So did Lewis.

The thrill of encouraging someone to listen to God’s call never wore off. In 1950, Lewis graduated with a degree in theology. His ministry took him first to the Catskills in New York and then back to Canada where he served God in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta.

Then God surprised him again. “One day,” Lewis recalls, “my phone rang. The caller from the General Conference explained that the Far Eastern Division needed a personal ministries director. Was I interested?”

How odd! Then Lewis remembered that years ago, when still a theology student, he had filled out a survey that asked, “If you were a missionary, what world division would you choose?” Lewis thought back to his answer: first choice, the Far Eastern Division; second choice, the Far Eastern Division, third choice, the Far Eastern Division. He says, “My dream became an exciting reality! Our family spent six unforgettable years over there.”

Working in that area of the world was challenging but very rewarding. Lewis’s territory reached north to South Korea and Japan, south to Indonesia, east to the Philippines, and west to Thailand and his home base, Singapore. His task was to train lay pastors. He writes, “One of our most outstanding lay preachers was Urbano Castillo. When I had the joy of walking into the

Yellow Sea with nine of his most recent candidates, I baptized his 1,096th convert. And my double joy was to dedicate his 23rd church.”

In 1970, Lewis was invited to the General Conference as director of Bible Evangelism in the Personal Ministries department. One of the most vivid memories he took back with him to North America was presenting a Bible to the king of Thailand on his birthday. “It was received with royal ceremony,” he writes.

Now, after decades of serving his church as pastor and administrator, Lewis works with a global company to eradicate malnutrition among 5 million children around the world. He says, “God’s plan fills my soul with praise and thanksgiving. For the transformation of a shy farm boy to a world traveller for the King of the Universe, I will be ever grateful to my alma mater, Burman University.” ■

*By Lewis Shipowick as told to Renate Krause,
editor of Burman University Magazine.*

Lewis and Eugenia Shipowick





Rear view



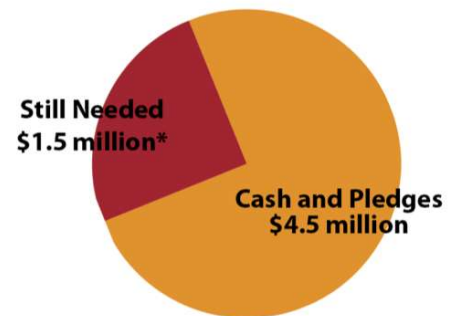
Front view

Construction progress as of October 2021

Thank you! You generously opened new doors for those wanting an Adventist university education in Canada.

Future gifts will fund the creation of the new library's welcoming interior. Gifting opportunities abound for naming specific spaces in honor of family and friends, or for memorializing those of special significance.

When the library is dedicated, it will become a powerful campus hub for students to attain academic success, and to develop the values of service, character, and leadership that have distinguished Burman alumni over the decades. Consider how your gift could help prepare a student to continue Burman University's legacy of faith and world service.



Library Campaign Financial Report
(September 2021)



There are many opportunities for naming interior areas of the library, both large and small. We invite you to discuss your participation in this transformative vision for the university. Please contact

Loren Agrey
President
president@burmanu.ca
(403) 782-3381, ext. 4147

J.D. Victor Fitch
President Emeritus, Chair
Campaign Advisory Team
(403) 302-0231

Eric Rajah
Chair, Advancement
and Donor Relations
erajah@burmanu.ca
(403) 782-4938

Pollination and Philanthropy

Central Alberta Family Finds a Sweet Way to Give Back



Laura Glover holds a tool used to pry apart the supers.



The Glovers will help students like these get desks so they don't have to sit on the floor.

All the toil and trouble, including some nasty bee stings, have been worth it for a Central Alberta family. The Glovers not only sold out of their homemade honey in late August, but also raised several hundred dollars for A Better World Canada. This sweet venture, called Laura G's Bees—named after Mark and Corene Glover's youngest daughter—shows us that philanthropy and pollination can go hand in hand.

Four years ago the Glovers began raising chickens in their backyard in Lacombe, Alta., where ABW is also based. Then beekeeping became a family hobby after Mark assisted a local apiarist. They started with a couple of hives that has since evolved into nine colonies. Some of the bees are located on the back deck of their house, with the rest housed in neighbouring counties.

"It's fun to learn about nature," says Mark. "Bees are quite fascinating."

The Canadian Honey Council reports 556 worker bees are required to make a pound of honey. A colony of honeybees in the summer totals 50 to 80 thousand bees. The average life of a honeybee during working season is six weeks.¹

Also, honey is deemed one of the safest foods to eat, since the most harmful bacteria cannot live there for any length of time.

It was no wonder, then, that people were eager to buy the Glovers' honey produced from wildflowers.

"We sold out in about three to four weeks," says Mark, adding they produced just over 408 kilograms in their first full year of production. Their initial launch in 2020 totalled 15 kilograms of honey.

Laura helped sell the honey for \$12 a kilogram. The

14-year-old has also performed some of the most intimidating work, including using a leaf blower to whoosh thousands of bees off the boxes, or supers, where the honey is stored.

"I only got stung once, last year," says Laura, a Grade 9 student. "And that's because I stepped on one, without the [bee] suit on, and I was just barefoot. ... I'm not really that scared of the bees anymore."

On the other hand, her father has been stung 20-plus times. He blames it on not wearing his boots or forgetting to zip up his suit. "Sometimes I do things quickly," says Mark, chuckling.

Mark and Corene also have an 18-year-old daughter, Janelle, as well as Sandra, 17, who helps with the accounting.

"We wanted our daughters and our families to know it's not just about making money," says Mark, adding they've donated to ABW in the past. "It's nice to give back." These members of College Heights Seventh-day Adventist Church hope to inspire others to raise money for ABW, no matter how small or big their efforts are.

Ten percent of their sales amounted to \$300, which will benefit ABW's New Desks project in Kenya.

"It is inspiring when young people get involved and believe they can make a difference," says ABW co-founder Eric Rajah, referring to Laura's fundraising efforts.

The Glovers' donation, to be matched by ABW, will buy 10 desks, ensuring 20 children will sit at a desk instead of being on the floor. ■

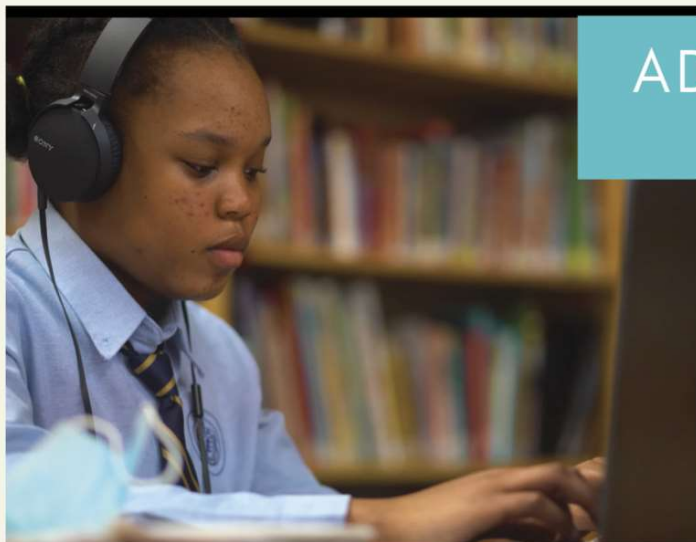
Laura Tester travels with A Better World and is a freelance writer.





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Bags of Love

“These children don’t know where they’re going, and then they have to wait in a rigid office, usually late at night, while the social worker calls up different foster parents to place the kids in the correct homes.” Jewel Lien’s voice softens as she explains, “At this crucial waiting time, these children receive our Bags of Love. They are very vulnerable, so having their very own quilt to cling to in those moments of distress provides a great deal of comfort for these children.”

The bag, with a stuffed animal, toys, books, personal items, and a handmade quilt gives them an identity because most of the time they take nothing with them from their home. So the bag becomes the one thing that is their own, which was the original name of the project: ‘It’s My Very Own—Bags of Love.’ It gives them a sense of ownership when they are taken to the local agencies tasked with removing children from unsafe homes.”

The little country Seventh-day Adventist church in Ryley, Alta., acts as the command centre for this great work, which extends to 30 childcare offices throughout the province. Jewel Lien, Nancy Clubb, and their army of volunteers have two motivations that keep them going: a deep love for children and an abiding trust in the Lord.

“‘This is mine!’ the children say when they are picked up by their new foster parents,” Jewel tears up as she recalls. “‘Don’t worry,’ they say, ‘I have my own stuff,’ while they sling the bag over their shoulder.”

Each bag is made specially for a boy or a girl and is stuffed with age-appropriate items. “We also put a little note in each bag, and childcare workers testify to the calming and comforting effects the bags have on children who have experienced such trauma.”

“Doing Bags of Love,” Nancy confesses, “we’ve gotten used to being blessed. Repeatedly, if we get a request for 20 bags somewhere, we will get a call from a volunteer somewhere else within the hour saying, ‘I have 21 bags ready for you, Nancy.’ What we give out, we get



Watch Jewel and Nancy share their remarkable story in “They’re Providing Bags of Love to Children in Need” this month on CTV or go to *It Is Written Canada’s* YouTube channel.

back. God multiplies the loaves and fishes every single day, and none of us gets paid to do this work; we do it for L-O-V-E. We’re so busy, we just pray that God will give us enough energy to keep going.”

“Some of the quilts are gorgeous,” Jewel says. “If you saw them in a quilting shop, you would pay easily upwards of \$500 for them. And what’s really cool is that 90 percent of our helpers are not even members of our church. We’ve got people from every kind of religion imaginable, and they all say, ‘We love kids, we love God, and that is what keeps us working together.’”

It Is Written Canada has received assistance to partner with Bags of Love to match every bag our viewers sponsor, up to a total of 350 Bags of Love. This means that together with your support, we can provide 700 children with their

very own Bags of Love.

For more information on this project, please call *It Is Written Canada* at 905/404-6510, email information@iiw.ca, or write to: It Is Written Canada, Box 2010, Oshawa, ON, L1H 7V4.

You can also watch Jewel and Nancy share their remarkable story on *It Is Written Canada* this month on CTV. Afterward, go to itiswrittencanada.ca or *It Is Written Canada’s* YouTube channel and click on the program titled, “They’re Providing Bags of Love to Children in Need.” ■

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



MANS Gardening Class Inspires Healthy Habits



Photo credit: Pattie Reasor

Despite a lack of summer rain and weeks of exceptionally high temperatures, the garden planted by Kim Harrington's six gardening class students produced bountifully.



Over 70 kilograms (150 lb) of tomatoes were picked by excited students in the high school-wide harvest effort.

What's your favourite vegetable? Could it be the earthy, vibrantly coloured beet? The virtuous (and enduringly popular) kale? Or maybe you're partial to the more familiar comforts that green beans, broccoli, and tomatoes have to offer. Chances are, whatever your favourite vegetable may be, you would have found it growing in the 2021 Mamawi Atosketan Native School (MANS) garden. Such tasty and nutritious abundance is due to a fun and innovative new gardening class that began in April, led by high school teacher Kim Harrington.

Kim acknowledges that her class was fortunate to receive the support of teachers Russ Neilsen and Michael Willing. Both Russ and Michael worked hard tilling the land to significantly expand the demonstration plot Russ had been spearheading for some years on a smaller scale. With a \$500 donation from A Better World Canada, MANS was able to purchase a new cultivator, sprinkler, and enough shovels and rakes for all six students taking the class to work together simultaneously.

In addition, three local nurseries—Wolf's Botanical, Evergreen Nursery, and the Patio Garden—donated hundreds of dollars' worth of starter plants. Besides the generous outpouring of community support, the class received an additional grant that allowed Kim to purchase new LED Grow Lights for her classroom. This investment meant the cucumber, pepper, tomato, and petunia plants could get a head start. Her students watched in awe as their seeds germinated and sprouted right in the classroom—learning much about growing fruits, vegetables, flowers, and general gardening practices in the process.

Fortunately for the students, most of the weeding happened

in the summertime, after school was over. Kim acknowledges her parents, Lloyd and Sandra Steeves, and her husband, Curtis, for their countless hours of weeding in the summer months when students couldn't get to the school. But when school resumed in the fall, all the students from Grades 8 to 12 were eager to assist with the harvest.

Besides assisting with the harvest of the on-campus garden, students in the class were responsible for a large container garden of their own. "Most students chose to grow tomatoes and peppers, which we had in abundance," notes Kim. "They were all able to take them home at the end of the year. Many of the gardening students have enjoyed the hot peppers." One student enjoyed them so much, she even persuaded her dad to rototill a section of their yard and is anxious to plant a garden of her own.

She is not a singular case. The enthusiasm for growing (and eating) fresh fruits and vegetables is a school-wide phenomenon. Students in Kim's foods class have made fresh salsa and "a lot" of tomato sauce to help with the school lunch program. Other food classes are busy preparing tomato soup, butternut squash soup, and other vegetable-laden delicacies with the bounties of the garden.

"God really did help our garden," Kim says. Ever thankful, Kim is already planning for the 2022 gardening class. "We look forward to what we can grow next year," she says, adding with a smile, "Pray for fewer weeds." ■

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





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AMAZING FACTS

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Most of us can recall the good times we had as children when someone was reading an exciting book to us. Remember the feeling at the end of a chapter that left you hanging in suspense due to the unknown, and how eager you were to hear more? Present conditions in our world have left many with that same feeling of eagerness to see what the future holds. At the same time there are those who have experienced fear, loss, and sadness today, making them hesitant to face tomorrow. The good news is that God already foresaw the events of today. Let us press forward in His strength as He unfolds life's next chapter.

Thank you for your continued support of Amazing Facts Ministries during this unprecedented time in earth's history.

Bruce Prokopetz, President, Amazing Facts Ministries

We want to extend our heartfelt appreciation to all of you who have included Amazing Facts Ministries Canada in your daily prayers. Thank you for your generous contributions to keep Amazing Facts Ministries TV programs airing across Canada. This past July we started broadcasting across the entire Middle East with TV programs 24 hours a day, seven days a week on satellite TV. The Great Controversy books continue to be scattered throughout Canada as many share these books in towns and cities. Hundreds of thousands of Bible study enrollment cards have been sent out across the country as well.

We look forward to working with you as we launch into 2022.

Together, let's do our part to hasten His return!

Rudy Harnisch, VP of Administration and Finance, Amazing Facts Ministries

Contact@AmazingFactsMinistries.com

Amazing Testimonies

from Amazing Facts Ministries

Josh's Story

Hello, my name is Josh and I am writing to you from a correctional centre. While watching a religious program a few days ago, there was an offer to receive reading materials by calling or writing in. I am asking for some Christian materials, as I have recently put Jesus first in my life. I struggle with the disease of addiction and pray every day for God to guide me and others suffering from this. Please send me any reading materials that you believe could help in our recovery. Thank you for your consideration and prayers."

Tyler's Studies

T Tyler was more exuberant than the typical Bible student. He had just finished his Bible study correspondence course, and getting baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church was the highlight of his life! He couldn't wait to make a public statement that he was a follower of Jesus Christ!

Tyler had serious questions about the state of the dead. Finding very little help from other sources, he decided he would "see what the Bible had to say" on the subject. So, remembering where he had put the Bible study signup card months earlier, he filled it out and mailed it to our Amazing Facts office.

Paul, our correspondence course supervisor, signed Tyler up and made sure he received his lessons and any other material that would help him understand what he was studying. We decided to call Ron (the individual who did the mailout in Tyler's area) and share with him the excitement Tyler felt for having found the truth! Unfortunately, Ron had passed away and never got a

chance to find out that his determination to make a difference while he was still alive had touched a life and given hope. Someday in heaven Tyler will find Ron and, no doubt, thank him for sending the enrolment cards to his area!

Tyler continues sharing his love and devotion to God with his friends and family. Who knows how many will be in heaven someday because Ron determined to do something worthwhile while he could?

Wouldn't you love to be there when Ron and Tyler meet in heaven? But then again, you'll most likely have your own awesome story from doing something worthwhile!

Sarah's Bag of Literature

Sarah and her group decided to spend the day going door to door with *The Great Controversy* and the *Steps to Christ* magazine. She was hoping that the long drive to get to this town and all the effort it took to go door to door with these books weren't for nothing. She really wanted her work to make a real difference.

"Looking behind me, I noticed a man carrying the bag he had just found at his door, trying to catch up with me."

"Who are you with?" the man asked Sarah. When he found out that the literature was from Amazing Facts Ministries, he was visibly excited. "I watch Doug Batchelor every day on TV!" he exclaimed. "I enjoy his programs and look forward to reading this as well. Thank you! Here is a donation to cover the cost to send me other books. I really want to learn the truth."

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Manitoba – Saskatchewan

The Journey of a Senior Academy— RRVJA Upgraded to Senior Academy



Red River Valley Junior Academy is now the first senior academy in the Manitoba-Saskatchewan Conference and has been renamed Prairie Central Adventist Academy.

The Manitoba–Saskatchewan Conference recently decided to make Red River Valley Junior Academy the first senior academy in the conference. Becoming a senior academy places our school at a strategic position as the only Seventh-day Adventist K–12 academy between Toronto and Calgary. With this shift, it was decided that a new name should be given to the school. After much discussion, the board is pleased to announce the new name for our school: Prairie Central Adventist Academy. PCAA’s new logo and colours are a work in progress and will be finalized soon.

PCAA has been on a long journey since it first opened in Winnipeg in 1901, when Neil McGill converted the living room of his home at 464 Selkirk Avenue into a schoolroom. Beginning with just a handful of children, his inspiration grew.

In 1924, the school officially opened and was known as Winnipeg Seventh-day Adventist Academy. The two-room school was located in the basement of the Old English Congregation Church at 290 Bannerman Avenue. It consisted of a gymnasium downstairs and the vacant lot next-door as a playground. Mr. and Mrs. Alex Jewkes served as teachers of 39

students from Grades 1 through 10.

“Resilience” is a fitting descriptor for the school during its years as Winnipeg Seventh-day Adventist Academy. The school survived the Great Depression and Second World War. Staff and students contended with an old rickety school building, renowned for fluctuating temperature controls and tight spaces.

In September 1961, the school relocated to its present location at 56 Grey Street. During the 1973/74 school year, its name changed from the Winnipeg Seventh-day Adventist Junior Academy to Red River Valley Junior Academy (RRVJA).

Great feats can be accomplished when we, as a Christian community, wholeheartedly co-operate. This was evident in 1984 when a building committee was formed to plan for an expansion. The plans expanded the school from a three-room school to six classrooms, a library, and a kitchen. With generous donations from Mary and Georgia Neithercut and the support of the conference-wide Adventist community, the project was successfully completed in 1985.

To accommodate a spike in enrolment in 2011, a modular classroom was erected on the grounds to meet the growing demand for Seventh-day Adventist education.

Our Seventh-day Adventist community can be proud of both the milestones, as well as the community





Red River Valley Junior Academy circa 1961

impact of the school. Hundreds of students have been baptized through the years, including some from non-Adventist homes. Counted among the alumni are many pastors and church administrators, missionaries, and physicians, as well as hundreds of other faithful Seventh-day Adventist men and women. Some have become medical workers, teachers, entrepreneurs, tradespeople, fathers, and mothers. Some have moved away, while others have stayed to serve God in Winnipeg.

Despite the realities of the pandemic and the challenges of accommodating a growing enrolment in 2020, the school opened with a buzz of excitement with an expectant 200 students and the addition of a Grade 12 program of studies. In June 2021, RRVJA was pleased to graduate their first Grade 12 class of six students—a first for the school and the last class of Red River Valley Junior Academy, as the school now operates under its new moniker.

The school's journey has no doubt been colourful. Many drivers and passengers have been involved in the almost 100-year journey. Over the years so many individuals—constituency members, parents, students, and alumni—have woven themselves into the rich tapestry

of Adventist education, whether in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, or elsewhere.

As PCAA looks forward, it is reassuring to know that “we have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history.”¹

Though the future seems optimistic, the journey for PCAA will never be complete until the Gospel Commission is fulfilled. Please keep PCAA in your prayers as it continues to play its evangelistic role in preparing boys and girls for Jesus' return. ■

—Sandra Wall,
youth/communication
director, Manitoba-
Saskatchewan Conference

1 Ellen G. White, *The Review and Herald*, Oct. 12, 1905, par. 22.

SDACC

Canadian Adventist Christian Fellowship Ministry

Meet Adventist students attending public campuses across Canada, and you'll encounter committed, passionate young people on fire for God. They are authentic, spiritual, and enthusiastic in their walk with Christ. This has been my personal experience as I frequently interact with similar youth here in Ontario's 15+ Adventist Christian Fellowship (ACF) campus clubs.

These Adventist students are attending various tertiary educational institutions to complete studies in their fields of interest. But even more, they have been providentially placed on said campuses to serve as ambassadors for Christ, sharing His love in relevant ways.

However, ACF, a public campus ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist

Church, is not overwhelmingly known to our membership at large. The ministry was intentionally established for the holistic development of students and supported by the full complement of the Adventist Church. The ministry is committed to offering opportunities for spiritual growth, outreach, as well as training and social interaction via campus clubs. The goal for ACF Ministry, outlined by the North American Division Youth Ministries Department, is “Reach the Campus, Change the World.”

The SDACC Youth Advisory (Canadian youth directors representing conferences and chaplain at Burman University) seeks to highlight this transformative ministry by hosting the Canadian ACF Emphasis Weekend,

January 14 and 15, 2022. The weekend is themed, “Jesus All: Celebrating Christian Faith on Public Campuses.” The intent is to generate awareness for ACF Ministry while creating a Canada identity for the same.

Canadian youth, youth ministry leaders, pastors, educational secretaries, and other interested ministry leaders are invited to attend this first-of-its-kind event. To register, contact your youth director or visit <https://bit.ly/3GJhNoV>. ■

—John Marvin Scott,
youth/young adults/ACF
ministries director,
Ontario Conference



Ontario

Ontario Conference Dedicates Future Campmeeting Site to God



James Rooney makes remarks at the dedication ceremony, while Mansfield Edwards looks on. Inset: An aerial view of the new site and pond looking southeast.



On Sept. 28, 2021, nearly 30 Ontario Conference office workers gathered for a dedication ceremony at our new campground, the 56.2-acre Rolling Hills, outside of Barrie. They were joined by a virtual audience (1.3K to date). It was a joyous day, as after years of prayer and searching, the conference's vision of acquiring a site for campmeetings and other events was realized.

In her welcome, treasurer Virene Meikle shared this story: "Twenty-five years ago I visited this campsite. My daughter's Girl Guide club had a weekend retreat here. I admired the property, not knowing that 25 years later it would be owned by the Ontario Conference. God works in mysterious ways."

Kevin Benta, property management director, then shared how the conference acquired Rolling Hills. In October 2019, while visiting another property with administration, Benta mentioned that the Girl Guides were liquidating their properties. He subsequently contacted the Girl Guides president, and several miracles followed:

1 Their president was moved by the conference's vision for the property and instructed the camp director and realtor to "take care of him," smoothing Benta's path.

2 Benta and administration looked at the property listings separately and independently chose Rolling Hills. Its impressive infrastructure included seven pavilions; a comfort station with washrooms and showers; a main house/lodge with a kitchen, laundry room, and four accommodation rooms; utility corridors; and a play structure.

3 An existing, conditional deal on Rolling Hills—conditions set to expire on the 23rd—was no obstacle for God. As Benta told Rob, the realtor, "I and our administrators [have] been praying about this. We believe God is leading. When it falls through on the 23rd, please call me." The afternoon of the 23rd, Benta heard back from Rob, who said, "Kevin, I don't know how or why, but the deal has fallen through!"

4 Rob was similarly shocked when Benta's offer—less than the asking

price and much less than the deal that had folded—was accepted with only a few thousand more requested.

Later, Mansfield Edwards, Ontario Conference president, reflected, "Today, I am joyfully relieved. We ran into several obstacles, but the Lord was building our patience and trust in Him, and He led us through."

Other speakers were Camp Frenda director James Rooney, who has enthusiastically taken on Rolling Hills as part of his portfolio, and health and prayer ministry director Maria McClean, who offered an opening prayer.

Leading the service's thanksgiving portion, Edwards stated, "Today, we concur with James 1:17—every good and perfect gift is from above." Then, after reading the lyrics of Hymn 376, "All Things Are Thine," he led workers in a litany praising God for and consecrating the property to Him.

Executive secretary Jakov Bibulovic then offered a prayer of dedication: "May all who come here learn more about You. May they commit their lives to Jesus Christ. May this property be a beacon in this community. May Your Spirit sanctify it. And may everything we do here bring glory to Your name." ■

—Christelle Agboka,
communication director,
Ontario Conference





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British Columbia

A Moment of Appreciation

The Seventh-day Adventist Church (British Columbia Conference) would like to acknowledge and thank Ern Brake, who spent 36 years in ministry and retired just this September, as well as Tom Glatts, who, after dedicating 35 years to ministry, retired in April.

Brake was born into a Canadian Air Force family in Halifax, N.S. He grew up in France, Germany, and Atlantic Canada. He converted from postmodern atheism in 1980 at the age of 20.

Touched by the message of Matthew 6:33, he resigned from his job as a train porter at VIA Rail in order to keep the Sabbath. Based on the same verse, he travelled to CUC (now Burman University), where he received a BA degree. He began his ministry as an assistant pastor to Larry Hall in Newfoundland.

Pastor Brake received both his master's and doctorate degrees from Andrews University in Michigan. The Brake family moved to British Columbia in 1997. During his ministry in the B.C. Conference, he served as a pastor in the districts of Port Hardy, Mission/Maple Ridge, and Rest Haven. In 2010, he was elected as the ministerial director, a position he held for four years, then worked as assistant to the president for REACH (Strategic Planning) for two years, and finally as VP for administration/executive secretary for five years.

During this time, Brake served as the health ministries director for eight years where he worked with a phenomenal team of health professionals to empower people throughout the province with messages of health and wellness.

Tom Glatts joined the ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in



Ern Brake



Tom Glatts

1984 as a youth pastor in the Temple City church in Southern California. Tom and his wife, Linda, were married in the Thousand Oaks, Calif., church, and it was there that Glatts was also ordained to the ministry. After five years at Thousand Oaks, Glatts received his first "own church" in the nearby Santa Clarita church. He pastored that district for eight years, guiding the establishment and expansion of children's and youth programs, Pathfinder and Adventurers Clubs, and fundraising for Santa Clarita's church expansion.

After ministering in the Southern California Conference, Tom and Linda accepted a call to serve in the Montana Conference, where he would serve as the pastor of the Kalispell and Columbia Falls churches for nine years.

In 2009, Pastor Glatts relocated to British Columbia, where he ministered to the Westminster Church for six years.

During the last two of those years, he added the White Rock church to his pastoral care. In 2015, he accepted the call from the conference's board of directors to pastor the Abbotsford church, and finally, in January 2017, the board invited him to be the ministerial director for the conference. Over the years, he has shined as he served our churches, pastors, church elders, and leaders and mentored our younger pastors.

On behalf of all the lives that have been touched through their service, we thank Pastors Brake and Glatts for their involvement in the ministry, and we wish them the best as they begin this next chapter of their lives. Though their time with us has come to an end, may their journey with God continue to remain strong. ■

—Noah Dauncey, ITS/
communication assistant,
British Columbia Conference

>> SDACC REVOLVING FUND REPORT: As of Oct. 31, 2021, there were 376 depositors with a total deposit of \$31,955,372. There were 91 loans with a value of \$28,681,057.

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





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- All announcements (non-profit events, new member notices, birth announcements, weddings, anniversaries, obituaries, and tributes) should be emailed to [Adrianna Lewis \(lewis.adrianna@adventist.ca\)](mailto:Adrianna.Lewis@adventist.ca) or faxed to her attention at 905/433-0982.
- Every individual named in the announcement must be aware of the submission and have granted the submitter approval for printing.
- Obituaries *must* be submitted on the appropriate form, completed and/or approved by a family member of the deceased. The forms (both printable and electronically submittable) are available at www.adventist.ca/messenger.
- The *Messenger* assumes no liability for typographical errors or responsibility for inaccuracies originating in submitted material.

Anniversaries

Leon and Avis (née Thompson) Rodney, of Guelph, Ont., celebrated



their 50th wedding anniversary on Aug. 15, 2021. Family and friends in Canada, the U.S., England, and Jamaica sent their congratulations and best wishes along with prayers that God would continue to bless their life together.

Norman and Laurie Trayer, of Hope, B.C., celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Aug. 19, 2021. Laurie wore the same wedding dress that she wore on her wedding day. The couple renewed their vows before family and friends at a garden



party at their home. There was much love and laughter as they celebrated the occasion. The Trayers have four children: Melisa, Krista, Christopher, and Marcus. They have eight grandchildren.

Obituaries

Lydia (née Boes) Dost was born April 26, 1927, in Mieczysławówka, Poland, and died Aug. 7, 2021, in Kelowna, B.C. Lydia served the church as a deaconess for many years. In earlier years, she also sang in the church choir. Hospitality was her greatest joy. She was loved by all. She was predeceased by her spouse, Gottfried; parents, Johann and Mathilde Boes; stepsisters, Maria Quiring and Adinda Weidner. Surviving: son, Gary (Gwen) of Ashcroft, B.C.; daughters, Ingrid (Joseph) Polzer of Kelowna, and Monika (Stan) Ratzlaff of Leduc, Alta.; stepsister, Olga Matijew of Kelowna; six grandchildren; and 17 great-grandchildren.

Iris (née Stewart) Edwards was born June 24, 1942, in Ashton, Union Island, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and died July 12, 2021, in Madison, Ala. Iris served as an elementary school teacher and associate librarian for several years. She was also a devoted pastor's wife. Her vivacious personality brought warmth and life to the church. She was predeceased by her parents, Solomon and Millicent Stewart. Surviving: spouse, Haskell; daughters, Del Edwards of Columbus, Ohio, Lisa Edwards of Douglasville, Ga., and Arlene (Oliver) Archer of Hamden, Conn.; and three grandchildren.

Howard Homenchuk was born July 23, 1939, in Yorkton, Sask., and died Aug. 23, 2021, in Lacombe, Alta. Howard served the church for 22 years as a pastor in British Columbia, and as a chaplain for 18 years at West Park Personal Care Home in Winnipeg, Man., and Branson

Hospital in Toronto, Ont. Surviving: spouse, Geraldine (née Glover); son, Troy of South Bend, Ind.; daughter, Tania of Winnipeg; brothers, Albert (Catherine) of Burnaby, B.C., and Leonard (Laurie) of Sechelt, B.C.; sisters, Martha Spenst of Lacombe, Evelyn Hardy of Brentwood Bay, B.C., and Diane (Allan) Thorne of Langley, B.C.; and one grandchild.

Stella (née Cormier) Robichaud was born Aug. 10, 1927, in Cap Pelé, N.B., and died July 7, 2021, in Cormier Village, N.B. She was predeceased by her spouse, Uldège; parents, Marc and Phélonise Cormier; son, Oscar; brothers, Alias, Albert, Laurie, Arthur, Léandre, Rhéal, Alban, René, and Joseph Cormier; and sisters, Germaine and Marie. Surviving: sons, Fernand and Ronald; six grandchildren; and 15 great-grandchildren.

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2021 OFFERING SCHEDULE

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Local Church Budget.....December 04
 Adventist Ministries of Compassion*.....December 11
 Local Church Budget.....December 18
 Conference Advance.....December 25

JANUARY (2022)

Local Church Budget.....January 01
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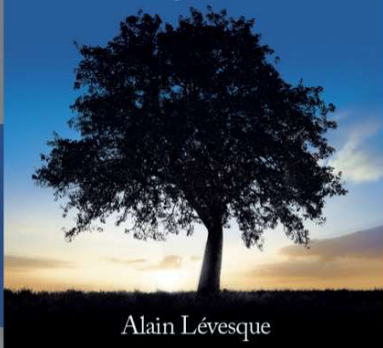
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OVER THE YEARS, just as most people, I've heard a fair share of stories about people making a difference in someone's life. All were amazing, but some stand out more than others.

One story was about a group whose mission was to help incarcerated mothers in the Canadian prison system. What this group did changed lives. After connecting with the mothers, they would find out about their children, possibly grandchildren, and would send Christmas and birthday presents to those kids, signed by their mothers. Jesus' statement "I was in prison, and you came to visit me," as recorded in Matthew 25:36, took on a whole new meaning for me. The group never vetted the mother or children to see if they were worthy. What made them worthy was that Christ left heaven to live on the prison earth for 33 years.

I wonder how those mothers felt and how the children felt. People often receive gifts as a sign of love, so I imagine the children's hearts were touched. And I'm sure the mothers' hearts were touched by this ministry as well. Those who know they are unworthy of God's grace have the greatest capacity to experience gratitude. It isn't our job to decide whether someone is worthy; we are simply called to serve and to love those who are broken.

Years ago I was called to visit a friend of mine who was in prison. (And she was there for a good reason.) We talked—or rather, I listened—and she began to unfold the backstory to her life, how her parents had mentally and emotionally abused her and put her younger sister on a pedestal. I remember thinking that her parents should be the ones I was visiting in prison, not their daughter.

I have been thrilled to hear reports from *It Is Written Canada* regarding several women taking Bible studies in prison. They're discovering new meaning in their lives and are being transformed by a "peace that passes all understanding" as they get to know Christ's character and unconditional love.

When I hear calls to put Christ back in Christmas, I respond by saying, "The best way to put Christ back in Christmas is to:

- Feed the hungry,
- Clothe the naked,
- Visit those in prison, and
- Look after the widows and orphans."

That just makes sense. ■

from the editor
Loving the Broken

P.S.: If you have your own story about prison ministries or loving the broken, I would love to hear it! Send your message to jensen.stan@adventist.ca

ANGEL'S* STORY

I watched your TV program here in jail. Please, send me the free offer.

Thank you for the books and pamphlets that you are sending me. I read them to the other girls in prison with me. So, you are helping many others not just me.

I got my two cellmates to watch the past two shows. One girl didn't believe in Jesus, but now she is starting to pray and read. Through your show I helped someone else. Thank you.

Angel

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Without your support, It Is Written Canada could not have aired messages to 4.1 million searching souls this past year.

Hi, my name is Christy*. I am at this regional correctional facility. Thank you for your TV shows. I want to learn more about God and the Bible. Please, send me anything you have.



* Not her real name

Through your donations this year, we have answered thousands of calls and prayer requests in response to weekly broadcasts. 180 students have graduated from our Bible study course; these people have been connected with local churches and some have already chosen to be baptized. With your support, It Is Written Canada can continue to reach people like Angel and her friend Christy with messages of God's love.

To donate - by Phone: (888) 225-5449, online: itiswritten.ca,
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Photo: © 2019 ADRA | Sharmilla Reid

Hygiene Kit

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