

You Are a Miracle! (p. 7), *NEW!* SDACC Ministries (p. 10), The Secret Sauce (p. 22),  
And the Waters Subsided (p. 34), From Atheist to Elder (p. 36)

canadian adventist  
*Messenger*  
january 2022

# How the Case for Steve's Conscience Was Won: 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Supreme Court of Canada Sabbath Decision



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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 Miroslavljevic  
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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“When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turning to the crowd that followed him, said, ‘I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith.’”

—Luke 7:9, *ESV*

## Amazing Faith

It's a remarkable story. The characters in this passage of Luke are an interesting mix: a Roman centurion, his valued servant, a group of Israelite elders, and Jesus.

The servant needed healing. He was valued by the centurion. And the sickness? Worse than a sore throat. He was dying.

The centurion was familiar with the faith of those around him. There must have been aspects of it that he believed. He had built the house of worship in their community.

And then his servant got sick. Whatever it was, this was it. The servant was not expected to recover. So the centurion, based on what he knew, asked in faith.

That's where Jesus enters the picture. Jesus was the only solution to the problem. And in the narrative, Jesus marvelled at the faith of this man who had called for help.

I like what Jesus said to the crowd who was following Him. This man, the centurion, was a man with amazing faith. The faith he showed was greater than a church full of believers. Jesus responded to that faith. The servant lived. He was healed.

That raises a question in my mind. How's our faith? Yours, mine. When we face personal difficulty and there's no other solution, do we give up or do we turn to Jesus?

I'd like to be known as a person of faith. How about you? ■

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







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# FREEDOM OF RELIGION



**Q:** *As a lawyer practising in human rights and constitutional law, what can you tell us about the impact of Central Okanagan School District No. 23 v. Renaud on Canada?*

**A:** This month's issue has an important cover story on the case of Larry Steve Renaud and his pursuit of a Sabbath accommodation all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada. The benefit of time allows us to see and acknowledge the impact that the efforts of Mr. Renaud and Karen Scott (his lawyer), and the support of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada, have had on so many others in Canada.

*Renaud* built on a 1985 Supreme Court of Canada case involving Theresa O'Malley, who refused to work on Sabbath because of her Seventh-day Adventist beliefs. The court found her employer discriminated against her when it failed to take reasonable steps to accommodate the Sabbath in her work schedule.

Presumably based on the *O'Malley* case, Mr. Renaud's employer did try to accommodate him; however, Mr. Renaud's union deliberately stood in the way.

The Supreme Court of Canada imposed a duty on a union to work with an employer to create a Sabbath accommodation. In theory, unions are supposed to support the rights of workers. This case showed that not to be true when a member doesn't fit the union's mould.

The union was more interested in protecting the terms of its collective agreement than the interests of Mr. Renaud. It actually impeded Mr. Renaud's employer from providing him with a very reasonable accommodation. The Supreme Court of Canada told the union it was wrong and that the union had acted illegally. That was new in Canadian law, and a very important recognition of individual religious liberty.

The impact of a case on the law can be seen, in part,

by how many times other courts and tribunals refer to it. As of the writing of this article, the *Renaud* case has been cited an astonishing 1,613 times. The *Big M Drug Mart* case, the 1985 case that is generally recognized as the first and still leading case about religious freedom in Canada, has been cited 2,003 times. But it is seven years older and, therefore, had that much more time to be referenced, meaning *Renaud* is a leading case in Canadian law.

This shows that the *Renaud* case, and to be more specific, the efforts and faithfulness of Mr. Renaud and Ms. Scott, have influenced the outcome of well over a thousand other cases. Each of those cases involves real people whose rights have been adjudicated and protected based on the *Renaud* precedent.

The number of citations is one way to measure the impact of the Supreme Court of Canada's decision. What we cannot accurately measure is the number of cases that have *not* been litigated because employers and unions have worked together to find Sabbath and other accommodations for employees in the workplace in order to avoid discriminating against them. Undoubtedly, this has been the largest impact of all and we cannot even see or quantify it.

I am personally grateful for Mr. Renaud's courage. God in His providence used him and Ms. O'Malley to immeasurably change the law to ensure robust workplace Sabbath accommodation in this country. ■

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





# You Are a Miracle!

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you..."

—Jeremiah 1:5, *ESV*

Jordan\* exposed his hurt, and my gut twisted into a knot. "My parents said I was a mistake," he said in front of the whole class.

Another student perceived Jordan's vulnerability as an opportunity to pounce: "Of course you're a mistake, Dude!"

Raucous laughter ricocheted off my classroom walls.

"Wait a minute, class," I began, my heart racing as I scrambled to construct my thoughts. Eyes widened. I continued, "Jordan raised a very important question. Are *you* a mistake?" My tone carried the weight of my words. No one answered. "What do you think the odds are of you being born? Maybe one in a trillion?"

One brave soul risked a response: "No, I think that's too high."

"Actually, it's too low," I said. Questions creased foreheads. "Think about the probability of your parents meeting, marrying. And the single reproductive cell of the possible trillions from your father uniting with the precise egg of the average hundred thousand viable eggs from your mother, uniting to make you."

"Is this a sex talk?" another student groaned.

"Sure, sex has a lot to do with why you are here, but there are many other factors, like wars, famines, epidemics, the movement of people throughout the world ... you name it. So, it's not just about your parents meeting and making you; it's about the same process taking place to create your parents and grandparents and all your ancestors back to the beginning of creation." The wheels were turning. I added, "If even one microscopic change occurred at any stage in history, you would not be here."

"True!" someone confessed.

"So, what *are* the odds of *you* being born?" I repeated.

"It's a pretty big number, right?"

"The most conservative estimates are one in four hundred trillion, but it's more like one in four hundred quadrillion," I said.

"Whoa!"

"A miracle is an event so unlikely that it is almost impossible, so by that definition, *you* are a miracle." I

then looked into Jordan's eyes. "Jordan, *you* are a miracle!" Everyone was silent. "Not one of you is a mistake!"

Even the toughest kid sobered up.

"Growing up in the orphanage," I said, "I felt like a misfit until my grandmother sent me to a Christian boarding school, and some guy I hardly knew handed me a Bible and challenged me to read a chapter a day. He said it would change my life."

Heads nodded.

"He was right; the Bible is still changing my life." I held up that life-changing volume. "God says, 'Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you ... , and before you were born, I consecrated you to Myself as My own.' God knew you before you were born."

"Jordan," said the classmate who'd been mean, now turning to face him, "I'm sorry."

Jordan stared at the floor. "It's OK."

"No, it's not OK! I was wrong. You are a miracle, and I'm sorry for calling you a mistake."

Jordan looked up. "I forgive you."

"I get it, guys," I said, breaking the tension. "I used to insult my friends, just joking around, but this book—the Bible—opened my eyes to how valuable and how sensitive we all are."

The bell rang, but no one moved until Jordan spoke. "When I heard my parents say I was a mistake, it really hurt." Tears flowed freely as he sobbed, "I don't know why I told the whole class."

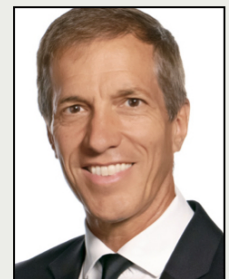
"Jordan, long before you took your first breath, God chose you to be His eternally cherished child."

Jordan's eyes smiled at me.

"Now go, live, feel, and act like the miracle you are."

The entire class rallied around Jordan, and they all walked together to their next class. ■

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



\*Name has been changed.

**Correction:** The byline of last month's article inadvertently attributed Dave Miller as president of the Manitoba-Saskatchewan Conference. Dave Miller is president of the Maritime Conference.





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*I tell you, whoever publicly acknowledges me before others, the Son of Man will also acknowledge before the angels of God.*

—Luke 12:8, 9, NIV

## Ruffed Grouse

I've often heard people around here talk about seeing or hunting prairie chickens, partridges, or pheasants. But I know what they're really talking about is ruffed grouse because there are no prairie chickens, partridges, or pheasants in our area. When it comes to ruffed grouse, it's a case of mistaken identity.

Even if there were prairie chickens, partridges, or pheasants in our area, you'd still be able to recognize ruffed grouse from the other

birds because of their behaviour. Ruffed grouse drum in the spring. They don't dance like prairie chickens, flick their tails like partridges, or crow like pheasants.

Ruffed grouse look different too. They don't have orange air sacks like prairie chickens, orange faces like partridges, or long tails and red faces like pheasants. No matter what you call them, ruffed grouse are ruffed grouse. They're not anything else.

## Think about it.

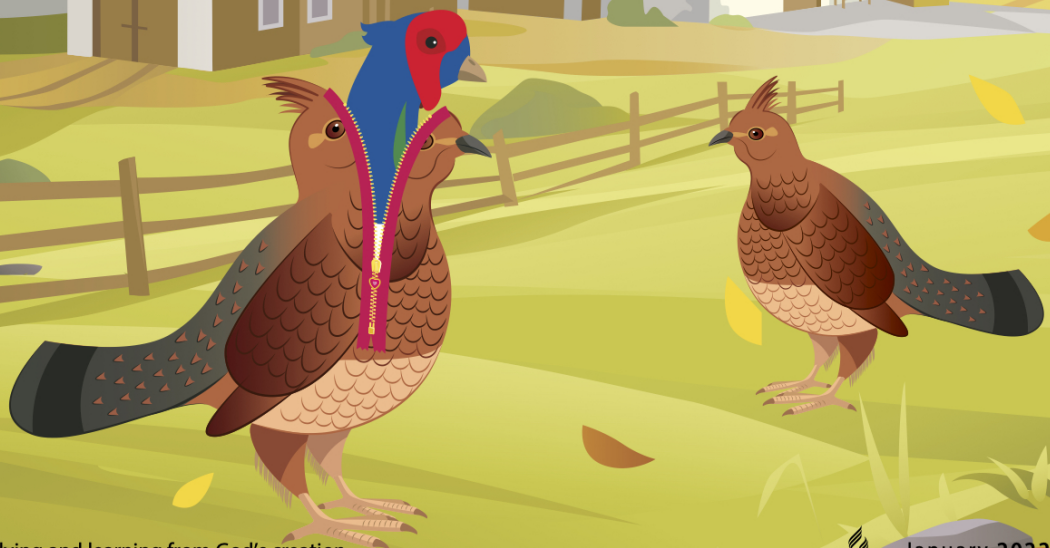
Sadly, some people mistakenly go by the name "Christian," when they're something else, not Christians at all.

Are you confessing to be a follower of Jesus by what you do, say, and what you put on? If your friends, family, or classmates don't know you're a Christian for sure, what are you going to do about it?

## Do it!

Spend time in regular Bible study and prayer. If you put these things off because they're uncomfortable, that's another sign things aren't right in your spiritual life.

Put away the worldly things that are distracting you and ask God to give you a hunger for His Word and time with Him.





## Navigating a COVID-19 World and Your Mental Health

As COVID-19 continues to disrupt our lives in so many ways throughout our country and world, an impending mental health crisis is looming. In fact, the World Health Organization listed mental health and depression as a global burden of disease in 2020.<sup>1</sup>

These are some simple steps you can take to care for your mental health:

- 1 Build a routine.** Eat on time, work on time, sleep on time, exercise on time, etc. Create a schedule that allows you to take care of your needs.
- 2 Prioritize.** Separate the urgent from the important. Some things can wait! Your health and mental health are a priority.
- 3 Make and maintain connections.** You must socialize in some way. We were not meant to live in a bubble, retire in reclusion, or become a hermit. Stay connected!
- 4 Take a break.** Take a break from the news, from being “Zoomed out,” and from all the conflicting information and noise pollution. Take a deep breath! Drown out the din and come to the quiet.
- 5 Stay calm, keep faith, and carry on.** This, too, will pass. Nothing lasts forever. Our God promises to keep us in perfect



peace if we place our trust in Him (Isa. 26:3).

May this New Year bring us all closer to God and to His soon return when the pandemic of sin will be all over and God will restore balance and bliss. ■

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*Daniel Saugh is a registered psychotherapist and the health ministries co-ordinator for the SDACC.*

<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization, “Depression,” Sept. 13, 2021, <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/depression>

## Bridge Builders

As Jacob saw Christ as the ladder connecting the earth to heaven,<sup>1</sup> Christ selected us as the leaders to bridge heaven and earth.

Amid all the challenges brought on by the pandemic, there are opportunities for good leadership. Online worship is here to stay, a chance to harness the intersection between physical, digital, and spiritual leadership.

Leaders need to reimagine mission and ministry. Did your community miss you?

People are lonely and looking for fellowship. Are we creating safe spaces for relationships to thrive? Are we inclusive of culture, age, and race? Ellen White says, “His followers are not to feel detached from the perishing world around them. They are a part of the great web of humanity, and heaven looks upon them as brothers to sinners as well as to saints.”<sup>2</sup>

Leaders are bridge-builders for the future, assisting our people to recalibrate, reset, and reinvent the mission. Bridge-building involves innovation and investment. How do we do that?

First, pray and lead the church to recall its purpose: to be the salt and light of the world and to share the gospel (Matt. 5:13, 14; 28:19). Envision together a hopeful and beautiful tomorrow.

Second, focus on relationships. Encourage love, respect, humility, and trust.

Third, create interdependence, moving from our silos into a collaborative team at all levels. We need each other— all generations, cultures, races, and people. Who are our community partners in this endeavour?

Leaders need patience. Christ in you is the bridge in you. Go forth and connect heaven to earth. ■

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*Damson Oppong is the ministerial secretary for the Ontario Conference.*

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 183, <https://bit.ly/3lr7GvF>  
<sup>2</sup> Ellen G. White, *Ministry of Healing*, 104, <https://bit.ly/3rwtZnP>





# FRESH FAITH

## 35 & UNDER

In 35 words or less, what motivates you to work hard?

### Life Leadership

by Alannah Tjhatra



Kira Bruggemann grew up learning how to take care of others. Born on a Sabbath morning in December 1998, Kira was the oldest child of three. Even as a child, Kira cared for her two younger siblings when her mother was sick. She learned what it meant to take on responsibility and lead others—two things she would carry with her for years.

Homeschooled until Grade 8, Kira attended Crawford Adventist Academy for high school. “When I reached high school, I... felt like I had to be ‘all in’ to make up for lost time. I dived into all the leadership positions I could. ... Working with people [was] a lot of fun for me.”

And throughout high school and into her time at Burman University, Kira continued to keep busy. “My four years at Burman were amazing,” says Kira. “I had so many opportunities for service and leadership, two of my greatest passions.”

Involved in everything from Student Association to Gospel Choir, Kira felt the most blessed in her role as Campus Ministries vespers co-ordinator. In this position, Kira was in charge of running Friday night vespers for the campus. She was able to work alongside many incredible people, and it was here where she truly began to see leadership as a ministry, a calling God had placed on her life.

After four years at Burman, Kira graduated summa cum laude with a bachelor of science in psychology, which felt natural, given that she had always loved studying people and the way individuals thought. Since graduating, Kira has been applying to various graduate schools to complete a master’s and a doctorate in psychology.

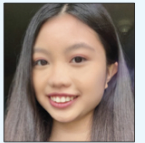
Recently, Kira also went on a mission trip with the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) to Thunder Bay, Ont. She continued delving into leadership and her love for people as she participated in providing support for First Nations communities who were being evacuated due to the forest fires in the north.

“This was a really meaningful experience,” says Kira, “which really highlighted the importance of ministering and volunteering to help people in our own country.”

Although there have been struggles in Kira’s life, she would rather not dwell on them, choosing instead to look ahead at the promise the future holds. There is a lot in store for her, and she looks forward to wherever life may take her. ■

#### Caralynn Chan

My friends and family motivate me to strive hard to become the best speech-language pathologist I can become. In my field, I hope to reveal God’s love through my words and interactions with clients.

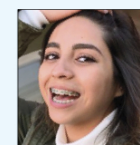
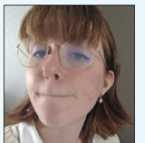


#### Enlai Wang

The fear of being a disappointment motivates me to work hard, as well as a competitive nature.

#### Genna Prouty

Simply put, I know I want certain things from my life and I have to work to get them.

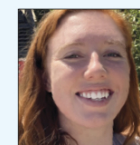
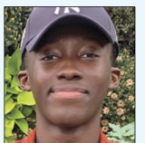


#### Jhoana Mortera

I want to be a missionary, so I look forward to ways I can serve others and keep in mind that I will give back to the community that has helped me achieve my goals.

#### Kwesi Tuffour

I’m a competitive person, so I really hate losing. The fear of failure motivates me to work really hard.



#### Siobhan Conyne

I procrastinate, so I put myself under pressure. And since I work best under pressure, I therefore tend to work very hard.







# Ask Me Anything

**Q:** I just moved across the country with my family. I start school soon, and I'm very shy. I miss my friends and my house and our neighbourhood. This is my first time moving. I feel out of place already.

**A:** My friend! Thank you for sharing what is happening in your life. Change can be difficult, especially when we are accustomed and comfortable right where we are. I'm so sorry you've had to experience the heartbreak of leaving your friends, house, and neighbourhood behind. It's difficult, and it certainly takes a while to not wake up feeling confused and missing the way things used to be.

This move is also an opportunity, friend. You are now on an adventure of recreating another home and expanding your friendship circle. It is daunting and scary, but I believe there are so many good things and experiences that await you.

There are perks to being the new person. I know because I, too, have moved around a bit. You'll meet people who will love and appreciate you! You'll have bright and sunny days ahead. While you get accustomed to this great big adventure, God promises to be with you. One of the characteristics I love the most about God is His omnipresence. He has the ability to be ANYWHERE and EVERYWHERE. He is not confined by space or time or location.

The same God who was with you across the country is the same God who is with you in your new home. God delights to be with us daily. I encourage you to incorporate Him into this huge change. May He help with your loneliness and reveal to you the amazing plans He has for you in this new place.

I love that passage of Jeremiah where God declares Himself to be close to us as His children. It has given me so much hope, especially when moving into new places:

"Am I not a God near at hand"—God's Decree—  
"and not a God far off?"

Can anyone hide out in a corner  
where I can't see him?"

God's Decree.

"Am I not present everywhere,  
whether seen or unseen?"

God's Decree.

—Jeremiah 23:23–24 (*The Message*) ■

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





# Growing Up

# Millennial



*"Fun fact: being a perfectionist and expecting perfection of oneself is a recipe for higher levels of anxiety, more stress, and an increase in self-loathing."*

## The Recovering Perfectionist

**I** once had a therapist tell me that she was a "recovering perfectionist." I couldn't figure out, at the time, why one *wouldn't* want to be a perfectionist. After all, when it came to control, wanting to do things the best way I could, and make the most people happy, I was a perfectionist. Of course, that was also part of the reason my anxiety levels were so high (*that* and the lack of serotonin in my brain, but I won't go into that today).

Merriam-Webster defines perfectionism in a couple of ways. The first definition has two variations: "the doctrine that the perfection of moral character constitutes a person's highest good" or "the theological doctrine that a state of freedom from sin is attainable on earth." I don't relate to either of these in a broad sense.

It's the second definition that gets me: "a disposition to regard anything short of perfection as unacceptable."<sup>1</sup> I cringe reading it a little bit, because that's the kind of standard to which I hold myself.

It's weird, but I don't hold other people nearly to the same standard as I hold myself. I give people a lot of leeway (too much sometimes, if I'm being honest), out of a sense of loyalty and assuming they are trying their best, etc. But of myself, I expect more. I don't think that I'm better than anyone else, but rather that it's my job to achieve as much as possible, to be the best that I can be, because if it's possible, I will make it happen. I've never been one to shy away from a challenge, and for me, especially throughout my undergraduate years, this seemed attainable.

Fun fact: being a perfectionist and expecting perfection of

oneself is a recipe for higher levels of anxiety, more stress, and an increase in self-loathing.

Don't get me wrong, holding yourself to a high standard is fine. Wanting to do well and succeed is a great motivating force, actually. But when you come to expect perfection of yourself—whether that be in terms of earning grades, making everyone around you happy, or how you're perceived in social situations—you lose yourself, and worse, at least in my case, God is lost in the mess.

To me, when I'm focused on making myself perfect and doing things perfectly, I'm the one trying to take complete control over a situation. I forget that God is actually the One who knows what's going on and knows more than me. And I know I'm not alone in this, because I've had my own clients (now that I'm an intern therapist) tell me similar things about control and wanting to be "good enough."

I wouldn't say that I've moved on from being a perfectionist. Actually, I haven't. I still struggle a lot with this idea of being perfect, doing everything right, and being the best that I can possibly be whether that be in terms of helping others or getting good grades. I'm competitive, too, so that doesn't help much. But this awareness is one of the first steps in any kind of "recovery"—even recovery from being a perfectionist. With a lot of prayer and a lot of self-reflection, I've come to identify as, just what my former therapist said, a recovering perfectionist. ■

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





# Beyond the AV Booth: Behind the Scenes of a Successful Livestream Production

*How to Seamlessly Deliver a Memorable, Glitch-Free Online Video Presentation*

**A**s churches and organizations look for new ways to reach people and keep their congregations engaged, especially with pandemic-related restrictions at play, a well-produced livestream that elevates your message can be critical to making that happen.

We're well aware that nothing replaces the experience of being at an event in person. However, now that so many are used to the idea of connecting remotely, the utility of livestreaming has grown in popularity. In this instalment, we will give you a few tips on how to seamlessly deliver a memorable, glitch-free online video presentation.

## Event Rundown

Firstly, the audiovisual (AV) team should be provided with a detailed event rundown in advance. This gives them time to review the material and allows them to do a tech rehearsal, pre-empting technical errors or faults before going live. The team members will also have time to think about how they may most effectively convey the message with the visuals at hand.

If a choir or a band is included, they should be prepared for a quick rehearsal and/or soundcheck before the proceedings begin. This will benefit not only the musicians but also the AV team. They will get a grasp of the music to be played, note any vocal or instrumental solos, and understand where the focus should be during specific bars and measures. Having a well-rehearsed team enhances the worship and message and will help to keep the online audience tuning in week after week.

## Live Director

A good live director is another key ingredient in transforming routine live coverage into engaging content. Having a rundown is a good basic structure for any church; however, a good live director knows how to emotionally connect with the audience.

If you can connect with your audience on an emotional level, not just through the message but also with how the audio

and visual broadcast is being conveyed, you increase the chances of keeping and attracting new members of your congregation. Your entire AV team plays a part, but a good director will elevate their skill as well as elevate the way the message is being conveyed.

## Communication

The last and probably most important tip is ensuring that communication flows well between all parties. This means the service direction needs to be communicated as clearly and as often as possible from the church's producer to the live director. Once the director has their directive and rundown needed to make the show possible, it's also important that the church has the tools for the director to be able to communicate that to the AV team both prior to and during the broadcast. Tools such as wired and wireless intercom, as well as in-ear monitors for musicians or performers who need them for one-way communication, are key.

Without communication, a service can quickly get derailed. And once derailed, it can be very hard to get things back on track. Therefore, it's critical for communication to be clear, concise, direct, and frequent. This will ensure your service avoids any possible mishaps and allows your entire team to confidently navigate the entire event.

There are so many other important elements that go into making a good livestream—suitable graphics, a cohesive audio team, timely video playback, proactive stage management, fresh and creative content, etc. But a good solid rundown, a good live director, and frequent and clear communication will differentiate you from other organizations. Your church will be well on its way, moving forward in a direction that connects with people on an emotional and spiritual level, even when they cannot be at church in person. ■

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*Brent Huckfield (brent@savweb.com) is a producer and technical director for Sandy Audio Visual in Toronto, Ont.*





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# Looking Beyond the Horizon



## The Honour of the Crown

“Why don’t they just become Canadian citizens like everybody else?” After all, doesn’t everyone want to be Canadian?

That’s the question, isn’t it?

My maternal family has been part of the Mushkegowuk Cree nations/countries in the James Bay area for thousands of years—an affiliation of Cree nations that extend from James Bay to the Rocky Mountains. That nation is recognized by the Anishinabek, Innu, and Eeyou Istchee Nations, who have also inhabited Turtle Island for thousands of years. My ancestors were there before Jesus walked this earth. I am a citizen of the Mushkegowuk Cree Nation (a right taken from me because my great-grandmother happened to marry a white man). My family has been Cree for hundreds upon hundreds of years.

Then newcomers, citizens of Britain, appear. Canada becomes a British colony. In 1867, it becomes a Dominion, a country in 1931, with not a single Canadian citizen on this land until 1947, and not an actual independent nation until 1982 with the Canadian Constitution and Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Get it? My mother and father were British citizens living in the land they were born, Canada, before they became Canadian citizens. Just a couple of British citizens with rights to live and work and own land in a country created by treaties. Just like every other person in Canada until the *Canadian Citizenship Act* became law in 1947.

In the *The Royal Proclamation of 1763*, pre-existing Indigenous rights and nationhood are named and promised to be protected by the *honour of the Crown* (British empire) forever. No one, including the British empire, was to infringe on these rights. Every treaty afterward is built on that legal foundation of inherent rights. It is recognized numerous times in Canadian history.<sup>1</sup>

Treated Canada is legally bound to keep the *honour of the Crown* with Indigenous Nations. Canadian citizenship is a scant 75 years old. Indigenous citizenship is hundreds and sometimes thousands of years old. It is an inherent legal right. So why should I *give up* being a citizen of an internationally recognized and existed-for-thousands-of-years Mushkegowuk Cree Nation to which I’m entitled according to every treaty/law, and instead accept a citizenship younger than my dad, from a country that gained its independence when I was in Grade 10?

There is the *honour of the British/Canadian Crown*, and then there is the *honour of the Crown of all Crowns and King of all Kings*. Jesus reminds me, and us as Christians, to render unto Caesar what is Caesar’s and unto God what is God’s (Mark 12:17). Be good citizens while also devoted followers of the Creator. Why would that entail living by British/Canadian law and not the laws of my Cree Nation—the original law of this land? Both can, and must, exist together. The *honour of the Crown* demands it. The crown found on a small European island and, even more, the eternal Crown found on the King of Kings.

Why isn’t that happening? Why are there half a million non-status First Nations people like me whose nationhood was taken from them? And almost two million status First Nations who, in order to become full Canadian citizens, must give up their rights to be part of their ancient nations? It is all about the land. We will explore that next time. ■

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



# That Place of Peace

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

As we look at the world around us at the start of a new year, it seems that true peace is a rare thing. With confusion, division, hatred, fear, and force steadily increasing, you may, like me, long for days of peace and tranquility—times when nothing could disturb us. Where have those days gone? Can we get to that place again?

Jesus said, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid” (John 14:27, ESV). Clearly, we don’t need to beg for Him to give us peace. It is already given to us as a gift. All we have to do is receive it and not let something else take its place.

“I’ve got the peace that passes understanding, down in my heart ... to stay!”

We sing it, but is it true? Staying in that place of peace is easy to recommend to others, but not so easy to do! We’re good at letting trouble and fear in, rather than receiving and keeping the gift of peace.

“You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You” (Isa. 26:3, ESV). There is a great deal of hope in this verse. God wants to keep us in that place of peace by focusing our minds on Him. But is the last part of the verse a problem? How much trust do we have?

I tend to assume I’ll have a huge amount of trust, until I’m actually in a difficult situation and then the trust seems to evaporate. I leap in to try and straighten things out myself rather than wait to see what God will do, and unfortunately, intellectual trust is no trust at all.

So what comes first, and what is my part? I’ve come to the realization that I can’t even receive the gift of peace without asking God to enable me to receive it. I can’t, on my own, stay focused on Him, but I can ask Him to capture my attention and focus. I can’t stay in that place of peace on my own, but He has promised to keep me there! And as for trust ... it grows, little by little as I practise resting in His arms and waiting for Him to provide His solutions. It is only nerve-racking until we learn to trust.

There is a place of quiet rest,  
Near to the heart of God,  
A place where sin cannot molest,  
Near to the heart of God.

O Jesus, blest Redeemer,  
Sent from the heart of God,  
Hold us, who wait before Thee,  
Near to the heart of God.

There is a place of comfort sweet,  
Near to the heart of God,  
A place where we our Savior meet,  
Near to the heart of God.

There is a place of full release,  
Near to the heart of God,  
A place where all is joy and peace,  
Near to the heart of God.<sup>1</sup> ■

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

<sup>1</sup> Cleland Boyd McAfee, “There Is a Place of Quiet Rest” (1903), <https://bit.ly/3nplYgB>



# Where Are They Now

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

*Interview by Ken Wiebe, Messenger Staff Writer*



**Mervin Kempert**

**Messenger:** *Tell me where you were born and about your earlier years.*

**Mervin Kempert:** I was born in Woodstock, Ont., and the third child in a family of six children: four boys and two girls. We were a non-Christian family with no interest in religion. However, I always pondered about life, where we came from, and why we existed.

After high school I took a 33-week forestry course in preparation of becoming a conservation officer. But God had other plans.

Sometime in the 1950s, William and Virginia Fagal's *Faith for Today* TV program caught my attention, and here I found the meaning to life that I had yearned to know about. In 1958, I chose to become a Christian and in 1960 was baptized at the Paris Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ontario.

**M:** *Where did you go to school and what led you to choose the ministerial career?*

**MK:** I was an average student in school and completed Grade 12 in Woodstock. Shortly after accepting the Adventist message, I felt a deep conviction that God was calling me to pastoral ministry. My pastor, Oliver Libby, directed me to Canadian Union College (now Burman University), and off I went in fall 1960.

It was there that I met Lillian Gabel, who was dean of women, and we married in 1962. Shortly after,



she received a call to serve as secretary of admissions at Andrews University, so we transferred there, where I completed my bachelor of theology degree in 1965.

Later, on two separate occasions, I studied at Loma Linda: in 1968 taking one quarter of clinical pastoral education (CPE) to train for chaplaincy roles and then again in 1973/74 to attend the School of Health, where I received my master of science in public health (MSPH), majoring in health education.

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

**MK:** Upon completion of my studies at Andrews University, our first assignment was in the Maritimes. We served the Charlottetown church on PEI (actually, the entire island was my territory), along with two other churches in New Brunswick: Pugwash and New Glasgow (those were the days before the Confederation Bridge was built). There, we adopted two children from Minto, N.B.: Kenneth, then aged seven, and his sister Wanda, who was nearly four.

After three years of pastoring in the Maritimes, I felt I might better serve as a chaplain, so we headed for Loma Linda, Calif., for that quarter of CPE I mentioned earlier. However, no chaplaincy position was open, so in 1968, I accepted a call to pastor the Quincy/Danville/Carthage district in the Illinois Conference. A few years later I felt the need for additional training and returned to Loma Linda for the public health program. That's when President Don McIvor called me to the Manitoba-Saskatchewan Conference to serve as chaplain for both Park Manor and West Park Manor Personal Care Homes in Winnipeg.

Later we accepted a call to pastor the New London and Litchfield churches in the Minnesota Conference, and then in 1980 the Manitoba-Saskatchewan Conference called us back to serve as pastor in the Brandon, Man., district.

After five years we were transferred to Winnipeg, again to serve as chaplain of Park Manor but this time to pastor two churches in addition: Winnipeg South-East and Mountain-Andrews. From there the conference reassigned us to the Moose Jaw district, where we stayed for five years. Then we were moved over one district to the west to the Swift Current and Maple Creek churches for three years.

About this time the Manitoba-Saskatchewan Conference invited Lillian and me to spearhead the new Adventist Community Service (ACS) program in Winnipeg, which we did. Once the program was up and running, we ended our pastoral career in the Dauphin district, retiring after a total of 34 years in ministry.

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

**MK:** Actually, four things stand out as highlights in my career:

1. Initiating the ACS project in Winnipeg. It was an honour to be entrusted to start such a marvellous outreach responsibility.
2. Building a new church in Carthage, Ill.
3. Building a new church in Danville, Ill.
4. Initiating the construction of a school classroom onto the west side of the Moose Jaw church. This involved some negotiation with the city for permission, since there was a playground next door.

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

**MK:** As I mentioned, Lillian and I adopted two children when we served in the Maritime Conference. Kenneth, while living in Hinckley, Minn., passed away from a stroke on Oct. 18, 2020, at the age of 61. Wanda is currently living in Moose Jaw, Sask., working as a home care worker.

After our retirement in 1999, Lillian and I moved to Moose Jaw, and it was there that Lillian was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. The symptoms quickly grew worse, and it became apparent she would soon need nursing care. With this in mind, in the summer of 2010, we moved to the Adventist-owned East Park Lodge in Winnipeg, and in January 2011, Lillian became a resident of the Park Manor Personal Care Home, which is adjacent to the Lodge. She died on Dec. 3, 2014, at the age of 89.

I have three grandchildren: Jason in Hinckley; Myles in Kelowna, B.C.; and Chris in Moose Jaw. I also have three step-grandchildren: Tim, Michelle, and Shelley, as well as several great-grandchildren.

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

**MK:** After Lillian's death I continued living in the East Park Lodge. I was involved in the Transcona Adventist Church, teaching a Sabbath school class, preaching on occasion, and assisting with church services and other duties at the East Park Lodge and Park Manor Personal Care Home. Feeling I still had significant energy, I also volunteered to help at the ACS Centre from time to time.

In April 2021, I relocated to Moose Jaw where I live with and appreciate the kindness of our daughter, Wanda. I'm enjoying the opportunity of doing more in-depth Bible study and looking forward to the blessed hope of the second coming of Jesus. ■



# Feeding the Spirit

“I remember standing on the ledge of that tall building planning to end it all when I heard a voice: ‘Look in your pocket, Ian.’ I dug my fingers into my pocket and pulled out a crumpled piece of paper with the words ‘Suicide Prevention Hotline.’ I don’t know how it got there, but I called the number, and they came to get me down.” Ian McPherson reflects, “I blamed God for everything, yet He was saving me.”

Looking back, Ian agonized over the seeds of resentment, pain, and anger planted in his tender little child’s heart when his parents split up.

“I just wanted my mom back. And when my dad started going to church and met my stepmom, I thought maybe God had something to do with all this happening. I raged against my stepmom, even though she loved and cared for me. When I reached my teen years, I started fighting, swearing, and bullying other kids, so I went into foster care, but the guy in charge was a pedophile, and he hurt me and the other boys.”

Years later the boys spoke up, and their foster father was sent to jail.

Ian continues, “We started drinking, smoking pot, and joined a gang, which became my new family. Because I was the only Indigenous kid, I felt I had to be the worst of the worst: the meanest, maddest, baddest guy on the streets. I was stabbed, shot at, jumped, beaten up, tasered, and hit with two-by-fours, but I gave it all back to them. I used anger to cover my fear.”

Ian’s regrets simmered to the surface. “I brought good boys into this bad world and made them bad, so I struggled to forgive myself,” he says. “I tried to numb the pain with alcohol, pot, pills, needles, cocaine, fentanyl, meth, you name it. I tried to change location, get away, but I always took myself with me: same problem, different city. Even when my girlfriend and I had a child together, we couldn’t keep it together.”

Though God saved Ian from stepping off the ledge, giving him strength to sober up, Ian became really depressed.



Watch Ian’s story in “Feeding the Spirit” this month on CTV or go to [It Is Written Canada’s YouTube channel](#).

“I ended up sitting in my apartment wanting to kill myself again. I was going to end it all, but I heard this voice. There was a glow in the room, and a soft, mellow, loving voice said to me, ‘This isn’t your time. I have plans for you, Ian.’ It was at that moment in my apartment, when I was at my lowest, that God forgave me, and He changed everything. Even though there are times when I wake up in the middle of the night in cold sweats—the devil taunting me, my heart racing—Jesus calms me, reminding me how He saved my life.”

Ian affirms, “I am now feeding the good wolf—feeding the spirit and starving the flesh—reading my Bible, praying, and getting support. This verse from Lamentations 3:22–24 says it all: “Through the Lord’s mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your

faithfulness. “The Lord is my portion,” says my soul, “Therefore I hope in Him!”” God has changed my heart to the point where I have a deep love and respect for my dad and my stepmom.”

You can watch Ian McPherson’s story on *It Is Written Canada* this month on CTV or any of the dozens of stations where *It Is Written Canada’s* programs are featured. Also, go to [itiswrittencanada.ca](#) or *It Is Written Canada’s* YouTube channel and click on the program titled “Feeding the Spirit.” ■

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





# An Inspiring Story: *George's Tree* Influences a Camp Frenda Endowment Fund



**AN ONTARIO COUPLE** credits the book *George's Tree* for their decision to set up a Camp Frenda endowment fund. The couple's children were blessed by attending Camp Frenda as campers and by working there as teens.

Although their children are now grown with families of their own, this couple remembered their dream of helping other children enjoy camp, particularly those who did not have access to other Adventist youth activities. Their vision and their Camp Frenda endowment fund came together when they received and read *George's Tree*. They found the book easy to understand and full of planned-giving and estate-planning ideas.

So in January 2013, Dr. George and Mrs. Earla (née Wood) Sanz established the Sanz Family Endowment Fund to assist children from Adventist churches who would not normally have the opportunity to attend a summer camp at Camp Frenda.

George and Earla set up this endowment fund to honour their parents, Earl and Ila Wood, and Daniel and Alice Sanz. Their parents were dedicated to Christian service and did their best to help others, especially the young people, to maintain a connection with God and with the Adventist Church. Lifelong members of the Kingston, Ont., Seventh-day Adventist Church, Earl and Ila Wood played an active role. They were especially devoted to the youth. Earl was active in the community. He

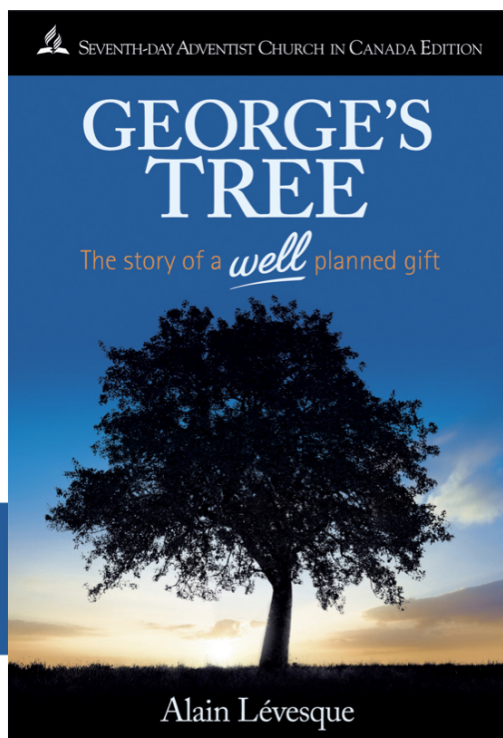
served as president of the local Children's Aid Society, was a member of the local elementary school board, and regularly participated in the Kingston Rotary Service Club.

Daniel and Alice Sanz lived in Spain during the Franco years when open evangelization was forbidden. Daniel, a pastor, and his wife, Alice, laboured for God under difficult circumstances. They reached out to many young people through friendship evangelism, providing meals, shelter, Christian social activities, and Bible studies. Many of these young people lacked family support when they joined the church. Daniel helped them find work selling Adventist literature and encouraged them to obtain a Christian education. As a result, almost a whole generation of pastors and church workers in Spain can trace their relationship to God and to the Adventist Church back to George's parents.

"It is for this reason that the Sanz Family Endowment Fund has been set up, especially for young people growing up in small, isolated Adventist churches," said the Sanzes. "By attending Camp Frenda, these young people will have the opportunity to experience positive friendships and realize that they belong to a worldwide church family. Hopefully, they will consider Christian education and will make the decision to maintain their relationship with God and with the church."

Glenn DeSilva, pastor and [former] camp director, happily received the news. "We are so thankful to God for the Sanz Family Endowment Fund," he said. "There is no question that many children will come to know God when they attend Camp Frenda. This fund will help our young people from remote churches to meet other Adventist young people. It is truly a wonderful gift." ■

*Reprinted from the October 2013 Canadian Adventist Messenger. Adapted with permission from an article by Halsey Peat in Ontario Highlights, Summer 2013.*



Request your personal, free copy of *George's Tree: The Story of a Well-Planned Gift*, Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada Edition, by calling 905/433-0011, ext. 2078, or by emailing [legal@adventist.ca](mailto:legal@adventist.ca). Visit [www.willplan.ca](http://www.willplan.ca) for more information.





# RAINMAK



## The Secret Sauce

At age 27, long after most of us have securely established relationships with our fathers, Garnet Thompson met, for the first time, the man responsible for giving him life. That profound experience sparked a desire in him to share the story of his non-traditional upbringing in the hope that it might help others in similar situations.

Born in the lush island paradise of Jamaica, Garnet was parented by his maternal grandparents until he was nine years old and then lived with various extended relatives or friends until he turned 14.

When he turned nine, Garnet spent a year with a local church's minister and his family while his grandparents immigrated to Canada, the land of promise, to establish a better life for themselves and their grandson. At age 10, Garnet followed his grandparents to Toronto, where he revelled in the excitement of winter and snow for the first time. He remembers often wearing his jacket open just so he could fully experience the coldness!

Supported by a variety of guardians throughout his childhood and youth, Garnet learned to accept that life would be unpredictable and present many challenges. Although these individuals provided care and guidance in his young life, he recalls his childhood as an often painful time of feeling abandoned, unwanted, and unloved.

Fast forward some years, and the young boy who once ran barefoot on the beach in Jamaica is now a husband, father, and business executive living in

a small town in southern Ontario and heading a department in a leading health-and-wellness company. Gone are the limitations that previously held him back—the tremendous self-doubt and socioeconomic challenges.

Indeed, Garnet states that after meeting his father, he was able to overcome his stifled mindset and fulfill his dreams for a better life through “persistence, willpower, and the support of compassionate relatives, mentors, and friends.” He calls these ingredients the “three keys” in the life he shares today with his wife, Nadine, and two university-aged children, Jasmine and Anthony.

Further, he asserts that while “facing life challenges at this unique time in human history requires persistence and the right attitude, a network of support is the ‘secret sauce’ when pursuing any noteworthy dream or goal.” He expounds, “A network provides a storehouse of encouragement on days when we lack the confidence and willpower to take another step forward.”

As a young boy, Garnet realized the importance of building genuine relationships with a small core group of people. This realization has certainly informed his relationship with his wife and children. Having experienced the pain of certain aspects of his childhood, he takes great care to ensure Nadine, Jasmine, and Anthony know that they can always count on him being in their corner to support them 100 percent.

Something else to add to his portfolio is the title of published author. Encouraged by family to chronicle his

journey through life thus far, in 2019 Garnet released his first book, *20/20 Vision Dreams: List of 100 Dreams*. Interestingly, the impetus for the book was a struggle he witnessed in his children. Recognizing that “one of the challenges facing some young people is finding interesting and effective ways to become or stay inspired and motivated to live up to their full potential and to contribute to society in a positive way,” Garnet acted on an idea.

During a week of vacation in July 2013, he sat down with Jasmine and Anthony and engaged them in writing out all the things, places, experiences, and dreams they wanted to make happen that week and beyond. Being able to make some of those dreams a reality together during that week turned out to be a powerful lesson for all about working hard and taking deliberate steps toward a goal. Coupling that experience with some of the lessons he had learned during his own journey through life, Garnet penned the 20/20 book with a desire to help future generations of youthful dream-seekers. For him, it's not just about his own children; he wants to inspire and motivate young people around the world.

A second book, *Why the Bricklayer Smiles*, followed, about Logan, a young boy going with his bricklayer mom to her jobsite on “take-your-kids-to-work day.” It's a book for children in their formative years that Garnet hopes will help them grow into adults with a well-informed understanding of the importance of their role and potential contribution to society.





# ERS

Garnet knows that his steps are being guided by God. There are parallels he has just recently come to appreciate in the developing relationships with his earthly father and heavenly Father. It took over a quarter century to meet his biological father, and the experience was profoundly life changing. With his heavenly Father, he reflects, "It took me longer than I wish it did, to hear the voice of God speaking through many people for me to make the decision to be baptized. I have always had a relationship with God from childhood. However, after hearing a sermon titled 'How Long?' by a pastor several years ago, that was when I made the decision in my heart to accept Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour, and started developing a deeper personal relationship with Him."

This spiritual relationship, he finds, impacts all aspects of his life, including family life, work, and even his writing style. At his workplace, his spiritual life helps filter decision-making through the lens of "What's the right thing to do?" to keep consumers' trust. In his writing, he seeks to provide information that will uplift the reader and share light and inspiration with those feeling lost in the world's darkness.

One "note to self" Garnet repeats to himself often is, "You were created by God to be you. You deciding that you prefer to be someone other than who you were created to be, doesn't trump God. Be you and play to win." Wise counsel, especially for young people navigating our entertainment- and reality-TV-riddled society. Garnet notes, though, that it is not his intention to be

a role model for youth. He simply wants to help them develop a mindset and perspective that will serve their future.

Garnet knows first-hand how fear can cripple one's psyche and tear down one's dreams. "One thing which held me back in the past and still rears its ugly head today from time to time is fear. Whether it was the fear of criticism, fear of failure, or fear of success, they all had the impact of obscuring my vision and sometimes paralyzed me from acting on my dreams."

Most of us can surely relate to his confession, but he continues with an important reminder for young and old.



Garnet Thompson

"I remind myself that the fears that are not related to my safety are false and are imaginary. I have decided ahead of time that I will demand of myself the courage to act and push through the curtain of fear to reach my dreams on the other side."

How wonderful that Garnet and, indeed, each one of us, can live without fear with Jesus as our guide on this journey of life. ■

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*Beverley Edwards-Haines is a nutritionist and farmer in beautiful B.C., who is passionate about sharing God's message of healthy living with the world.*







# How the Case for Steve's Conscience Was Won: 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Supreme Court of Canada Sabbath Decision

*Thirty years ago, the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) ruled in favour of Larry Steve Renaud's conscientious stand not to work on Sabbath.<sup>1</sup> The court held both the employer and labour union had to negotiate an accommodation, while acknowledging the employee's duty of reasonableness in seeking an accommodation. It was a ground-breaking case.*

*"I learned through this experience that it isn't easy to stand up for your beliefs," Steve recalls, "but you need to be able to follow your conscience because that is ultimately where you find peace. Knowing you are obeying God's law, though maybe difficult, is comforting."*

*Originally from Haiti, Steve immigrated to Canada in 1972. In 1980, School District #23 in Kelowna, B.C., hired him as a custodian. Convicted about Sabbath in 1985, a crisis of conscience arose. His beliefs meant he could no longer work Friday evenings after sunset.*







Approaching his employer for Sabbaths off, he was told to use up his holiday time. This temporary solution worked for only a few months. The employer suggested contacting the union as any accommodation required changing the collective agreement. The union was displeased he had spoken to the school district first. The union also reasoned changing the agreement for Steve would open the door to similar requests from others.

“I had a difficult time with this,” remembers Steve, “because [the union] made allowances for a co-worker to play music with his band in a bar on multiple Friday nights and that was OK.” So why not allow him to have Sabbath off? He was willing to work Saturday evenings and Sundays to ensure the school was clean for Monday classes, but his

suggestion was rejected, in part because the collective agreement required overtime pay for evening and Sunday shifts. Steve was willing to work for regular pay, but this accommodation along with other accommodations were rejected by the union that did not want to change its collective agreement. The union threatened a grievance if the school district accommodated him.

With a young family to care for, it was difficult to lose his job. Friends chastised him over his choice. His first duty, they exhorted, was to his family, and he must remain at work until God led him elsewhere. Steve chose to lose his job and honour God.

The intake person at the unemployment office informed him that his dismissal from the school district was wrong. As Steve explains, “One thing led to another as

this situation took on a life of its own, as I didn’t plan for this to happen. I was directed to file a complaint with the human rights authorities, and that is where the legal challenge began.”

During the various stages of the legal proceedings, Steve continued to trust God. He admits, “The experience was a bit like a roller coaster ride—ups when the ruling was in my favour and downs when a higher court ruled against me. The case became a part of everyday life, but it didn’t consume me, because I trusted God and knew that He was in control. I was able to enjoy life. My business ventures were pleasurable for me because my little boy accompanied me with my yard maintenance and was often with me selling ice cream. I had the support of my whole family delivering flyers.” No doubt, the ice cream business



# City man takes religious discrimination case to top court



LARRY RENAUD  
... has struggled

OTTAWA (CP) — It took seven years, but Larry Renaud finally sat in the Supreme Court of Canada on Tuesday as judges heard his claim that he lost his job because of religious discrimination.

"I fought it all the way to the Supreme Court just because I want my job back, and also for the other

"It's been very hard, but the Lord always gave us support," he said outside court.

The high court reserved decision. It is not known when it will issue a ruling.

The case is considered an important test of how far employers and unions must go to accommodate

Renaud began working for the Central Okanagan School District in 1980. In 1985, he switched to the Spring Valley Elementary School.

But he refused to work on Friday — normal time was 11 p.m. — because Seventh-day Adventists are allowed to work on the sabbath except for humanitarian such as saving lives.

The school board was told to let Renaud work Sunday.

But his union, the C

Renaud had been discriminated against and ordered that he get his

## Court case to set precedent on religious discrimination

BOB COX  
Canadian Press

Ottawa

"I fought it all the way to the Supreme Court just because I want my job back, and also for the other people it might affect because I have been discriminated against," said Renaud, a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.



Renaud

It took seven years, but Larry Renaud finally sat in the Supreme Court of Canada on Tuesday as judges heard his claim that he lost his job because of religious discrimination.

"I fought it all the way to the Supreme Court just because I want my job back, and also for the other people it might affect because I have been discriminated against," said Renaud, a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

It is not known when it will issue a ruling.

The case is considered an important test of how far employers and unions must go to accommodate workers who may face religious discrimination.

Employers must accommodate a person's religious beliefs so long as they can do so without undue hardship — too much disruption of normal business or too much cost.

The Supreme Court will try to further define the concept by deciding if the school board or Renaud's union has a duty to make a reasonable accommodation if he is unable to work part of a shift for religious reasons.

Renaud began working for the Central Okanagan School District in 1980. In 1985, he switched to afternoon shifts. Monday to Friday, at the Spring Valley Elementary School.

But he refused to work past sundown on Friday — normal quitting time was 11 p.m. — because Seventh-day Adventists are not allowed to work on the sabbath except for humanitarian reasons such as saving lives.

The school board was willing to let Renaud work Sunday to Thursday. But his union, the Canadian Union of Public Employees, said that would violate their contract.

The board refused to do anything without union approval that might lead to a grievance.

A human rights tribunal ruled Renaud had been discriminated against and ordered that he get his job back as well as \$14,000 from the board and union.

But the British Columbia Supreme Court — upheld by the B.C. Court of Appeal — ruled that working Friday night was a legitimate part of Renaud's job and he couldn't claim religious discrimination.

Renaud's lawyers argued that neither the board nor union did enough to accommodate Renaud.

The board claims it offered many solutions, but it would have been too much to ask it to unilaterally breach the contract.

The union says it would be unreasonable to accommodate Renaud by hurting other workers who might be forced to work his Friday night shift.

## Renaud's family happy he's got his job back

By ROB MUNRO  
Courier Staff

Larry Renaud is going back to work.

After seven years, the school custodian is returning to work with the Central Okanagan School District on Tuesday.

"We stuck together as a family and that really helped," his wife Siegrid said today. "We made it."

Renaud, a Seventh-day Adventist, was fired by the school board in 1985 after he refused to work on his church's Sabbath, from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday.

He fought his dismissal all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada. The court ruled recently that he should get his job back. It said the Canadian Union of Public Em-

ployees, was wrong in not allowing

## Adventist wins court fight

OTTAWA (CP) — Unions have a duty to accommodate members' religious beliefs, just as employers do, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled Thursday.

In a 6-0 ruling, the court said the union of a British Columbia man, a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, was wrong to refuse to agree to shift changes which would have allowed him to avoid working on his sabbath.

The court said Larry Renaud,

36, of Kelowna, B.C., should get his job back as a school janitor and that both the school board and the Canadian Union of Public Employees should pay him for lost wages and distress.

Members of Renaud's church said the ruling broadens what employers and unions must do to accommodate them.

"This raises the standard," said Douglas Dvornich, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada.

Photos this spread: Newspapers and journals from across the country reported on this momentous win for religious freedom in Canada after the Supreme Court decision in 1992.

was a big hit with his family!

Steve retained a legal aid lawyer. The B.C. Council of Human Rights ruled in his favour, but on appeal, the B.C. Supreme Court (BCSC) ruled against him. At that point the legal aid lawyer said he did not have the expertise or financial support to continue the case.

That was when lawyer Karen Scott was retained. Steve had been impressed when he heard Karen speak at Camp Hope about a religious liberty case she had worked on, so he contacted her for assistance. She was in private, solo practice and only six months in after being called to the bar. In other words, she was at the very beginning of her legal career!

She immediately recognized that this case would eventually go to the country's highest court after the B.C. Court of Appeal (BCCA) hearing. Karen explains, "The SCC had already ruled employers have a duty to accommodate employees' needs but what is an employer's duty to accommodate when there's a collective agreement in place? This was the first time in Canadian legal history this question was before the courts."

She suggested Steve and his wife, Siegrid, get a more experienced lawyer.

Steve recalls, "When I first asked her to take on my case, she felt that she didn't have the needed experience to properly represent me. My answer to her was that I would rather have a lawyer with faith and trust in God and little experience than a lawyer with much experience but no faith and trust in God." He remembers she "worked hard and prayed harder, and she was a solid support all the way through. She shared in my disappointments, hopes, and ultimate victory as a friend and not just a lawyer representing my case."

Karnik Doukmetzian, the Public Affairs and Religious Liberty director of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada (SDACC), agrees: "Karen single-handedly carried the load of this case on Steve's behalf. A valiant battle to correct a wrong." Karnik's office provided Karen with the financial resources she needed to get the job done.

The seven-year legal journey had its difficult moments. Steve struggled with misrepresentations made in court by the employer and union, and his "eyes were opened" when reporters misquoted him. "The first time that happened was such a shock!" he recalls. Then there were natural letdowns when he lost, followed

by jubilation when he won. Looking back, he saw it as a net gain for God's kingdom because he was able to witness to the importance of keeping Sabbath.

When strangers on the street would sometimes recognize him from newspaper articles and call him "Larry," as the media referred to him, his family and friends teased him endlessly because they all knew him as Steve, which is his middle name and the one he goes by.

At every level he was present to hear the arguments live. From the questions the judges asked, he gained clues as to what the outcome would be. At the BCSC, he noted the derision toward the decision of the B.C. Council of Human Rights. Again at the BCCA the three judges were very sympathetic toward the employer and union. At the SCC, he observed a different demeanour. The judges asked direct and intense questions of the lawyers for the school district and union. "This time they were on the defensive," says Steve, "and it was very obvious that the judges were leaning in our favour. That was such a wonderful feeling."

While Steve trusted God, so did Karen. She was acutely aware of the





# Sabbath verdict affects unions

OTTAWA (Staff) — Unions have the same duty as employers to accommodate workers whose religious beliefs prevent them from working on their sabbath, the Supreme Court says.

In a 6-0 vote, the court ruled yesterday a school janitor's union and employer should pay him \$14,000 in lost wages and emotional distress for costing him his job in 1985.

It also ordered that Larry Renaud, a Canadian Union of Public Employees member, get his old job back.

Renaud, 36, is a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church which prohibits followers from working on its sabbath — sunset Friday to sunset Saturday.



The Supreme Court agrees: Larry Renaud lost his job because of his religion.

# CLEAN WIN FOR JANITOR'S CASE

OTTAWA (CP) — It took seven years, but Larry Renaud finally sat in the Supreme Court of Canada on Tuesday as judges heard his claim that he lost his job because of religious discrimination. "I fought it all the way to the Supreme Court just because I want my job back, and also for the other people it might affect because I have been discriminated against," said Renaud, a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Renaud, 36, of Kelowna, B.C., was fired as a school janitor in 1985 when he refused to work on his sabbath, from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday. Since then, the married father of three — the youngest is 16 months old — has struggled to find work. He has been unemployed since last May.

# Adventist janitor gets day in court

OTTAWA (CP) — It took seven years, but Larry Renaud finally sat in the Supreme Court of Canada on Tuesday as judges heard his claim that he lost his job because of religious discrimination.



RENAUD

# Renaud back

It took seven years, but Steve Renaud is back at work. Renaud, a Seventh-day Adventist, returns to his job as a school custodian Tuesday, after he was fired by the Central Okanagan School District in 1985 for refusing to work on his sabbath — from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday. He will now work Sunday to Thursday, a shift the school district originally offered him in 1985, but which was vetoed by the Canadian Union of Public Employees. CUPE argued its collective

# Man wrongly fired, court rules

OTTAWA (CP) — A British Columbia man should not have been fired for refusing to work on his sabbath, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled today. The court said Larry Renaud, of Kelowna, B.C., was a victim of discrimination when he lost his job as a school janitor in 1985. Renaud, 36, a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, was fired when he refused to work on his church's sabbath, from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday. The case was considered an important test of how far employers and unions must go to accommodate workers who may face religious discrimination.

# Supreme Court hears janitor's tale



Renaud fired for refusing Sunday shift.

OTTAWA — It took seven years, but Larry Renaud finally sat in the Supreme Court of Canada yesterday as judges heard his claim that he lost his job because of religious discrimination. "I fought it all the way to the Supreme Court just because I want my job back, and also for the other people it might affect because I have been discriminated against," said Renaud, a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Renaud, 36, of Kelowna, B.C., was fired as a school janitor in 1985 when he refused to work on his church's sabbath, from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday. Since then, the married father of three — the youngest is 16 months old — has struggled to find work. He has been unemployed since last May.

magnitude of the case, recalling "that I had not just the fate of Steve's future in my hands but the fate of every Sabbathkeeper in the nation. That's when I prayed even more for God's guidance and direction as well as asking that He prepare the hearts of the judges to decide in Steve's favour."

The night before appearing before the SCC, Karen prayed for wisdom. "I didn't just want to read my submitted written argument," she recalls, "but nothing seemed to work. So once again I cried out to God about how important this case was and how I was unable to do anything myself. As I had previously advised clients seeking exemption from union membership, I now claimed His promise in Luke 21:14-15 for the words needed. I am still amazed how God answered that prayer. Suddenly the words just flowed onto my paper. After weeks of struggle, I finally had the oral argument to present to the court."

Because of the importance of the case, three entities—the Ontario Human Rights Commission, Disabled People for Employment Equality and Persons United for Self-Help in Ontario, as well as the SDACC—were granted permission by the SCC to argue before the court.

Karnik, arguing on behalf of the SDACC, remembers the day of the hearing: "We were all very nervous to be before the highest court in the land, not only to support Steve but the church and our beliefs. It was a privilege for us, as Adventist lawyers, to be before the court." The victory now stands as the foundation not only for employment accommodation to all religions but also for the rights of accommodation for disabled persons and others.

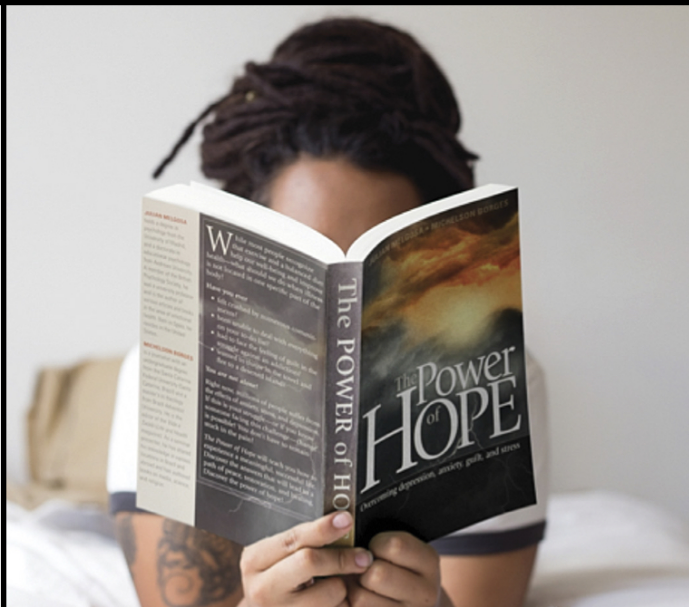
The Renaud case continues aiding not just those needing Sabbath accommodation but those needing accommodation for other needs such as disability. Unions nationwide now support the case. Some scholars believe the Renaud decision is one reason Canada leads the world in providing positive work environments. God continues, 30 years later, blessing many as a result of Steve's commitment to honour and obey Him. ■

Barry W. Bussey is the president and CEO of First Freedoms Foundation (www.firstfreedom.ca).



An article covering this story also appeared in the October 1992 issue of the Canadian Adventist Messenger, written by Karnik Doukmetzian, who served as Public Affairs and Religious Liberty director for the SDACC at the time.





# The Power of Hope

*“For those of us who have experienced peace in Christ, especially if our relationship with God started years ago, we may not realize the hopelessness many people are going through right now.”*

**E**very summer, Canada Youth Challenge missionaries are sent across this country to reach people for Christ. With the many restrictions this past year, it was not possible to visit individuals in their homes. Following much prayer, God helped us to find a new and creative way to connect with people.

We did some postcard mailings and followed up with an extensive Facebook advertising campaign that covered all the provinces across Canada. Through this method, we were able to reach over 80,000 people!

Individuals were offered a free book called *The Power of Hope*, by Dr. Melgosa. The book shares stories and practical steps to help readers who are battling anxiety, depression, stress, addiction, and guilt. The goal was to provide resources and tools for the present while pointing individuals to a hope beyond the current darkness. The book introduces readers to the Saviour and invites them to experience restoration through Sabbath rest and hope in Christ’s soon return.

Hundreds of people responded positively and requested for us to mail the book to them. Hundreds also opted to download a digital copy to read on their devices. From the Facebook profiles, we could tell that requests came from a vastly diverse audience. In other words, people of all backgrounds and persuasions are looking for hope!

For those of us who have experienced peace in Christ, especially if our relationship with God started years ago, we may not realize the hopelessness many people are going through right now. Rachel\* helped us to see that. She lives in government housing provided for women who have gone through trauma. After reading the book we sent, she requested that we send her 46 additional copies—one for each woman in her building!

She told me that the ladies now meet together to go over the book and review the practical tips and exercises for better mental health!

We are also thankful that this Canada-wide outreach initiative has opened a channel of communication with many people through the Facebook Messenger app. Below are just a few samples of the hundreds of messages we received about the book:

*“Thanks. I will use it a lot. It will help me on my new path in life to have more hope and faith...”*

*“Just received mine this morning, thank you so very much!!! I started to read this, just finishing Chapter 1!!!”*

*“Thank you. I’m really at the lowest point in my life emotionally. I needed that this morning.”*

*“Thank you so much for this book. My wife suffers from acute depression, and I suffer from a mild depression.”*

*“I received the book. Thank you so much! I’m enjoying it very much. It is so helpful!!!”*

*“This book will help me move forward. My youngest brother passed away on [date removed], and Mom is passing away. Thank you so much!”*

All individuals who received a copy of the book were also invited to complete our Community Needs Survey.

From the surveys, we received requests for Bible studies, prayer, counselling, and for more resources for depression recovery. Please pray that as individuals across Canada read this book, they may find peace with God and seek to know Jesus and His truth in a deeper way. ■

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

\*Name changed.





# A Beautiful Garden



Sid having an adventure in the pumpkin field with his Flat Stanley.

**Adventist educators** value and respect diversity and seek to provide opportunities that allow us to learn from and about one another. I feel blessed to be part of our Adventist education family across Canada.

In 2014, plans were made for a new program at Sandy Lake Academy (SLA) for junior primary- and primary-aged children (ages 4 and 5). The Maritime Conference offered me this unique position, explaining that they wanted to try the program for one year to see if it would attract families and be successful.

I was fearful of leaving my current position in case there were not enough children for the new SLA program to go ahead. At the time, there was only one child registered. I prayed, asking God to guide me. If God would provide six children to start with, I decided I would take the job. God provided. I joined SLA and have been teaching the junior primary and primary (JPP) program ever since.

Each school year I am excited to be part of God's plans for each child. The program has grown quickly, and every year God is faithful in providing us with more children. Because of the increase, our classroom welcomed Sharri Scott as our teaching assistant. This year we have been blessed with 15 children!

Every year we find ways to celebrate the rich diversity of children in our classroom. Our families represent almost every continent, and we are so happy to have the opportunity to learn about all the cultures represented. Children are like flowers—different shapes, sizes, and colours—and together they make a beautiful garden!

One of the children's favourite subjects is social studies. Every year we complete a multicultural project in this class. Each student introduces his/her family's country with songs, cultural dance, food, animals, cultural events, family traditions, and more. We finish the year with a celebration in the gymnasium, with decorations and a meal. Each family decorates a

table, wears traditional costumes, and cooks traditional foods, and we share a meal together with music and fellowship.

Last year, because of COVID-19, we were not able to hold this big event with our families. So we decided to give the children their own Cultural Theme Day in the classroom, where we learned about various countries as the students wore traditional clothing, shared traditional foods, and taught us how to make cultural crafts from their heritage.

This year we are so excited to extend our curriculum and implement a new project for social studies called Flat Stanley. The fictitious story features Stanley, who, after an unfortunate event, is able to fit in an envelope and travel around the world, teaching us about different countries. He fits in a pocket and has adventures visiting new places and exploring our world. In our classroom each child (and teachers too!) have the opportunity to make their own Flat Stanley.

Every week the students' Flat Stanleys explore Nova Scotia and bring knowledge back about the many beautiful places in our area. Our next step is to send Stanley to different countries to learn more about amazing places in our wonderful world. This project not only gives us a chance to learn about geography, mapping, countries, diversity, culture, family traditions, and celebrations, but also helps build a strong sense of belonging and ownership with parents by involving them in this special activity. Relationships with families are important, and we want everyone to feel valued in our small, friendly Christian school family.

The Bible teaches that "we are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other" (Rom. 12:5, NLT). This is only one of the many blessings of Adventist education. ■

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*Viktoria Brunets is the junior primary and primary teacher at Sandy Lake Academy in Bedford, N.S.*



# THE BURMAN EFFECT

BURMAN ALUMNI  
IMPACTING THEIR COMMUNITIES

## With Jesus in the Family...

*"Both AP and Katrina actively modelled their life values. Grandpa was a faithful provider.... Grandma worked hard."*

With two boys clinging to her skirts, Katrina Anderson followed her husband, Anders Peter (AP), up the gangplank to the ship that would take them across the Atlantic Ocean. They were leaving Sweden to join the families of Katrina's sister and sister-in-law in Alberta, Canada.

Attracted by the "free" land Canada was advertising, many immigrants were leaving Europe to settle on the Canadian prairies. For \$10, "homesteaders" could acquire 160 acres. In turn, they committed to build a house and cultivate a specified area within three years.

The Andersons arrived in Idlesleigh (near Medicine Hat) in 1912. They settled about three miles from their relatives. Roads and bridges were scarce. When it rained, trails were almost impassable. They found that they couldn't get their crops—poor as they were—to market until after the ground was frozen. Doctors were few, and life was hard.

Then Pastor Fred Johnson came to hold meetings in their schoolhouse. Evenings were now devoted to reading, studying, and discovering new truths. God's Spirit was working on their hearts, and the Andersons and their relatives joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

AP struggled to improve their crops, but the land disappointed him time and again. Finally, he found richer soil in Sedgewick, east of Lacombe. In 1922, they packed up once more to move north. Mom, Dad, and the nine siblings cleared land and built houses and barns. Their mixed farming operation thrived.

Farming was AP's and Katrina's life, but they also valued education for their children. All but one attended Canadian Junior College (CJC). They trained to become pastors, teachers, businessmen, homemakers, as well as farmers—all committed to Christ and to service.

AP Anderson's family commitment played out in their children's families. Thirty-five grandchildren learned by example to serve and share. Both AP and Katrina actively modelled their life values. Grandpa was a faithful

provider. He even mended his family's shoes. Grandma worked hard. She made her family feel welcome and loved, and provided homemade meals for the girls every day one summer when they took on the task of painting all four houses on the homeplace.

Pathfinders and sunshine bands were regular events. The generations worked together. They told stories around the campfire. Aunties helped little ones study stars, flowers, trees, rocks, etc. Everyone acquired multiple Pathfinder honours.

Like their parents, many grandchildren left the home farm to attend Canadian Union College (formerly CJC, now Burman University) to prepare for service in the medical field, education, pastoral ministry, and business. Generations of Andersons have served their churches and communities at home as well as overseas in Ethiopia, Rwanda, Pakistan, Japan, Korea, Peru, Brazil, China, and other countries.

Even though AP and Katrina have been asleep in Jesus for many years now, their family still stays connected through reunions, special holidays, and an Anderson family Facebook page. At a recent reunion in Sedgewick, more than 50 participated in an impromptu choir to close the Sabbath.

"With Jesus in the family / Happy, happy home" indeed! ■

*Renate Krause is the editor of Burman University Magazine.*



AP and Katrina with their nine children.  
Back row: John, Bill, Andy, Gilbert, Albin; middle  
row: AP, Anna, Katrina; front row: Elsie, Harry, Myrtle





# New Records and New Beginnings for MANS, Students, and Grads



*Miweyhtowin*, by Tessa Potts, Eileen Firingstoney, and Mike Willing.



Students coming out of the new high school building.

## Highest-Ever Enrolment and Surge in Career and Technology Studies

Despite the obstacles brought on by the global pandemic, more students than ever before are enrolled at Mamawi Atosketan Native School (MANS). We are grateful for

- a 10 percent increase in high school enrolment,
- our 33 off-reserve Indigenous students, and
- a total of 232 students in K–12, the highest-ever overall enrolment at the school.

“We’re excited to see this growth,” says principal Michael Willing, who assumed his position in August 2021. Our career and technology studies (CTS) and industrial arts classes also have record enrolment and are filled to capacity. While male students make up the majority in the welding class this year, the construction technology class is evenly split between male and female students.

To get the new principal’s take on the coming year, watch our “Principal Update” video at [www.mans1.ca](http://www.mans1.ca).

## Commissioned Sculpture and MANS Artists Attract New International Audience

The two young welding artists who got their start at MANS and unveiled their commission from the City of Lacombe in 2020 got to see their piece in an international art show catalogue.

*Miweyhtowin* is one of only two student sculptures

selected for an international welded art show curated by a London-based organizer. Past shows and conferences of the organization have been in Europe, but the 2021 exhibition was strictly online due to COVID-19.

To view the catalogue of the 2021 International Institute of Welding Welded Art Photographic Exhibition, go to [bit.ly/3sTXwGr](http://bit.ly/3sTXwGr).



*Miweyhtowin* was featured in the 2021 International Institute of Welding Welded Art catalogue.

## 2021 Valedictorian Scores Multiple Firsts

Kaylie Okeymow, MANS’s Class of 2021 top student, broke new ground as a cultural ambassador at Burman University’s celebration of Canada’s first Truth and Reconciliation Day. Kaylie shared bannock and pride in her Maskwacis roots with her fellow freshmen and other BU students. Kaylie’s fellow 2021 graduates Ivory Threefingers and Amelia Louis plan to join her at Burman next year. ■

*Lynn McDowell is director of planned giving/philanthropy at the Alberta Conference.*







*Photo above: Repair work being completed on a health facility in Yemen. Inset, opposite page: Mahmoud before and after his surgery; a doctor working with the ADRA project.*

**M**ahmoud<sup>1</sup> stood in the dark doorway of his home, watching the children play outside in the sunshine. The shouts of laughter echoed off the stone walls. Mahmoud wished he could join in the fun. His young heart yearned for friendship, but his mind had learned to be more cautious.

Every time that Mahmoud tried to join the lively group, he was ridiculed and driven away by cruel taunts. When he was old enough to go to school, he had no choice but to brave the bullying. It was extremely hard for Mahmoud to focus, to learn, and thrive.

All this malice was not because of anything Mahmoud had said or done. It was because Mahmoud had a cleft lip, a simple birth defect that occurred during pregnancy. But because of it, Mahmoud's childhood was full of suffering. As a baby, he could not breastfeed properly. The milk would spill out of his mouth. He would spend his days and nights crying from the empty ache in his belly, screaming from frustration and hunger. As Mahmoud grew and transitioned to solid food, things did not improve. The food would fall out of his mouth, just as the breastmilk had done. Hunger was a cruel companion of Mahmoud's daily life.

"Whenever I looked at him and heard his cries of hunger, I was grief-stricken," shared his father, Khalid. "Sometimes I would cry. Sometimes I would leave the home, just so I

couldn't see or hear my son's suffering."

Khalid did not wallow in helplessness, however. He searched far and wide for help for his son. He was willing to do whatever it took to end his child's suffering. It pained him to see Mahmoud's childhood stripped away from him, darkened by hunger, fear, and loneliness. However, in all his searching, Khalid could not find any help. He was always turned away.

Khalid and his family live in a poor village in war-torn Yemen. Grippled by conflict for seven years and counting, Yemen is considered the world's worst humanitarian crisis. Over 20 million people need assistance. That large number is understandably hard to grasp. To make it easier to picture, the UN World Food Programme breaks it down. If Yemen had a population of 100 people, 80 would need humanitarian aid; 67 would have no access to clean water; 66 would have nothing to eat; 59 would have no access to healthcare; and 11 would be malnourished.<sup>2</sup>

ADRA has been working in Yemen for several years, providing emergency food assistance and health care, and that work continues today. Along with giving food to hungry and malnourished families, ADRA is repairing and reopening health facilities damaged by the conflict. ADRA is ensuring they are staffed by doctors, nurses, nutritionists, pharmacists, and support staff. ADRA is also providing the needed medical equipment, medicines, and health care supplies.

<sup>1</sup> All names in the story have been changed.

<sup>2</sup> UN World Food Programme, Instagram post, July 3, 2020, <https://www.instagram.com/p/CCLs3GWDWWH/>





A part of the project is a referral system whereby patients receive referrals from a local facility to a better-equipped hospital in Sana'a, Yemen's capital city. The transportation and medical fees are all covered by the project, ensuring that the most vulnerable can receive much-needed medical care.

When Khalid heard that an agency called ADRA was going to renovate a damaged health facility nearby, he was skeptical. After his experience searching for help, it seemed pointless to be hopeful again. However, the health facility was, indeed, renovated by ADRA. Khalid decided to find out if help could really be found for his son. When he entered the health facility, he immediately noticed that there was a warm and welcoming atmosphere. The doctor and health care worker smiled at him and took a genuine interest in him and Mahmoud.

All of Khalid's experience in searching for help for Mahmoud could not have prepared him for what was about to happen.

Mahmoud received a medical consultation at the ADRA health facility. From there, he was referred to a better-equipped hospital in Sana'a. This trek, and the hospital bills, would be far too expensive for the family to afford. When it was made clear that ADRA would cover the medical expenses and transportation, Khalid was in utter disbelief.

Mahmoud was admitted to a hospital in Sana'a for surgery. He was discharged three days later. His father thoroughly examined Mahmoud's lips and saw, with overflowing joy, that

his son's cleft lip was sealed! For the first time in his life, Mahmoud would be able to give a full-fledged smile.

Since his life-changing surgery, Mahmoud is no longer inhibited by fear, shyness, or embarrassment. He can go to school with confidence. For the first time ever, he can eat and drink without difficulty.

The extraordinary change in Mahmoud's life is made possible in part by our monthly donors. Your compassionate and faithful gifts give ADRA the stability to plan ahead and to help wherever the need is greatest. Thanks to various partnerships, we can take your donations and multiply them many times over. On average, we can gain a \$1 to \$4 match. With our supporters' gifts and these matches, coupled with the lower administration costs associated with monthly gifts, we can help even more families with nutrition, shelter, health, protection, inclusion, improved livelihoods, and more. We are so very grateful for you and your support. We hope Mahmoud's story illustrates for you the truly life-changing impact you are making around the world. ■

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*Heather Grbic is a writer for ADRA Canada.*







And the  
Waters  
Subsided

Much of the Fraser Valley in British Columbia was covered in water after heavy rainfall caused serious flooding in November 2021.

**B**efore the British Columbia Conference of Seventh-day Adventists had the opportunity to breathe a small sigh of relief from their efforts aiding this summer’s wildfire evacuees or congratulate themselves on a successfully co-ordinated response, a “once-in-a-century flooding” hit the beleaguered province. To truly appreciate the B.C. Conference’s predicament, one must understand that the Coldstream, B.C., warehouse used for the summer’s wildfire response was closed a mere 12 days before meteorologists issued the B.C. flood warning.

This warning, preceded by others, notified of extreme rainfall moving in. Predictions of localized flooding and high river levels in some areas inundated news channels and outlets. ADRA Canada, in partnership with the British Columbia Conference, began to plan and prepare.

“As people of faith,” says Steve Matthews, ADRA Canada’s executive director, “we pray fervently for God’s mercy always. We pray that He will allow the storms to pass over His people. But at the same time, we also prepare for the worst. That’s ADRA.”

A good thing, too, because by Saturday, Nov. 13, 2021 torrential rain began falling across much of the province. The storm struck by 11 a.m., breaking dozens of all-time rainfall records and dumping nearly a month’s worth of rain over 48 hours. The rain, continuing unabated, turned a bad situation into chaos. Reports of mudslides, closures, and crashes poured in at an alarming rate from at least 20 affected areas.

Meanwhile, the church and ADRA were putting their plans into action. In speaking of this effort, Wesley Torres, B.C. Conference president, said, “Camp Hope became a ‘City of

Refuge’ again.” This time it served about 250 people stranded in one segment of Highway 7 due to landslides. Mountain View Summer Camp buses brought stranded passengers to the camp as the flooding marooned most cars. “Our camp staff, assisted by the Lytton First Nation group that is still at Camp Hope from the Lytton wildfire in July, provided food, water, emergency clothing, and accommodation for those who were stranded,” added Torres.

“In the Old Testament we find references to ‘Cities of Refuge’ in Numbers 35 and Joshua 20,” said Daniel Saugh, Canadian Programs manager at ADRA Canada. These were designated historically and traditionally for the Levites and Levitical priests and provided refuge for perpetrators of crime or manslaughter. Over time and with spiritual applications, they became synonymous with being places of safety, protection, shelter, refuge, and relief. It was ultimately a city that would be a place of peace, habitation, and rehabilitation and where victims of calamity would experience God’s presence.

Today, in a real sense God desires us to use the properties, places, and churches He has entrusted us with to be a “city of light, hope, peace, and refuge,” so that many people can find solace, life-saving help, and eventually salvation.

What a privilege for us to shine for Jesus amid this dark world of suffering, sin, and sorrow. As Jesus says, “You are the light of the world; a city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden” (Matt. 5:14, NKJV). Let us allow the Light of God’s love to shine through us to others. ■

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







Michael Lockley assembling a new ADRA water filter in the kitchen of the Tundra Buddies Day Care.

**I**n the last few days of September 2021, the unmistakable smell of gasoline emanating from kitchen and bathroom faucets was, to the residents of Iqaluit, the first sign that something was wrong with their water.

When city staff began investigating, they confirmed what had been obvious to residents. Fuel was contaminating the city's treated water supply, rendering it unsafe to drink even when filtered or boiled.

A state of emergency was declared on October 12. Able-bodied residents with vehicles filled jugs and other containers in the icy waters of the Sylvia Grinnel River just outside the city. Those without vehicles were looking for rides to the only available source of uncontaminated water but yet still needed to be boiled before use.

When ADRA heard of the crisis, it immediately began responding. With the help of the Manitoba–Saskatchewan Conference and the Iqaluit Seventh-day Adventist Group, 30 gravity filtration units were sent to Iqaluit for distribution. ADRA focused on the Qajuqturvik Community Food Centre, childcare centres, and group homes, in addition to the most vulnerable households.

Rachel Blais, who serves as executive director of the Qajuqturvik Community Food Centre, was grateful for the donation of two water units from ADRA. Qajuqturvik staff were also resorting to river water to produce the food and drinks required for service to the most vulnerable in Iqaluit, which sometimes numbered 250 people a day in the early weeks of the crisis.

"I'm so grateful to ADRA for the water filters. They've

alleviated a huge need for potable water here at Qajuqturvik. Because people didn't have clean drinking water to cook with or wash their produce with, it meant that they were coming here to the food centre to get a healthy, fresh meal. We had staff collecting, boiling, and cooling water for use. So, the water filters that ADRA supplied us with were crucial to alleviating a lot of that burden. We were able to just put it through the filter, giving us a steady supply of clean water that didn't require boiling or cooling. We're incredibly grateful to ADRA for supplying those filters to us."

Across town at the Tundra Buddies Day Care, the story is much the same. Chef Michael Lockley works to prepare healthy food and snacks for the centre's 35 to 65 children. Because of the shortage of experienced, trained professionals willing to work in the North, he also cooks for the Uqutaq Men's Shelter, a 60-bed facility in Iqaluit. His days are long—from 5 a.m. to 5 p.m.—and sometimes include weekends.

"The water crisis is a big problem," says Chef Michael. "The ADRA water filter is great because you don't have to monitor it. You can fill it up and move on to other things so it's great."

Though perhaps most known for its international work, ADRA is also meeting needs right here in Canada through its Canadian Programs. We are partnering with conferences, local churches, and volunteers across the country to reach, in tangible ways, our neighbours facing sudden or ongoing crises. Thank you for your ongoing prayers and support to help ensure that Canadians experience Jesus' love and compassion in time of need. ■

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





# From Atheist to Elder

*Yvon Gauthier never thought he would have found God in the midst of his trials*

As the bitter wind slapped against the sides of the house and the need for warmth quickly became a necessity, a family huddled together with their knees to their chest. The cold was unbearable. The survival of the family depended on four men hired to provide heating.

One man supplied a pickup truck, his co-worker brought a chainsaw, another friend carried an axe. A fourth

friend was supposed to carry the matches. The three who were present walked outside the cabin house into the snow-covered forest in search of the last colleague. With hung heads and heavy hearts, they came to terms with the absence of their friend who had not come.

Despite this, the three men were determined to supply the family with heat. For hours they worked hard, cutting down logs until the wood fit

perfectly inside the fireplace. To their dismay, when it came time to light the fire, they quickly realized all their labour had been in vain. Without the matches—such a small, simple item—it would be impossible for them to start a fire.

“This story teaches us that every talent counts, and we have to use what we are given,” says Yvon Gauthier. “The gift God gave me is the gift of management, and that is what I do.”





Yvon serves as an elder at a Seventh-day Adventist church in northern Ontario. His duties include preparing and overseeing the church service in addition to organizing the livestream.

Yvon lets out a soft chuckle as he recounts the intense pathway God walked him through in his journey of faith. Each experience, trial, and adversity placed him a step closer to God. A long time ago God chose Yvon, and in 2016 he accepted the call.

"If you told me five years ago I would be who I am today, I would have laughed out loud," says Yvon. "I didn't even believe in God ... not even a little bit."

Yvon grew up with his parents and two brothers in a small mining town in Quebec. He was raised in a strict religious household where religion was made the centre of his life. At a young age he viewed his religious beliefs as an obligation rather than a personal conviction. After attending elementary and high school, Yvon decided to leave the family home in Quebec and travel to North Bay, the farthest point in Ontario.

"I was homeless because I made the choice to be homeless. I had a home to [return] to. But I wanted to see more than the town I had grown up in. I felt like a prisoner in my town for many years," says Yvon.

One day he found himself lingering at the front steps of a neighbourhood church as he repeated the words over and over trying to perfect the English pronunciation. With shaking hands, he knocked on the door of the church and said, "I am really hungry. Can I have a can of food?" The answer he received was the door slamming shut in his face.

Turning away from the church, Yvon wearily walked away in search of a garbage can he could eat from.

"That was my impression of churches," says Yvon. "To me religion seemed to be just a way to control people." It was a major reason he stopped believing in God and became an atheist.

Eventually, Yvon's life started to look more promising and hopeful. He obtained an engineering degree. But just as soon as his life took this positive turn, tragedy and anguish struck. Yvon's mother was dying from cancer.

Yvon quit his job and rushed to Quebec, where he lived with his mother until she passed away. Shortly thereafter, two people very close to him also died. These losses hit Yvon hard.

"I did not want to commit suicide, but I did not want to live anymore," says Yvon. "I got on my knees and said, 'If He exists, help me because I have no purpose, and life is meaningless.'"

In December 2016, God answered Yvon's prayer. His love for history led him to a 13-episode series on the creation and destruction of Rome. After each video Yvon would do some research on the emperors he had just learned about. When he got to Constantine, he eagerly investigated further and stumbled upon a video of Doug Batchelor explaining the topic. Intrigued by the power and simplicity in Batchelor's sermons, Yvon spent the next eight months studying his videos. In September 2017, Yvon found the North Bay Seventh-day Adventist Church, and four months later he decided to be baptized.

"I went from wondering what my purpose was, why I was here, who I was, and why I didn't feel a part of this

world, to finding a new purpose that totally changed my life," says Yvon.

Yvon is convinced God led him to the Seventh-day Adventist church that was just right for his needs. When he entered the church for the first time, he immediately felt welcomed and loved. It was a new experience for him.

Now this new believer clings firmly to his faith and considers it his most valued possession. Yvon is eager to take the next step in his Christian journey and share his testimony with others.

"God does not work on your watch; He works on His own time," says Yvon. "Our true job as Adventists is to plant seeds and then trust."

Every Sunday Yvon helps at a local foodbank where he serves with his time, hands, and words. As a former atheist, he understands the approach to take when addressing non-believers. Sometimes simply saying "Jesus loves you" is not enough; they need to see God through your actions.

"I am the glove, not the hand. I am the tool, not the operator," says Yvon. "God used me, and I can't begin to say how thankful I am."

God has given everyone talents. Some talents may seem small and insignificant like lighting a match. Yet it only takes one spark to get the fire going.

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms" (1 Pet. 4:10, NIV). ■

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*Clesha Felicien is a member of the College Park Seventh-day Adventist Church and a journalism student at Ryerson University.*

**Yvon at work.**



**Yvon and his beloved late mother.**





**In February 2021**, our new small group was blessed with three friends joining us—Rick Dingman, Julie Canuel, and Lucie Douville. Months later, in September, all three took a stand for Christ publicly in the waters of the Batiscan River on the property of Jacques and Jeanne Ayotte, in Saint-Adelphe, Que.

It all started toward the end of 2020, when Rick began to join the online worship service at the South Stukely Seventh-day Adventist Church. Then one Sabbath morning, he asked if anyone could help him with Bible studies or get him materials, as his friend Julie was interested in learning more as well. At the start of 2021, right around the same time, my husband, Jean, and I had gone through the 10 days of prayer and were praying that God would use us in His service.

When I heard of Rick's request, I felt compelled to do something for them, so we began praying for the start of a small group in Trois-Rivières, Que. Eventually, our prayers and those of our church were answered, and with unfailing support from our friends Jeanne-Paule and Mario Coulombe, we launched our small group.

We contacted Rick and Julie, who were more than happy to hear from us, and they eagerly accepted our invitation to join the group. Since we were in lockdown, we needed to host our meetings via Zoom. Rick, being a computer specialist, kindly agreed to handle the platform for us. God is so good.

We praise God for Rick, Julie, and Lucie, for their willing hearts to contribute their skills and talents to serve our church. We have been so blessed by their involvement and their warm smiles, encouragement, and dedication. We count it a privilege as a small group to be part of their lives, to be able to study the Bible with them, and to witness the beautiful transformation that the Holy Spirit is working in them. Here are their testimonies.

### **Rick's Return to God**

I was born into an Adventist family and had my heart set on studying to be a pastor; but as life sometimes plays tricks on us, my path was sidetracked in my late youth, and I eventually left the church, but God never gave up on me. And about two years ago, I was introduced to the message of justification by faith by a video by Pastor Ivor Myers.

For the first time in my life, I truly understood God's love for me and the reality of Jesus' promise in John 6:37: "All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out" (ESV). My heart and my life were deeply touched by this message, creating in me the desire to delve deeper in this new truth, to live in harmony with His Word, and to re-establish an authentic relationship with God.

This decision completely changed my life. [It] allowed me to have a living and saving experience with Him, and today I am a liberated man. Every day I am happy to put my life in His hands, and I ask Him to use me to reveal His love everywhere around me.

### **Julie's Peace in the Storm**

Several months ago, when I was in the depths of a great storm, I opened the Bible to escape the great pain I was experiencing. I, who had always rejected everything related to religion, was surprised. When I read Matthew 11:28, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (NIV), my heart was touched by His grace, and a great silence came over the tumult of my life. Without really knowing yet what was going on inside me, I felt a great peace, relief, and *the* answer to my torment.

I struggled, and I still struggle sometimes, but less and less. Jesus has found His way into my heart and soul. He is always present in my life and with my loved ones. He never stops offering me His blessings, and He consistently answers my prayers. He has filled the void in me that was always there and has given meaning to my life.

At my baptism, I offered myself to Him, gave Him my heart and handed over my life. And I thank Him so often for guiding me through His Word, for all that He does for my children and for me and, above all, for all that He is. I thank Him for coming to save me and for keeping me by His side. I thank Him over and over again for His true love, the only love that really matters. I feel that with each of my daily prayers, I reach Him, that He heals me, but most of all, that He fills me with His love.

### **Lucie's Transformation**

I had been part of another congregation more than 20 years ago and had come out of it bruised and paralyzed by guilt, to the point that I thought I was too unworthy to approach God and no longer dared to pray to Him. For about 10 years, my brother Jean worked to convince me that I could approach God without fear and that He would welcome me with open arms. I had studied the Bible with Jean and Gisèle, but even though I had the desire, certain aspects of my life prevented me from giving myself to Him.

However, I had started to pray again, and I could see that God was answering me, which was so good for me. Last year, God Himself solved the problems that were preventing me from having a real relationship with Him. I was so happy because I was finally ready to accept what He had been showing me for some time.

During the [lockdown], since I was alone, I spent almost all my time reading the Bible, and an extraordinary transformation took place in me. I remember very well the day when I felt a refreshing shower go through my whole being. I believe it was the presence of the Holy Spirit in me; it was a radical change. I had the desire to seal my commitment by being baptized, and I thank Him every day for the strength and courage He gives me to continue to follow Him. ■

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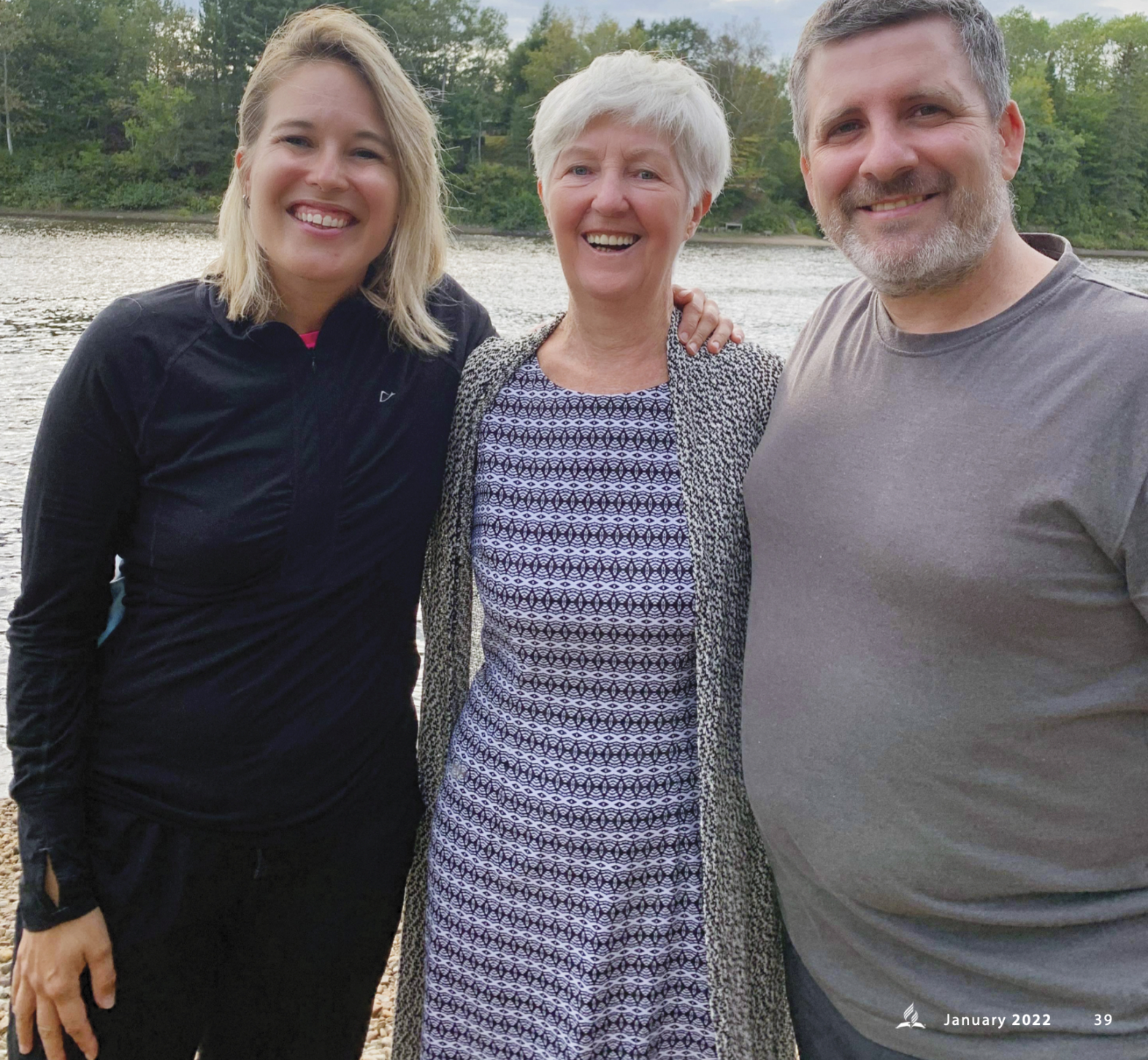
*Gisèle Douville is a member of the South Stukely church in Quebec.*





# Small But Mighty:

Three Baptisms Through a Virtual  
Small Group in South Stukely





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## Maritime

# Maritime Conference Elects Melissa Cooke as Executive Secretary

The Maritime Conference is very happy to extend a warm welcome to our new executive secretary, Pastor Melissa Cooke. She joined us in the office in her new role on Nov. 1, 2021.

On Sept. 23, 2021 the Maritime Conference Board of Directors elected Melissa Cooke as the next executive secretary after Teresa Ferreira announced she would be moving away from our conference.

Melissa Cooke was born in Houston, Tex., to El Salvadorian parents. Although born in the United States, Melissa was raised in Toronto, Ont. She grew up in a Seventh-day Adventist Christian home with her three siblings. At a young age, Melissa learned to love and trust her Saviour, Jesus. She remembers being taught to preach as a child and being active in her church community, learning at a very young age to serve others.

Melissa attended both public and Christian elementary schools in her formative years. It was during her years at Kingsway College in Oshawa, Ont., that the Lord directed her steps and called her into ministry. After high school she attended both Canadian University College (now Burman University) and Southern Adventist University.

Melissa earned her BA in religious studies from Canadian University College (2010) and her M.Div. from Andrews University (2017).

Although life has presented its share of challenges, heartache, and disappointments, Melissa would tell you that it is her Lord who has brought her through it all and He has put a passion in her to love and serve others as Jesus did. She has dedicated her life to serve her Lord with her husband, Jason, and their two sons, Edward (8) and Joshua (3).

Melissa has served as a pastor in the British Columbia Conference since June 2010. From the first day of entering ministry, she knew that life would be an adventure. Although leaving many friends, family, and those she holds dear to her heart, she is compelled to follow where her Saviour leads. For the path that the Lord sets for us is the surest path.



Melissa and Jason Cooke with their sons, Edward and Joshua.

Pastor Melissa enjoys spending time in the outdoors with her family (which includes their dog, Soren), meeting new people, learning new things, reading, studying, and sharing the love of God with others.

We look forward to welcoming Melissa and her family to the Maritime Conference! ■

—David Miller, president,  
Maritime Conference





## Ontario

# Power Beyond Our Walls



The Adventurer, Masterguides, and Pathfinder (AMP) Club Ministries have been impacting lives for many years. Recognizing that there is strength in unity, the three ministries combined forces to work together in spreading the “Advent Message to all the world in this generation.”

Under the theme “Power Beyond Our Walls,” the AMP Ministries held its triennial Leadership Summit virtually on the weekend of Sept. 24–26, 2021. The summit started Friday evening with an awe-inspiring message from Gladys, an eight-year-old Adventurer from the GTA Zimbabwean church. She expounded the word with much enthusiasm and passion. It gave true meaning to the saying that “a little child shall lead them.”

A number of workshops were presented to engage leaders and young people to reach outside the church’s walls. Frankie Lazarus, former Ontario Conference youth director, spoke on “What Do Leaders Need?” He admonished everyone to be men and women of integrity. Cyril Millet, also a former youth director, graced the summit with his presentation titled “Spiritual Fortification of Leaders.” Friday’s session ended with a devotional message from Travis Afflick, Ontario Conference Master Guide Council (OCMGC) chaplain, who encouraged attendees to TALK, which stands for trust in God, acknowledge God, lean on God, and keep connected to God.

On Sabbath morning, everyone logged in again dressed in full Type A uniform. The morning devotion was led by Mathew Feeley, Ontario Conference Pathfinder Council (OCPC) chaplain, who emphasized the importance of relying on the Holy Spirit for strength and power. When caught in a dark place, all we need to do is to “flick on the main switch and go to the source of all power.”

The next round of workshops followed. Andrew Thomas, Ontario Conference Adventurer Council (OCAC) associate chaplain, talked about “How to Develop Confidence in Teaching.” Gael Murray, NAD Youth administrative secretary, shared valuable insights on “Seeing the World Through the Eyes of a

Child.” Shawn Ellis, OCAC chaplain, shared practical ways to “Reach In and Reach Out.” Vanessa Roper-Cunningham, in her presentation titled “Children and Mental Health,” stressed the importance of creating a safe and positive environment for the children in each one’s charge. Other practical workshops included “Video Editing Made Easy,” “Online Ministry” (which covered how to use TikTok and Instagram for ministry), “Livestreaming,” as well as “How to Use Canva.”

For the midday Sabbath service, Mansfield Edwards, Ontario Conference president, delivered a timely message about making up one’s mind like Daniel. He encouraged leaders to purpose in their hearts to serve God, regardless of their circumstances.

A panel discussion, comprised of pathfinders and young master guides, provided an honest look at the impact the ministry is having on them. Not only were they spiritually blessed by AMP ministries, but they are now able to use what they learned positively in their daily lives at work, at school, and in church. Indeed, AMP Ministries play a vital role in discipling children and youth.

As a closing charge, Edwin Martin, AMP Ministries director, reiterated the responsibilities of AMP leaders to “feed the lambs” with the power of the Holy Spirit. The Gospel Commission in Matthew 28:19–20 is as relevant today as it was back then. Disciple children to grow like Christ through Adventurer ministry, nurture them through Pathfinder ministry, and train them to teach and lead through Master Guide ministry.

AMP Ministry is committed to reach out through evangelism, using technology and social media, to share God’s Word in creative ways. Let us therefore resolve to use the gift of Power to reach beyond our walls. For online resources, please visit <https://www.amp-summit.ca>. ■

—Gloria Allen, assistant executive  
co-ordinator, Ontario Conference  
Pathfinder Council



## SDACC

# Hundreds of Pastors and Spouses Across Canada Learn to “Thrive in Critical Times”



Program hosts, Ontario Conference ministerial secretary, Damson Oppong, and SDACC executive secretary, Paul Llewellyn, in the Ontario Conference studio.

Several months ago, Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada (SDACC) leadership saw a need for Canadian pastors to be more connected as they navigated uncharted territory. Thus, they selected Damson Oppong, Ontario Conference ministerial secretary, as their ministerial liaison. He soon began chairing bi-monthly advisory meetings with the SDACC’s ministerial secretaries. According to Ngoy Kyala, then ministerial secretary and now Quebec Conference president, they aimed to “look for ways to better serve our [Canadian] pastors and keep them united in spirit for the mission.”

Last spring, this advisory birthed the idea of an event for all SDACC pastors, chaplains, Bible instructors and their spouses. It had been 12 years since such a meeting had taken place, and it was time; moreover, technology existed to make it happen. “We sensed the need for pastors to come together to share their experiences and have fellowship,” said George Ali, Alberta Conference ministerial secretary. Oppong, who led the planning committee, added, “We wanted to share best practices, see what other areas are doing and discover next practices.”

The SDACC offered their full support from the start, with Paul Llewellyn, SDACC executive secretary/vice-president for administration, presenting the summit proposal to admin and attending all planning meetings thereafter. After a few months of intense preparation, a Canada-wide ministerial summit, themed

“Thrive in Critical Times/*En temps de crise, progressons,*” was held virtually from Oct. 17–19, 2021. Over 200 pastors and spouses from Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba–Saskatchewan, the Maritimes, Newfoundland and Labrador, Ontario, and Quebec attended daily. This initiative was marked by worship, learning, sharing, and connection.

## Worship

Besides musical features from different conferences, attendees were blessed by uplifting, timely messages from distinguished speakers including Desiree Bryant, associate director, Ministerial Spouses, Ministerial Association, North American Division (NAD); G. Alexander Bryant, NAD president; Mark Johnson, SDACC president; José Rojas, president, MOVEMENTUM; Ivan Williams, NAD ministerial secretary; and Derek Morris, Hope Channel International president.

Key takeaways from the devotionals were:

- We’re not alone when we’re in the dark.
- Find a Barnabas (mentor) and be a Barnabas to someone else.
- Serve and love Jesus first, and He’ll equip you for service.
- Pastoring is a ministry of presence.
- “Transparency is the new currency of trust.”—Ivan Williams
- “Let not your heart be troubled. In my Father’s house are many mansions. This [promise] restores hope that there’s





- a better day.”—G. Alexander Bryant
- “The church is not a club. The gospel isn’t exclusive. We need to connect with all people, those who are churched, unchurched, online, offline.”—Ivan Williams
  - “Look a little higher [heavenward] and take people to a higher calling.”—José Rojas

## Learning

Prior to this initiative, the ministerial advisory surveyed their respective fields for relevant topics, then carefully selected presenters. “There was a focus on emotional, relational, spiritual, fiscal, and mental health. The SDACC is endeavouring to equip us for health,” explained Pastor Honey Todd (Alberta).

Organizers also catered to Francophone attendees with a family life seminar in French by Pastor Nephtaly Dorzilme (Ontario) and French interpretation for other programs via the Quebec Conference.

Given the summit’s primary focus on family life and mental health, Drs. Claudio and Pamela Consuegra (director and associate director, Family Ministries, NAD) and Drs. David and Beverly Sedlacek (co-founders, Into HIS Rest Ministries) addressed issues that arise in balancing ministry and family life. A key takeaway from the Consuegras was that a minister’s priority list must be (1) God, (2) spouse, (3) children, and (4) church. After their seminar, Pastor Marc Leslie (Alberta) expressed: “This was great! As a new pastor, I’ve learned a lot, especially during these questions and answers!”

Attendees also appreciated that the summit tackled difficult topics head-on. One standout was Andrews University professor Denis Fortin’s message on the Trinity. “Dr. Fortin’s explanation of the Holy Spirit as a part of the Godhead was succinct and interesting,” said Pastor Andrew Thomas (Ontario). In another seminar, attendees learned that preaching inductively and leading with biblical knowledge are critical to tackling controversial subjects. Several also expressed appreciation for a presentation on the topic of pornography by Pastor Mike Tucker (speaker emeritus, *Faith for Today*).

Finally, Paul Musafili’s (SDACC treasurer/VP for finance) presentation on finance was a hit. “The financial presentation was extremely valuable and practical. Amazing seminar. Give that man a raise,” said Pastor Andrew King (Ontario).

“[The summit] addressed current issues we face as pastors and leaders in our churches. I felt encouraged, supported, and blessed,” concluded Pastor Liviu Tilihoi (Man–Sask).

## Sharing

Throughout the summit, pastors had ample time to share best practices and happenings. And on the last day, the different conferences and missions presented video reports of how their conferences had fared during the pandemic, including successful initiatives. “The tour around Canada was inspiring,” Pastor Andrew King (Ontario) stated.

“On top of the absolutely relevant content, the opportunity to connect with other pastors across Canada, and the opportunity to have a glimpse of what is taking place in other conferences was of the greatest benefit,” said Pastor Evaldo Vicente (Ontario).

A church leader from the Newfoundland and Labrador Conference concluded, “It was wonderful to see the Canada-wide pastoral team come together to experience relevant, timely, motivational presentations; experience the joy of renewed friendships; and get a broad perspective of the diverse work across the country.”

## Connection

Furthermore, fellowship took place naturally in the chat during the plenary sessions on YouTube and in the Zoom-based seminars, while Zoom rooms were the site of pastoral connection moments led by Pastors Elizabeth and Orlando Pule (co-directors, Family Life, Ontario Conference). Tuesday afternoon attendees joined rooms focused on topics like social justice, preaching and women in ministry. Pastor Alison Down (Ontario) particularly enjoyed “the open discussions with the female clergy.”

“One of the most important consequences of the summit was reconnecting with former partners/colleagues in ministry and seeing people that I had not been in contact with for many years,” said Pastor Frankie Lazarus (Ontario).

Furthermore, a pre-summit session for pastoral spouses on Sunday fostered conversations and began creating support systems for spouses. Spouses enjoyed encouraging messages from Pastor Jordane Smith (Alberta) and Desiree Bryant and seminars on communication and family relationships. In this session, Becky Johnson, wife of SDACC president, Mark Johnson, shared from her heart about being a pastor’s wife in an interview with Elizabeth Pule (Ontario). Donna Swaby (Ontario) responded, “Thank you, Becky, for being so open and genuine. You are a blessing.”

## What’s Next?

Organizers received overwhelmingly positive feedback. A representative comment came from Pastor Cavin Chwyl (B.C.): “I really appreciated this summit and found the seminars valuable. This is something worth having every year as a means of keeping us all connected and keeping our ideas and methods current and aligned in the SDACC.”

Statements like this from Pastor Jeremy Wellman (Alberta) also showed that the summit hit its target: “We are very much not alone in this journey home. Press together, press together!”

Organizers are now aiming to have such an event every two years, preferably in person.

Reflecting after the event, Oppong admitted, “It was quite involving. A lot of heavy lifting. Anything could have glitched, but God saw us through it.”

Many thanks to the team, including the SDACC’s admin, the ministerial directors, Orlando Pule, Mani Alcaide, Edwin Martin, Ashton Blake, Kristen Whyte-Bailey, Keith Chant, and Alicia Hernandez, for behind-the-scenes assistance. Finally, a big thank you to Cathy Anderson, executive assistant, presidential/secretariat, SDACC, for her exceptional administrative support. ■

—Christelle Agboka, communication director, Ontario Conference



**Announcements**

**PROCESS:**

- All announcements (non-profit events, new member notices, birth announcements, weddings, anniversaries, obituaries, and tributes) should be emailed to Adrianna Lewis (lewis.adrianna@adventist.ca) 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 submitable) are available at [www.adventist.ca/messenger](http://www.adventist.ca/messenger).
- The *Messenger* assumes no liability for typographical errors or responsibility for inaccuracies originating in submitted material.

**Anniversaries**

**Gladstone and Sylvia (née Lemon) Smith**, of Belleville, Ont.,



celebrated their 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on Sept. 21, 2021. The Smiths have five children: Reg, Elmer, Julie, Tony, and Reno. They have eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

**Obituaries**

**Arthur Hiebert** was born March 12, 1935, in Halbstadt, Ukraine, and died Aug. 28, 2021, in Weslaco, Tex. Arthur served as a teacher in Newfoundland for one year and as a pastor in the Manitoba-Saskatchewan Conference for 12 years before transferring to the US. After retiring, he travelled to Madagascar with the outreach ministry ShareHim. Arthur was predeceased by his parents, David and Helena; and son, John Edward. Surviving: sons, Andrew (JoAnn) of Weslaco, James (Abigail) of Edinburg, Tex., and Brian (Virginia) of Longwood, Fla.; daughter, Sharon (Michael)

Pikus of Golden Valley, Minn.; brother, Jacob (Judy) of Creston, B.C.; sister, Erna Maier of Loma Linda, Calif.; 10 grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

**Advertising Policies**

**PROCESS:**

- All advertising should be submitted with local church or conference approval.
- Payment must accompany your ad or it will not be published. Acceptable methods of payment are cheque (in the mail) or credit card (online via PayPal).
- Submission deadlines are 8 weeks before the date of publication (e.g. May 1 for the July issue).
- The *Messenger* assumes no responsibility for typographical errors, nor liability for the advertisements.
- Acceptance of ads does not constitute endorsement of the products or services by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada.

**RATES:**

**Classified advertising**—\$42 for 50 words or less; \$11 for each additional 10 words. *Maximum 250 words.*

**For ad rates, sizes, deadlines, and more, visit:** [www.adventist.ca/messenger](http://www.adventist.ca/messenger).

**Advertisements**

**2022 Great Controversy Prophecy Tours**, March 18–31 or June 17–29, with Dr. Gerard Damsteegt, retired professor of Andrews University. See prophecies of Daniel and Revelation come alive! Visit Reformation sites in Italy, the Waldensian Valleys, Switzerland, Germany, France. A most exciting experience! Call 269/815-8624 or email [gctours@mac.com](mailto:gctours@mac.com). (1/22)

**SHOP FOR NEW/USED ADVENTIST BOOKS: TEACH SERVICES** offers used Adventist books at [www.LNFBOOKS.com](http://www.LNFBOOKS.com) or new book releases at your local ABC or [www.TEACHServices.com](http://www.TEACHServices.com). **AUTHORS**, let us help publish your book with editing, design, marketing, and worldwide distribution. Call 800/367-1844 for a free evaluation. (12/22)

**We help Adventists** marry Adventists. It's that simple: [www.adventistdating.com](http://www.adventistdating.com). (4/22)

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**Education is Freedom**  
F.A.C.E. has been providing access to education for orphaned children in Uganda since 1991.

**For \$10 a month**, your donation will allow a child to attend an Adventist primary school by providing tuition fees, a school uniform, lunch, school supplies, and more.

**F.A.C.E.**  
P.O. Box 54005 Village Square  
Calgary AB T1Y 6S6  
Phone: 1-844-277-6485

Visit us at [www.facecharity.net](http://www.facecharity.net)  
CRA Registration No. 8192 63633 RR0001

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# 2022 OFFERING SCHEDULE

## JANUARY

Local Church Budget .....	January 01
Conference Advance .....	January 08
Local Church Budget .....	January 15
Religious Liberty* .....	January 22
Local Church Budget .....	January 29

## FEBRUARY

Local Church Budget .....	February 05
It is Written Canada* .....	February 12
Local Church Budget .....	February 19
Conference Advance .....	February 26

\*Special materials provided.



# Did You Move?

Contact your local conference membership clerk to update your records and stop delivery of extra copies:

**Alberta Conference**  
Dorothy Falesau  
dfalesau@albertaadventist.ca  
403-342-5044, ext. 210

**Ontario Conference**  
Kristen Bailey  
kbailey@adventistontario.org  
905-571-1022, ext. 224

**British Columbia Conference**  
Tanya Avelar-Martinez  
tavelarmartinez@bcadventist.ca  
604-853-5451, ext. 300

**Quebec Conference**  
Sara Therlonge  
stherlonge@sdaqc.org  
450-651-5222, ext. 230

**Manitoba-Saskatchewan Conference**  
Aleisha Mazier  
amazier@mansaskadventist.ca  
306-244-9700

**Maritime Conference**  
Jullie Bannister  
info@maritimesda.com  
506-857-8722, ext. 201

**SDA Church in Newfoundland and Labrador**  
Xenia Capote  
xcapote@nladventist.ca  
709-682-0284



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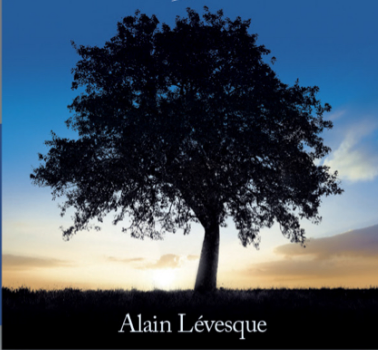
Download official Seventh-day Adventist® Church logos, fonts, stationery, and signage guidelines:

[www.nadadventist.org/brand-guidelines](http://www.nadadventist.org/brand-guidelines)

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN CANADA EDITION

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Alain Lévesque

GEORGE'S TREE will teach you how to benefit from Canadian tax deductible policies when you make your current charitable donations, as well as charitable bequests in your Will. A financial specialist in Planned Giving, author Alain Lévesque uses an easy-to-read story format to demystify many preconceived notions. This special edition includes examples for Planned Gifts to Canadian Adventist charitable organizations.

To receive your **FREE** book of *GEORGE'S TREE*, please email [legal@adventist.ca](mailto:legal@adventist.ca), or call 905-433-0011, ext. 2078. Available in **ENGLISH** or **FRENCH**.

Also available in **electronic format** at [www.willplan.ca](http://www.willplan.ca)

**>> SDACC REVOLVING FUND REPORT:** As of Nov. 30, 2021, there were 375 depositors with a total deposit of \$31,816,918. There were 88 loans with a value of \$28,436,205.

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







**A DECADE HAS PASSED** since I thrillingly accepted the position of communication director for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada and editor of the *Canadian Adventist Messenger*. And on Jan. 31, 2022, I will be logging out of my adventist.ca email for the final time. That's right, after more than 42 years of denominational service for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, I have decided to claim retirement status.

Over the last 10 years, we, as a communication team, successfully negotiated with the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) to have the Hope Channel, the only single-faith, single-point-of-view television network allowed to broadcast anywhere in Canada. And even after they changed those rules, they still approved the only 24-hour Spanish-language network in Canada, *Esperanza TV*.

Together, the *Messenger* team doubled the number of pages published yearly. We added a French magazine, called *Le Messenger*. Some of the initial discussions were to translate the English magazine, but I wanted to give our French Adventist members their own voice. We went on to create two more *Messengers*, one to help us understand our South Asian (that is, Hindu and Sikh) neighbours, and the *Adventist-Muslim Relations Messenger*, to help us mingle and befriend those with a Muslim background.

We moved the magazine's distribution to the church membership list which doubled its circulation, as every member of the church in Canada is entitled to our union publication. As a result, the *Messenger* is sent to many members who may not have walked through the doorway of a church for years, perhaps decades, if their names are still on the books.

Thanks to our designers and writers, these magazines have won several industry awards, and I have made many friendships with other faith magazine editors in Canada and the United States.

Much of this success can be attributed to my many predecessors, as each person added something vital while serving, for example, Crystal Steeves, who brought in secretarial support and a professional copy editor. Crystal redesigned the masthead, the overall layout, and the magazine as a whole. She upgraded our computer platform to Apple, which is industry standard for magazines. The *Messenger* was made better thanks to Crystal's skills and innovations.

Progress is built on what has come before, and I trust the next editor will continue to take these magazines and the communication department to even higher ground.

Thank you, readers, for allowing me into your homes every month for the past 10 years. It has been an honour and a privilege.

Ever onward. ■

from the editor

Thank You and Goodbye





# Adventist Muslim Relations Summit

## **What:**

Learn to successfully share the  
gospel with Muslims

## **When:**

March 25-27, 2022

## **Where:**

Calgary Central SDA Church,  
Calgary, AB

## **More Info:**

[sdabooks@gmail.com](mailto:sdabooks@gmail.com)

## **Speakers:**

**Petras Bahadur, DMin**  
(General Conference AMR UK)

**Mark Johnson**  
(President of SDACC)

**Stephen Dickie**  
(NAD)

**Rudy Harnisch**  
(SDACC)

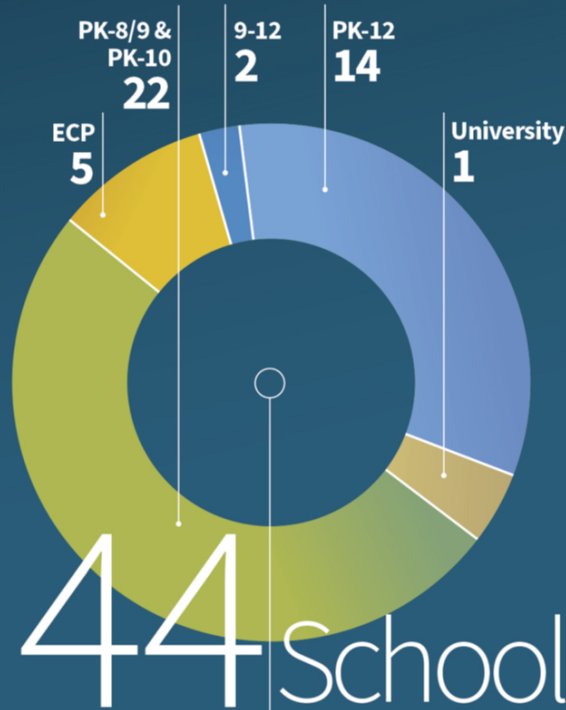






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#### PK-12 SCHOOLS

by size

by conference

6

2-Teacher Schools

6

3-Teacher Schools

26

4 or more Teachers

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

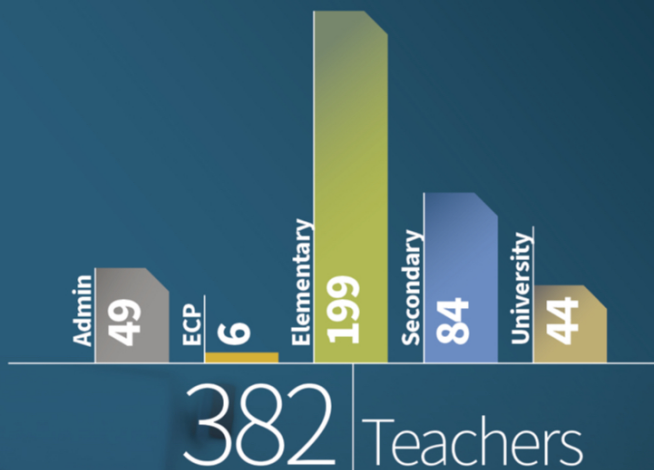
Elementary  
2,866

University  
466

ECP  
60

Secondary  
1,020

**4,412** Students



**382** Teachers

