

Mandatory Vaccines? (p. 6), Where Did God Come From? (p. 12),  
The Blessing of Small Churches (p. 35), Led by God (p. 36)

february 2022

canadian adventist

# Messenger



## Bridges to Freedom

Don Straub's quest for answers to life's  
hard questions led him to freedom in Jesus

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“But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him.”

—Luke 10:33, RSV

## Jesus and the Neighbour

When I think of compassion, I think of Jesus. Wherever He went, Jesus brought solutions. He was a carrier of joy, of sunshine. And the people responded.

Jesus was available to those who thought or lived differently than He did. Whether it was Nicodemus, Zacchaeus, a woman at a well, or anyone else who had views that Jesus didn't, He accepted them. And in that very way, Jesus demonstrated what God is like.

One day a religious thinker asked Jesus how to have eternal life. Jesus responded with a story.

Here's the story:

Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.' Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers? (Luke 10:30-36, RSV)

Who do you suppose the neighbour was? How can you, how can I, be the neighbour in the cities and villages of Canada this year? ■

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





# Shaping the World

*Lives of Service Begin Here*

Students participating  
in Service Day in 2019



*Are there 5000 people who  
will invest in our future?*

We, the leaders of the Burman University Student Association, want to thank alumni, friends, and the Church in Canada for your vision of a university in Canada. We deeply appreciate that you believe in us and in our future.

Because we want to do our part to see the wonderful new library completed — a place where current and future students can learn, connect, and belong — we have personally pledged our financial support and are planning activities to help raise a total of \$525,000 for the library furniture and technology. We invite you to join us.

*If 5000 people donate \$100, we can  
reach **\$500,000.***

If 5000 people join our efforts and donate \$100 each, the balance of \$500,000 is easily achievable. We know that not everyone can give \$100; some can do more and others, less. Names of participants will appear on the Student Association donor wall as a testimony of their belief in Burman students.

Anna Flores,  
SA President, 3rd year Business



*New library nearing completion*



*2021/22 Student Association Leaders: left to right  
Rohvoy Williams (ON), Selena Ly (ON), Dennalia Fray (ON),  
Anna Flores (ON), Nadine Irakoze (International -  
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*Ways you can give...*

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# WHAT'S INSIDE

## February 2022



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

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**WHAT'S COMING** Learn about a centre of influence in Quebec, Better Life Centre, that is making a difference in the community by offering a range of services to empower individuals for a healthier society.

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# FREEDOM OF RELIGION



**Q:** *I am a Seventh-day Adventist and I do not want to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. If my employer makes it mandatory, can I claim a religious exemption?*

**A:** This is a question I hear frequently because the federal government, and many other employers, have made COVID-19 vaccines mandatory. I cannot speak directly to any process your employer might have with respect to medical or religious exemptions, and if you are a unionized employee, the circumstances may be different than if you are not. However, I can provide some general guidance.

It is important to understand that the Seventh-day Adventist Church does not oppose COVID-19 vaccines on the basis of any religious principle. Our theology teaches that the decision whether to take the vaccine is not a matter of salvation, nor is it related to the mark of the beast as some have suggested. Therefore, your membership in the church will not provide a foundation for claiming an exemption from a mandatory vaccination policy.

However, in Canadian law, your religious beliefs and practices are protected irrespective of whether they are required by official religious creed or conform to the teachings of a particular denomination. You are entitled to hold religious beliefs concerning vaccines that the church does not share, and the church supports your right to hold a personal conviction that is guided by the Word of God, your conscience, and informed judgment.

Additionally, neither your employer nor governments are the arbiter of religious beliefs or practices. They are not entitled to question whether your beliefs are correct.

Fundamentally, to seek a religious objection, you must have a sincerely held religious belief based on your view of God's will for you to not receive the COVID-19 vaccine. There are two elements to this.

First, your belief about vaccination must be religious

in nature, having a close nexus with your spiritual faith and connection with the Divine. Your objection cannot be a political or even a health concern. Claims of religious liberty are not appropriate for objecting to government mandates or employer programs that are designed to protect health and safety.

Second, your expressed belief must be sincerely held. You cannot use the fact that you are a Christian to shield political or health beliefs behind an insincere religious veil. While your employer cannot question the validity of your beliefs, it can question your sincerity. For example, if you express a religious opposition to vaccines generally but have voluntarily taken many others in the past, the employer will legitimately question whether you are truly seeking a *religious* exemption.

If you are going to seek a religious exemption from mandatory vaccination, think carefully about why you refuse to be vaccinated. Make sure your reasons arise from your relationship with God and your desire to please Him. Consider whether Scripture requires that you refuse the vaccine and prayerfully document why your religious beliefs preclude receiving a COVID-19 vaccine. Also consider, as a self-check, whether other areas of your life are consistent with the religious position you are using to avoid mandatory vaccination. Also make sure that you follow any process your employer has in place for seeking an exemption. It is always a good idea to obtain individual legal advice before proceeding. ■

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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).*





# The "Benefits" of Procrastination

"Afterward the other maidens came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' But he replied, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.' Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour."

—Matthew 25:11–13, RSV

Regardless of what you may have heard, procrastination has its benefits. One of the common reasons why people procrastinate is to avoid pain. You know that if you don't go to the dentist, you won't have to experience the discomfort of the dentist sticking all those needles and instruments in your mouth.

And if you're procrastinating, that means you said yes to something, which might be better than a hard no. Or maybe it means you don't have to work quite as hard. And maybe that thing, whatever it is, isn't as big of a deal anyway, so you can relax, as the opportunity will probably come around again. At least that's what we tell ourselves.

But when we procrastinate, we often carry this burden in our minds; we're aware that we can't put something off forever and that we'll have to do it eventually. Sometimes it's our spouses who will remind us (we call it nagging and we don't like it). But there are just some things that will keep getting worse if we wait, like a leaky roof that needs fixing or replacing. Failure to address a roof repair will end up costing you a lot more than if you took care of it at the first signs.

So there are definitely many downsides to procrastination. There will be opportunities that may never come around again. Like what? You might say, "My wife and I have decided we want to enjoy our marriage and careers. Someday we may have children and start a family—when we're about 50." Guess what? By that point, the time for having children will have passed you by (unless you have a miracle child).

What about those winter tires? We know winter is coming, but we put it off for as long as possible based on predictions that it shouldn't snow until the 1<sup>st</sup> of December. And then, sure enough, there's a huge snowstorm at the end of October and we slip and slide, maybe even into the rear-end of another car, with our summer tires. Procrastination has a price.

Procrastination can sometimes seem like a reasonable thing to do because you just want time to think about it or get some advice before making a decision. But

think about the time of Noah. There's a good chance that a few people who listened to Noah's message considered going into the ark. When they saw the animals making their way through the ark door, they were impressed. They *didn't* say they would *not* go in, but before making that choice, they wanted to hear what friends, professors, or trusted community leaders had to say first. Sadly, procrastination meant that when the door of the ark closed, they were still on the outside. It is true—one should evaluate before deciding; however, waiting too long can have drastic, even fatal, consequences.

Then there was the Roman governor Felix, in Acts 24. He listened to Paul as "he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come," but "Felix was afraid and answered, 'Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you'" (verse 25, NKJV). Felix didn't say no, and he may have even found some comfort, thinking he had given a tentative yes without committing.

Unfortunately, when conviction is strong, procrastination will dampen that conviction, which might never return.

I have asked myself, *If I continue to live with my present choices, even though I say I love Jesus, right up until the time He returns, will I be safe to save? Is there something that I am practising that will keep me from joining the family of God in His kingdom?* It's a good question, one that each of us will have to answer.

Here's the hard truth. When you procrastinate your response to what God is telling you, you're actually saying no. And unless you say yes, you might end up with the five foolish virgins of Jesus' parable in Matthew 25. No benefits there. ■

Ken Corkum is president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Newfoundland and Labrador.





# On to New Adventures



Jewel, Onyx, Jaden, Elizabeth, and Charles Aguilar. Charles has accepted a position with ADRA Canada as of Jan. 1, 2022.

As we wrap up our time in Uganda, we look back at an array of experiences. Living in a new environment, culture, and lifestyle is something we will never forget. Our lives were enriched by embracing the everyday adventures and community engagement opportunities, but more importantly, the character that God has allowed us to observe and develop through these experiences has been priceless.

I brace myself for the flood of emotions as we come to our final weeks in Uganda. Unfortunately, it has been bittersweet. It seems everything that could go wrong, went wrong. Travel plans to spend Christmas together one last time in Uganda were cancelled, flights to Toronto were complex with transporting our pets, selling our home in B.C. and purchasing another in Ontario has had its challenges—and all with the tainted underlying issue of being in Uganda without work visas for over a year.

It made me wonder, *Given all the challenges we are facing, are we in God's will?* I stepped back and tried to see the bigger picture, but it was foggy. Remembering Bible characters like Joseph, Moses, and Job and contemplating on the resiliency of my Bagandan brothers and sisters gave me courage.

Most of the Baganda people of Uganda live in harsh conditions. Many live below the poverty line and are hungry, marginalized, harassed, and oppressed. Yet they have an unshakable dependence on God and live with vibrancy despite these challenges.

It's so inspiring to see that their resiliency is not based on the ease of life but based on their full dependence on God.

Our observations have caused us to reflect as a family. How have our experiences and observations in Uganda shaped us as individuals and as a family?

We have learned the value of withholding judgment. Jewel and Onyx recall learning this concept during Mission Institute training five years ago. Our interpersonal relationships are far richer when we pause, observe, and get to know a person beyond the first impression.

Now that Jaden is in boarding school, she realizes how close we are as a family even though we are all living in three different places. She treasures our nightly chats and prayers.

We have seen the eyes of the starving, we have seen those thirsting for a better life, we have seen those naked against corruption. We have become sensitive to those most affected by injustice of entitlement, hierarchy, and privilege; inequality of access to education and health services; and corruption. We will always struggle with the injustices, but the heart to see the needs has been awakened and we have learned to advocate for those without a voice. Our hearts will always yearn for the people of Uganda.

Having travelled over every step of advance to our present standing, I can say, "Praise God!" As I see what God has wrought, I am filled with astonishment, and with confidence in Christ as leader. "We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history."<sup>1</sup>

Thank you for following our family's journey for the past five years. Charles will be sharing more stories through ADRA Canada. ■

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

<sup>1</sup> Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, xxxiv.





# Creation Corner for Kids

*Even though we speak like this, dear friends, we are convinced of better things in your case—the things that have to do with salvation.—Hebrews 6:9, NIV*

## Foxtail

Farmer George peers through the kitchen window at the thermometer outside. “Another cold morning,” he tells himself. Still, it’s a beautiful morning. The hoar frost is clinging to the trees, and the snow on the hayfield sparkles in the pink light of the rising sun. Farmer George puts on his parka and insulated coveralls, pulls on his heavy winter boots, and heads outside.

He starts the tractor and leaves it to run as he fetches a torch and some matches. Then he drives out to a low spot on the hay field and stacks the bales in a pile. He jumps down from the tractor seat and sets fire to the bales. Then he backs the tractor away and watches the sooty smoke rise through glittering frost crystals into the air.

### Think about it.

Farmer George knows the salty soil in the low spot on his field grows only foxtail. The foxtail seeds, with their barbed hooks, stick like slivers in the mouths of the cattle, causing pain and infection. The only thing he can do with foxtail hay is burn it.

Is the soil of your heart producing useful fruits of righteousness? Are you living up to the truth you know, allowing Jesus to sanctify you and make you like Him? Are you living to bless others and glorify God?

### Do it!

Read Hebrews 6:1–12. Pray that God will help you grow in Christ and “go on to maturity,” because selfishness produces briars and thorns “and its end is to be burned” (verses 1, 8, ESV).





## Applying A Little Gospel to Our Relationships

We all face challenges in our relationships. Despite these challenges, the Bible represents one of the most enduring sources of solutions for our relational needs.

Spiritual and relational growth are more than parallel processes. They are indivisibly intertwined in a symbiotic relationship. There should be no dichotomies between who we are as Christians and how we transact our relationships. Without relationships, we cannot mature in the virtues espoused in Scripture.

One practical example that comes to mind is Galatians 5, where Paul describes the fruit of the Spirit. Love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (NIV) at their most optimal levels are qualities that are fostered in relationships. We call to mind Jesus' test of a productive Christian when He posited that only by the kinds of fruit that we bear are we embraced or rejected as true followers of God.

Look at the list of the descriptions of the fruit of the Spirit again. Slowly read through the list, think of a significant relationship you are in, and ask yourself three important questions:

- To what extent do I value these virtues as important ingredients in my relationships?

- How often do I consciously pray and ask the Holy Spirit to help me to develop these virtues?
- What deliberate steps can I take to begin to practise these virtues in my relationships?

Next time you are faced with a challenge in your relationship, throw the gospel at it and see what the Holy Spirit will do to grow that relationship into a healthy testimony of the transforming grace of Jesus. ■

*M. Webster Turgott, D.Ed., CCC, is a pastor and trained family counsellor with the Alberta Conference.*

## Fear of the Judgment?

One of the common-ground beliefs between Adventists and Muslims is the judgment. We both teach it. However, the manner in which we understand the judgment makes all the difference in the world. I studied this issue from a Muslim perspective. I use this subject to continue a dialogue with Muslims I meet.

I ask, "Tell me, what do Muslims know about the judgment?"

They usually reply with, "Oh, we fear the judgment! You see, it's like this. There is a judgment scale, and all your good deeds are piled up on one side of the scale, while on the other side all your bad deeds are heaped. The side with the larger amount will determine where you spend eternity. Therefore, we fear the judgment, as we never know if our good deeds are sufficient to tip the scales in our favour." A very fearful situation indeed.

I tell my Muslim friends, "There is no need to have fear of the judgment!" I usually get a very puzzled look. I then ask them, "Is God [Allah] for you, or is He against you?"

They usually respond, "We don't know."

I assure them, "God is doing everything possible to get you into the kingdom. He longs to have you there and everything that can be done is being performed by heaven to get you in. Your duty is to respond favourably to what God reveals to you and to willingly offer your consent to allow God's grace to be

performed in your life."

This is a novel thought for Muslims—"God is in our favour?" Adventist friends, you can learn to effectively communicate the gospel message with Muslims, and it is easier than you think! We have much in common. Join us March 25–27, 2022, at Calgary Central Seventh-day Adventist Church for our Adventist–Muslim Relations Summit. Email [sdabooks@gmail.com](mailto:sdabooks@gmail.com) for more information. Wishing you heaven's eternal peace. ■

*Rudy Harnisch is the Adventist–Muslim Relations liaison for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada.*





# FRESH FAITH

## 35 & UNDER

In 35 words or less, what are some ways you cope with stress?

### A Heart for Children

by Alannah Tjhatra



Fifteen-year-old Selina McIntyre has always loved serving her community. Raised in the beautifully named Heart's Delight-Islington, N.L., Selina grew up with six siblings and currently attends the Bay Roberts Seventh-day Adventist Church.

With both father and mother very much involved in church life—her father being head elder and her mother being children's ministries leader and Pathfinder director—Selina knew that she wanted to get involved, too. So, from the young age of seven, Selina helped out with Sabbath worship services, morning prayer, and Scripture reading. And after asking her father

to teach her about it, she even learned how to manage the church's audio booth.

Selina always knew she had a special passion for children's ministries, and she started out by doing children's stories and helping out with VBS programs. When the churches shut down in 2020 due to COVID-19 and the Newfoundland mission started doing Sabbath services through Zoom instead, Selina decided to expand her ministry.

"I got inspired by [the Zoom services] and decided to put together a Zoom Sabbath school with the help of my younger sister Jenna so children who [wanted to] participate could join," says Selina. Together, she and Jenna taught everything from the parables of Jesus to the Fruit of the Spirit. They made sure that each lesson was filled with songs, stories, crafts, and games to help the children learn the Bible lessons from home.

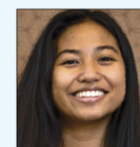
Now Selina continues her ministry as a junior primary Sabbath school teacher at her church. "It is a challenge but one I am willing to continue! I love teaching the children everything about Jesus and how much He loves them," says Selina. "They learn things from me, and I definitely learn so much from them."

There have been some difficult times, as her mother passed away in November 2021 from stage 4 breast cancer, but Selina remains hopeful still. "I truly appreciate every opportunity that [each person has] given me, and I look forward to more opportunities in the future. I also give a huge shoutout to God for making all of it possible and continuing to lead me in the right direction."

Selina is an amazing example of the impact that young people can have on their communities. Things may look new and different, but the youth carry on, filled with resilience, ingenuity, and hope in a Saviour who inspires. ■

#### Ashley Kim

I try to escape from the world by isolating myself, either by napping or going on a walk while listening to music. I like contemplating the prospect of a perfect world; it helps me de-stress.



#### Cheryl Anne de Guzman

I FaceTime people I know would help me get through whatever I'm going through—for example, my brother. I try to find things to keep my mind off of whatever is stressing me.

#### Enlai Wang

I either socialize with friends, exercise, or sleep.



#### Izzy Koh

Taking walks outside is incredibly helpful, and calling my little sister makes me really happy.

#### Melanie Taina

I talk to myself, write to myself, and leave my room to talk with my friends to release tension.



#### Tyler Ninalga

I go on a 10-minute jog sometimes. If I have something on my mind, I like to call up my friend and talk about it. I binge YouTube.







# Ask Me Anything

**Q:** Where did God come from?

**A:** God has always existed. He has always been there. The Bible, in its opening texts, declares the existence of God from before even the establishment of time. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (Gen. 1:1). He isn't held captive by time. He isn't withheld by time, space, or matter—these are simply concepts that help us understand the world. In our world we need all three to exist, but for God, He is beyond that.

God has no beginning or end, no start or endpoint. No one created God. He didn't inherit His position as God; He was not awarded it as a promotion. He didn't grow into it. He has no parents, no father or mother, and definitely no siblings. He is God. In Colossians 1:17, Paul puts it this way: "He [God] is before all things, and in him all things hold together" (NIV). And Daniel 4:35 says, "He does according to His will ... No one can restrain His hand" (NKJV).

God has specific features that make Him divine:

1. He is omniscient, which means He knows everything. He knows the end from the beginning.
2. He is omnipresent. He surpasses space. He can be everywhere at once, yet fully present.
3. He is omnipotent, meaning He is all-powerful.
4. He is immutable, meaning He doesn't change.

All of these characteristics are a part of what makes our God powerful yet personal. He is the Creator God but also our Saviour. He values our friendship with Him. He delights in us and loves to be with us. ■

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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



*"I have never entirely understood why we have a need to show extra love on one day a year."*

## My Least Favourite Holiday

**F**ebruary has my least favourite holiday ever: Valentine's Day. When I was little in elementary school, it was fun, because everyone felt included and we got to hand out little candies to everyone in the class along with cute notes. But after that, the excitement of it all died down. For a long time, I actually came to resent it, because as someone who's *definitely* a romantic, I never got to celebrate it. In middle school and high school, no boy sent me flowers or chocolates or anything, which was fine. But I love love, and so sometimes it was hard watching my friends get to celebrate it and go on dates with their significant others.

Even when I did have a boyfriend in my undergrad, at one point the relationship was long distance and we were 19, so we didn't celebrate it. Then when I was 21, I had a boyfriend during Valentine's Day, but he spent our entire date on the phone with a friend and then cheated on me a month later. Safe to say that Valentine's Day and this idea of a day dedicated to love left a pretty bad taste in my mouth.

Since then, I've had better Valentine's Days. I've either been single or dating, but I've never celebrated anything. The idea of this kind of passionate love that the day is dedicated to can be kind of exhausting. And when you're in grad school and/or working full-time, going out to dinner for a lengthy date sounds totally draining after a full day.

So this year I'm trying really, really hard to find things to like about Valentine's Day. I'm trying hard not to feel bitter when someone mentions Cupid or roses or chocolates—and I'm not even sure why I'm feeling bitter anymore; I'm in a relationship, I'm happy. But I have never entirely understood why we have a need to show extra love on one day a year.

Part of this for me is the question of why we can't just show people we care every day. It means more to me when someone shows they care out of the blue rather than feeling almost obligated to celebrate love.

When it comes to love, though, there really isn't any love greater than God's love for us. This thought has gotten me through a lot of heartbreaks and a lot of lonely Valentine's Days. And the amazing thing about God's love is that it isn't restricted to one day of the year in terms of intensity. God shows us His love every single day, whether we look for it or not. It's amazing, it's beautiful, and it's overlooked.

So if you're like me and really aren't a fan of Valentine's Day, take the day to explore your relationship with God. Look into how He has shown His love for you. Build that relationship *while* you build your romantic and platonic relationships. ■

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





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## SAVE MY

## MARRIAGE! PT. 1

**T**he following account is an amalgamated story of several couples I have counselled in session. Names have been changed. After reading this counselling description, how do you think your church could support this couple?

Jack and Jill have been married for 12 years. Their love story is like many today; they met online. She was looking for a man with a great sense of humour, while he was searching for an “independent-minded” woman. They found each other, and after a few dates, they both knew “this was the one.”

After a dozen years, the initial spark that had seemed to keep their relationship hot has gone cold. Jill wishes her “funny” husband would spend less time thinking about his work and focus more on the household. “I wish he would wash the dishes, give the kids baths, ... without me having to ask him,” she says, rolling her eyes, “or as he would say, ‘nag.’” The humour that had drawn her to Jack has long faded. “I’m not enamoured by his jokes any longer. I need him to participate in this household.”

Jack has his own feelings about their marriage. He says he still loves Jill but doesn’t feel like he can keep up with the stress from work, and home life seems to bombard him from both sides. “I’m angry that I have to always ask for sex,” he says. He recounts when they were first married, both of their sexual appetites were strong and spontaneous. “Now all she does is make a running to-do list in her head throughout the day and fixates on getting her list crossed off. I feel like the only time we have sex is when she is rewarding me for something.”

By now, Jack is getting aggravated, as his neck around his collar becomes reddened. “I’m just tired of all of this,” Jack says as he looks down at his shoes.

“You’re tired,” Jill looks over at her husband incredulously. Tears begin to stream down her face as her hands tremble in her lap. Jack can see her body language shift, and the tear droplets fall from his periphery. He crosses his legs and folds his arms.

The average length of a marriage in Canada is 14 years<sup>1</sup> (in the United States it is almost eight years). Canada ranks as having the 29<sup>th</sup> highest divorce rate among 87 countries (Russia comes in first, and the United States ranks 18<sup>th</sup>).<sup>2</sup>

Most Christians believe that marriage is one of God’s institutions that have existed since the beginning of time. What are some actionable steps your church could provide through outreach that would support couples in your community? Does your church offer support services to couples in crisis or help guide couples through premarital counselling? Marriage support services is a wide-open outreach opportunity often overlooked in local churches.

Next month we will examine some practical steps that the local church can take to support the marriages in your community. ■

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

1 Statistics Canada, “Table 3: Mean Duration of Marriages for Divorced People, Canada, Provinces and Territories,” <https://bit.ly/3qVvIGt>

2 Jane Stevenson, “Canada Has 29<sup>th</sup> Highest Divorce Rate Out of 87 Countries: Survey,” *Toronto Sun*, Jan. 17, 2021, <https://bit.ly/3HG1Lf3>





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# Breath of Heaven

*"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."—Deuteronomy 6:5, ESV*

God created us with incredible design. Simple things like sleep, fresh air, water, exercise, and breathing can improve and maintain our health, physically and mentally. Take a moment right now and take six deep slow breaths. Breathe in for five seconds and out for five seconds. Slow, deep breathing oxygenates the body and brain, tells your brain that all is well with your world so that the neurotransmitters released give a sense of well-being, and gives you time to take hold of any thought processes that are inviting anxiety or depression. If you have ever been deprived of oxygen, you know how precious and valuable it is to take a breath. God breathed into us the breath of life. Without His breath in us, we would die.

Did you know that the holiest name of God is a breath? YHWH is a breath. It is the sound of breathing in and out. God identifies Himself with this most basic need of life, with the breath that sustains life in us. Every breath we draw is a gift of God's grace. Sin kills, but God gives grace so that we keep breathing, opening space for us to turn to Him and accept His grace.

Do you know what other Hebrew word is also a breath? *Ialeph, ayin*, written as "hb" or "ahave." This is a word for "love." It is the sound of inhaling and exhaling. The consonants are silent. God's name is a breath. God's love is a breath. Take a breath and know that He is God! And that He loves you!

"Throughout Scripture this word (*ialeph, ayin*) is used to describe the intimate connection that God desires to have with us and that we can have with our life partners. This kind of love is the one in which we are so close to our beloved that we breathe in the breath of the other."<sup>1</sup> This up-close-and-personal, breath-to-breath love is the most common word for love in the Old Testament. Some examples of this love:

- **Lev. 19:18, 34:** Love your neighbour as yourself; love the alien as yourself.
- **Deut. 6:5; 10:19; 11:1:** Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and strength; love the stranger; love the Lord your God.

How do we get to this place of feeling so safe and secure in Christ that we are able to be vulnerable enough to be breath-to-breath with God and others? We talk with Him and listen to Him, through the Holy Spirit and the Bible. Prayer is talking to and listening to God. When entering a season of personal prayer, take a moment to be still, to breathe slow, deep breaths. As you breathe in and out, remember "YHWH" is breath, and "love" is breath. Sit for a moment focused on God's love, God's sharing of Himself with you, and that He is God Almighty, just a breath away. Be in awe that our great God desires breath-to-breath connection with you.

When I embrace this deep connection and know absolutely that God loves me, He becomes my secure attachment figure. In humans, neurotransmitters and hormones are released when we are in proximity to (Heb. 13:5) or thinking about (Heb. 12:3) our secure attachment figure. These neurotransmitters and hormones reduce the release of stress hormones like cortisol, increase a sense of well-being, strengthen the immune system, and create a cascade of pleasure, comfort, and calm. Slow down and breathe with God, know His heart, find secure attachment in Him, and breathe Him and His love into every part of your day. ■

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

<sup>1</sup> Sue Johnson and Kenneth Sanderfer, *Created for Connection: The "Hold Me Tight" Guide for Christian Couples* (New York: Little, Brown Spark, 2016), 37.



# Where Are They Now

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

*Interview by Ken Wiebe, Messenger Staff Writer*



Ed and (late) Marion Reimche

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

**Ed Reimche:** My parents, Albert and Emma, were married by a justice of the peace in Calgary, Alta., and moved to Benalto, Alta., where I was born in 1936 as the first of eight children. Six daughters followed me and then, finally, another son, Leo. Dad was an Adventist early in his life, while mother was baptized into the faith shortly before their marriage. They moved fairly frequently while they were raising us children.

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

**E:** I was homeschooled for my first year in Rimbey, Alta. Then the folks bought a farm in the Bentley, Alta., area, where I attended public school for Grades 2–6. We moved to Armstrong, B.C., where I attended Grandview Flats Church School (now North Okanagan Adventist Academy) for Grades 7–10 and public high school in Armstrong for Grades 11–13.

I remember haying and picking potatoes for neighbours to earn my tuition to attend Canadian Union College (CUC, now Burman University), so I could take my teacher training classes with Mildred Clark as our instructor. It was a one-year program. I graduated in 1956. Much of my future education took place by correspondence, night classes, and summer school at Memorial University in St. John's, N.L., while



I was still teaching full-time. I finally gathered all the transcripts and turned them over to the Atlantic Union College to enter their Adult Degree Program. I graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Education in 1980.

**M:** *What led you to choose education as a career?*

**E:** I grew up as the eldest of a fairly large family. Children always delighted me. I taught a primary Sabbath school class occasionally. When I was in Grade 12 at the Armstrong Public High School, I joined the Future Teachers' Club. I had the opportunity to teach a Grade 7 class. I just felt that the Lord had called me to be a teacher. So it was natural for me to head to CUC to take the teachers' training program. I never regretted my decision.

**M:** *Where and in what capacity have you served in the field of education?*

**E:** In my initial year I was invited to teach students in Grades 1–8 in a log cabin in Silver Creek, B.C. I was 19 years old and had a young man of 16 who presented a challenge. In fact, the school board chairman suggested I find another career, but I wasn't quite ready to quit. I finished that June. I moved on to teach Grades 1–8 for two years in the Basaraba Sawmill Camp School 20 miles out of Williams Lake. This proved to be a much more pleasant experience.

In 1959, my friend David Crook, a fellow student in teachers' training class at CUC and now teaching in Rest Haven, B.C., suggested we go teach in Newfoundland for an adventure. Pastor Desmond Tinkler, then president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Newfoundland and Labrador, gladly accepted our offer, and we both were given different schools, Dave in Bay Roberts and I in Corner Brook.

I taught Grades 5–8, while Yvonne Critchley, who had just graduated from Kingsway College, taught the lower grades. Things went well. I also served as the interim pastor while Elder Frank Knutson attended Andrews University to complete his master's degree. I served as teacher and principal in Corner Brook, Botwood, Lethbridge, and Bay Roberts.

In 1976, we moved to St. John's, where I taught Grade 5 and/or 6 in the St. John's Seventh-day Adventist Elementary School with Phyllis Pearcey as principal until 1996, when I retired after teaching for 40 years. I continued another five years part-time with Marilyn Kelloway as the principal of the St. John's Adventist Church School, the provincial government having switched over to the public school system.

**M:** *What has been the highlight in your career or what*

*has brought you the most satisfaction in your career?*

**E:** It was a joy to work with young students, and as they matured, many came back to express their happy memories of our working with them. The parents of two young ladies I taught came to Marion asking if we would take their daughters into our home, which we did. We were Mom and Dad to them. All the praise goes to God.

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

**E:** I met my wife, Marion Gill, sister of Pastor Victor Gill, in Corner Brook. She was a good cook, a lover of children, and a lovely Christian lady. In June 1960, we had a double wedding with Yvonne Critchley and Frank Johnson. We have four children who are very precious to us. Carolyn (Terry O'Neill) works in Student Services at Burman University; David (Angela) is a photographer; Laura (Jamie) works at Walmart; and Ron (Natasha) supervises the security and transportation departments at Burman University. We also consider these as a part of our family: Lily, Rosalie, Cory, April, Ruthie, and Keith. We have six lovely grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

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

**E:** In 2002 we moved from St. John's to Lacombe, Alta., where my parents and several of my siblings and extended family lived. We attended the Lacombe Community Seventh-day Adventist Church and held numerous church offices. In April 2021, Marion suddenly and unexpectedly went to her rest. I had lost my life companion of almost 61 years.

I have enjoyed being the Religious Liberty secretary and, for 19 years, the church's ADRA leader. Speaking of outreach, I commenced collecting for Harvest Ingathering, now called ADRA Appeal, when I was 13 and am still involved 72 years later. At other times of the year, I have solicited for Canadian Cancer Society and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada.

As part of my witnessing approach, I bowl with the seniors, help weekly with the food bank, host Back Yard Friends (a community supper), and deliver Meals on Wheels for seniors and shut-ins. I have been distributing the *Great Controversy* from door to door. Witnessing for my Lord has been a real joy for me. The verse in 2 Timothy 3:14 has been a motivating factor for me over the years: "Continue thou [young Timothy] in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them [for me that's parents, teachers, and good friends]." I can't wait until Jesus comes. Do come soon, Lord Jesus! ■





## Steel Cut Oats

### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup (250 ml) steel-cut oats
- 4 cups (1 L) unsweetened soy milk
- ¼ tsp (1 ml) salt
- 2 tbsp (30 ml) honey
- Fresh or dried fruit and nuts for topping (optional)

### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Soak steel-cut oats in water for a few hours or overnight. Discard soaking water and rinse well.
2. Place oats in a saucepan with soy milk, salt, and honey and mix well. Bring mixture to a boil, reduce to a simmer, and simmer for 35 to 45 minutes, stirring occasionally. For thinner oats, add additional soy milk or water.

**Tip!** Serve topped with fresh or dried fruits and nuts.

*Makes 4 servings.*



### NUTRITIONAL INFO:

- Serving Size 301 g
- Calories 252
- Total Fat 5.6 g
- Saturated Fat 0.8 g
- Cholesterol 0 mg
- Sodium 190 mg
- Total Carbs 38.5 g
- Dietary Fibre 5.1 g
- Sugars 11 g
- Protein 11.3 g

*The late Afa Donkor was a passionate health advocate. The Powerful Plate is available for purchase online at [adventistbookcenter.com](http://adventistbookcenter.com) or by phone at 800/765-6955.*





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# RAINMAK



## Reaching Mexico for Jesus

There's a world of difference between handing out Bible study cards door-to-door in your own neighbourhood in British Columbia and operating a school for marginalized children in one of the poorest districts of Mexico. Thomas and Marcie Drobott know all about that difference. As a couple, their journey together in outreach ministry has evolved considerably since they wed in 2007, and now spans the roughly 3,885 kilometres between Cherryville, B.C., and Roni, Mexico.

Amid the beautiful, snowy backdrop of their home in the country, Thomas and Marcie reminisce on the way God has led them over the years. Thomas takes us back to when they were single, noting, "We both had very limited thinking about mission. God really developed our mindset very early in our marriage." It's interesting to trace their ministry journey and see how God prepared them for their current mission, Reach Mexico.

After they got married, for several years the pair were involved with a local organization, Kelowna's Gospel Mission, feeding people living on the streets. Later they answered God's call to help a widow and her 11 children, aged newborn to 16. They still keep in touch with the family to this day. Isaiah chapter 58 comes to mind, as they share about their love for helping others.

An annual health expo for the community was the next project God had in mind for them while they still lived in Kelowna. After they moved to the country area of Cherryville, they were ready for more. Starting up a

Pathfinder group with other church members and facilitating Caring for the Heart marriage seminars are just a few of their current church ministries. At its peak, the Pathfinder club numbered 24 children, 22 of whom were from the community. Wonderful numbers for a community with a population of only around 800. But God had an even bigger work awaiting them in Mexico.

It was January 2013. Thomas and Marcie had travelled to Mexico to flee winter's chill. Thomas recounts, "It turned into a very busy three weeks!" It certainly did—after Marcie phoned Pastor Emanuel Hernandez at the local Adventist church to ask if there was any assistance she and Thomas could offer. Thus, the Reach Mexico ministry was born. Their first undertaking was to help the church members repair thatched roofs on seven homes belonging to seniors in the village of Potam. The makeshift roofs consisted of anything the people could find over the years. "It was a very difficult job to remove all that material that had piled up over 30 years," Marcie recalls. Not to mention the scorpions, bugs, and other critters that called the roofs home!

Thomas continues, "That same trip, the idea came up to run a bakery, so we bought a commercial oven and mixer for the local people to make bread, pizza, and sweet buns to sell to the public. Then we thought, 'Think bigger! What else can we do before we leave?'" That's when Pastor Hernandez's wife, Judy, a teacher at the local Adventist school, shared her dream for the children in Roni Village. In times past, the church

members' meagre resources had been too scanty to fund any type of program for the village's many children. In fact, the town, previously a brothel, was now a gang stronghold, with many of the children fatherless or parentless. Judy's dream was to offer a school program for these children.

With Thomas and Marcie's help, plans were laid that first year, and by the following year, the church was able to provide a children's program and potluck lunch. What a godsend for the community, attracting between 70 to 100 children! Well, that was a whirlwind of a vacation!

Every January since, until COVID-19 halted travel in 2020, Thomas and Marcie have traversed the 3,885-kilometre, 36-hour drive to Mexico, their truck loaded with donations of new shoes from Roy's Shoes, clothing from Lumby Thrift Store, toys, bikes, and more. Praise God, the goods were never confiscated at the border!

Over the subsequent six years, a whopping number of Reach Mexico projects have been initiated. Many have been completed, and many are ongoing. A partial list includes an addition to the church building permitting outdoor fellowship while being sheltered from the elements, a paint job for the church building, gravel added to the dirt parking lot, sponsorships of families, food delivery programs, a housing renovation program, sponsorships to allow as many children as possible to attend the local Adventist school, and vans to transport the students to school. Without sponsorships, most of the



# ERS

children's futures would be bleak. Girls are at risk for sex trafficking and teen pregnancy, and boys are often recruited for gang membership. These dear children can't even attend the public school, as they are bullied there for being so poor.

Thomas and Marcie recount a funny story about the sponsorships. The Adventist school, Colegio Empalme, was being funded by a generous local optometrist. Thomas chuckles, "We thought we would sponsor 10 children and then leave it at that." Marcie adds, "The children are unschooled and unchurched, so we thought, 'What better way to give them an education and teach them about God!'" It turned out the optometrist needed partners to continue funding the school. Thomas and Marcie prayed and felt God leading them to partner with the optometrist to fund Colegio Empalme. So much for bowing out after implementing the sponsorships!

Currently, with around 90 students enrolled, the school offers Grades K–9, with a Christian curriculum focusing on music and English acquisition. The long-term goal is to add Grades 10–12 and teach different skills, such as carpentry, agriculture, esthetics, nurse's aid, massage therapy, and more, enabling students to be qualified for work immediately after graduation.

The school relies on donations to operate the kitchen and transportation services and to maintain the building. All incoming tuition is used for teacher and staff salaries, along with a portion of the donations. The marvellous thing is that,



Marcie and Thomas Drobott

providentially, two weeks before COVID-19 hit the world, Thomas and Marcie had just completed transferring their charity organization to the eight local churches, in essence, handing control over to the community. Now they work with Reach Canada to raise the necessary funds to meet the ongoing needs of the school and the children of Roni Village.

Thomas and Marcie share that ministry has strengthened their relationship with God through seeing His hand in every step of their journey, especially during challenging circumstances. At the same time, ministry has enhanced their marriage by giving them the common goal of focusing on others. They encourage others to "follow the Holy Spirit's leading," adding, "Without prayer, you will not

have success. We serve a mighty God, so don't be afraid to pray big." They are grateful to the many individuals who have volunteered their time and means to travel to Mexico over the years to assist in various aspects of the Reach Mexico ministry.

You, dear reader, may be pondering how you might help. Most assuredly, your prayers are welcome. And if you want to do more, visit the Reach Mexico website at [reachmexico.org](http://reachmexico.org), which outlines how you can participate in the blessings that come with this great work, undertaken for God's glory. ■

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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.*





# Bridges to Freedom



*"The godly man's life is exciting."  
—Prov. 14:14b, TLB*

**T**he night Don Straub read this Bible verse in Proverbs, he never dreamed his life as a Christian would be so exciting. "Since then, I've visited more than 30 countries," says Don. "I narrowly escaped a terrorist train bombing in Paris, tented with roaring lions in the Serengeti, and went tubing on the piranha-filled Amazon River. I delivered my firstborn with my own hands at home. I've gone swimming with a dolphin, allowing her to pull me down into the deep water and then flying out from the surface with her. My son flew me into a remote village in Papa, Indonesia, which was once a region of headhunting cannibals. I've explored the narrow streets of Old Jerusalem, floated on the Dead Sea, and ridden a camel around the pyramids in Egypt. I certainly haven't lived a boring life."

Don's life journey took him through countless careers and challenges: he served as a teacher of elementary grades, secondary science and religion, a school principal, an international missionary, and a pastor of a new church plant.

"I have been married three times; two of my wives passed away from diseases. I have been diagnosed with cancer twice and beaten it both times. I am the father of four of my own (one adopted) children and two stepchildren of my wife, Juanita. My 11 grandchildren bring me happiness in this final chapter of my life," he says.

Don credits his wide-ranging life experiences as being the best preparation for his current vocation as a counsellor and psychotherapist. "I have a specialty in marriage counselling through the Gottman Institute and other specialties in treating trauma and addiction. I supervise student counsellors at a master's degree level for various universities. My clients tell me heart-wrenching stories that are often X-rated for violence, sex, and coarse language. Helping people completely turn their lives around is both gratifying and challenging."

As a college student, Don wrestled with deep thoughts of self-reproach, never feeling good enough to make it to heaven until one night while attending a Bible conference. He remembers, "I was tossing and turning in my bed when I felt like I was supposed to get up and go downstairs to the main living area of the lodge. When I got down there, a group of people sitting in a circle asked me why I came down. I answered, 'I woke up and felt impressed to come down for some reason.' They told me they had been praying, asking God to wake someone up who needed a relationship with Jesus and come downstairs. I broke down in tears and told them what I had been struggling with, and within minutes they shared that when we come to Jesus, just as we are, God forgives and declares us righteous, and my life was never the same since."

Don was like a child who discovered a new flavour of







Don and Nellie with their children in Africa.

ice cream, better than chocolate! “Try this, you’ll love it!” He and his friends witnessed at college campuses and local churches, leading revivals—even being accused of initiating a riot. Just an honest group of Christian young people on an adventure to share their faith, trusting God to supply their daily needs of food, shelter, and transportation—perpetually living on the edge—having almost nothing to eat at times, yet their basic needs were always supplied.

“It was during the last summer before I completed college that I met my future wife, Nellie, who was on our team. She had an amazing character and love for God.”

After Don and Nellie married, he was hired as a teacher at a Christian school in northern Alberta. “My purpose in life was not to just be a teacher, but to help kids find a personal relationship with God. To save money, we lived in a small shack that had plywood floors and no indoor plumbing.”

It didn’t bother Nellie, a trained nurse who grew up in a small village in Alaska, accustomed to roughing it and dreaming of one day becoming a missionary in Africa. “Six years and four children later, I got a call to go to Tanzania as a high school science teacher,” says Don. “Nellie was in the hospital at the time, having just given birth to our fourth child. On our way home from the hospital, I told her about the surprise call to move to Africa. Without skipping a beat, she said, ‘Yes! Let’s go!’”

Don reminisces how they landed in “storybook Africa” teeming with “elephants, giraffes, lions, zebra, monkeys, and lots of snakes.” Three of their four children were still in diapers when they arrived in Tanzania, and their house had no electricity; however, unlike their shack in northern Alberta, it did have indoor plumbing. Because their furniture took a year to arrive, they did everything on the floor: eating, playing, and sleeping on foam mattresses.

“For a long time, we had no curtains on our windows, so we had to get used to children lined up watching our every move. We did the laundry in the bathtub on our knees, and once per week we would walk a few kilometres with the kids to the market. We had to carry two of them in backpacks and carry a week’s food supply back in four baskets.”

Don kept so busy teaching and supervising students, preaching regularly on weekends, that his devotional life began to slide, feeling more like an employee of God than a child of God. One day another teacher came to him quite depressed. Don says, the teacher “did not feel like his life had much purpose. After we talked, I told him how I was feeling the same way, so we decided to listen to a set of 12 sermons on cassette tapes that centred on salvation and a relationship with Jesus.” Don decided to transcribe the sermons onto paper and preach them to the students.



*"I've explored the narrow streets of Old Jerusalem, floated on the Dead Sea, and ridden a camel around the pyramids in Egypt. I certainly haven't lived a boring life."*



Don at Machu Picchu, Peru.



Don at the Pyramid of Djoser in Egypt.

As he started the series, Don's eldest son came down with hepatitis A, and after Nellie nursed him back to good health, she contracted the virus. "All along I had been trying to contact headquarters by radio, but no one answered. One day someone arrived with a car and a woman to stay with us to care for the children while Nellie went to the hospital."

A few days later, after Don had just finished preaching a sermon about trusting God when bad things happen, he walked out of the building into the dark night where he was greeted by the friend who had taken Nellie to the hospital. "He hugged me and whispered, 'Don, Nellie's gone. She didn't make it.' He had to practically carry me up the hill to my house. I took my four children into my bedroom and told them Mommy had died and we would not see her until we got to heaven. The rest of the night was a blur. All five of us clung to one another in my bed that night."

Don's perfect life came crashing down. "I recall standing by the hole in the ground with the coffin in it. In my mind, I was begging God to raise Nellie from the dead as He had done with Lazarus. It wasn't too late; God could do it before we put the dirt in the hole.

*Please, God!* Then I got a clear thought: *Why would God do this for me when every second of every day, someone in this world was praying the exact same prayer about their loved one who died?*"

After the funeral a missionary from the United States whom Don had never seen before came to him, put his arm around his shoulder, and said, "Don, we don't know why God caused Nellie to die, but we know that He did it to teach you some kind of a lesson."

Don just froze. "I was devastated by his words." A few hours later, Don came down with both malaria and hepatitis A and was isolated for 30 days in a small room in a hospital in Nairobi, Kenya. "All I could think about were the words that missionary said to me. I reasoned that I must not have been a good enough missionary for God to do this to me." When he finally left the hospital to go back to Tanzania, he weighed 90 pounds.

"One morning I read the story of John the Baptist, who was beheaded by King Herod, but then Jesus said that John was the greatest of the prophets. That was the beginning of my healing. Later I received a telegram from a missionary who had become a mentor to me. The telegram simply said, 'Don. God did not cause Nellie to







Don explaining concepts from his book with *It Is Written Canada*.

Get your free copy of Don Straub's book, *Bridges to Freedom: Creating Change Through Science and Christian Spirituality* from *It Is Written Canada*.



die. An enemy did this.' Those words sent me on a journey of studying the Bible, asking questions, and thinking more deeply about why suffering exists."

Don concluded that the Bible reveals how God is not the cause of evil. "But then if God is good," he questioned, "why doesn't He prevent bad things from happening?"

Scripture is clear, he says. "Because God is love, He is a God of freedom. If you take away freedom, you end up with force. And force destroys love and trust and creates fear. For example, a Nazi guard in a prisoner-of-war camp could force his prisoners to do anything, but there was one thing he could never do: force anyone to love him. And if He begins to take away freedom, love will die, and we will be left with fear for all eternity."

*It Is Written Canada* wants to give you a chance to learn more about this freedom by sending you a free copy of Don Straub's book titled *Bridges to Freedom: Creating Change Through Science and Christian Spirituality*.

You can also watch Don's entire story on CTV or any of the dozens of stations where *It Is Written Canada's* programs are featured. Also, go to [itiswrittencanada.ca](http://itiswrittencanada.ca)

or *It Is Written Canada's* YouTube channel and click on the program titled "Bridges to Freedom" to watch the first of seven episodes. You'll hear how, as a practising clinical counsellor, Don Straub deals with important questions concerning addictions, emotional dishonesty, letting go of deep hurt, realizing self-love, understanding God's anger, and why we sometimes do things we ourselves do not understand. You'll see how Don helps people struggling with everyday problems by giving them powerful, practical solutions. ■

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





# Like a Little Child

*“Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”—(Matt. 18:3, 4, NKJV)*

**A** few months before the pandemic hit, literature evangelist Clarke was knocking on doors in the city of Toronto. He was having a bad day in the sense that no one seemed to be responding positively to what he had to offer. Most people were just too busy to take the time to listen.

Clarke eventually met a man and his son. He shared some literature with the man, including a book called *Storytime*, which has character-building stories for children. After listening for some time, the man simply said, “Thank you for coming and sharing, but I won’t be interested.”

Clarke’s heart began to sink, but then he heard a small voice saying, “Daddy? I have some money. Can I get the book?”

The son had heard what the stories in the book could do in his life. He wanted the book. What could the father say? The boy got his own money to pay for the book.

Some time later Clarke met a lady who seemed to have an excuse for everything. She didn’t seem interested in anything spiritual or even health related. But her daughter had heard the conversation and told her mom that she wanted to donate funds to support Clarke in sharing God with more people. The little girl was so adamant! So the mother told the girl, “All you have is your savings. Are you sure you want to give your savings away?”

The girl went upstairs and got her \$6 to give as a donation. Clarke made sure to give her something nice for her generosity. This event brought to mind another incident of a widow who gave her last coins so long ago in a temple in Jerusalem.

Clarke was able to have a nice conversation with a

couple at the last door he knocked on that day. After talking for some time, they decided to get some books for their family. As Clarke was about to leave, their little girl came up to him and gave him a nice little card saying, “This is for you!” This little girl was so happy that Clarke had come to give her family some books about God. This was her way of saying, “Thank you.”

Sometimes, when we’re out in the field, it’s tempting to conclude that no one cares. Satan is always encroaching on God’s work, seeking to discourage His workers. But God has His agents everywhere. And often they come in small packages. Clarke was very moved by the simple gesture of the little girl, which encouraged him for many days.

Jesus tells us, “Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 18:3, 4, NKJV).

As humans, we’re often so busy with our own agendas that we give little thought to those who have committed their lives to serving God. And when we do meet these individuals—be they pastors, teachers, evangelists, medical missionaries, or others—often the first thing we have to offer is criticism. Instead, let us become like little children in this regard. Although we may not agree with people’s methods or perspectives, we can still show love, appreciation, and moral support as human beings and children of God. May God help us become more like little children. ■

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





*Wow!  
They Really  
Did Care!*

Will Kaytor teaches math and physical education at Kingsway College.

*The* third time Will Kaytor showed up at my Kingsway College office, I wasn't certain if I was impressed or irritated with his tenacity. Will was in his senior year at Burman University completing his education degree. His first visit at my office was during Thanksgiving break, dropping by to leave his resumé and letting me know he was a Kingsway College graduate wanting to teach at Kingsway. The subsequent visits were so I wouldn't forget about him.

Reflecting on it all now, Will says, "In university I was like, 'What's my ministry?' I didn't want to be a pastor, because standing up front and preaching isn't what I wanted to do or was good at. So, how do I give back?" Exploring his life at Kingsway College led him to the vocation God had in store. He believed in the importance of Christian education. He adds, "I always said that where you end up going to high school is most vital."

Will recounts how his experiences at Kingsway shaped his future. When tutoring students in the dorm, he says "it felt really good to teach someone a concept, and when they began to understand, for me it was kind of like that lightbulb moment where I realized, *I think I really like this!*"

Relationships were also important. "The bonds created in this small-school, Christian environment run a little deeper. Putting everything together, it's like a big family. I'm so grateful for the experiences, and teachers, most of whom are still at Kingsway today." He adds, "It is so important to have positive Christian role models. The staff were really good people. Their example was inspiring. Their positive influences made teaching so attractive."

The connections Will had with his teachers made an impact. "My math teachers cared. When I wasn't working

to my potential, I appreciated how they approached me. The classroom interactions were genuine. I really felt they cared about us and our futures. When I'd come back to visit, and they'd ask me about how I was doing, I thought, '*Wow! They really did care!*' That's what makes me want to be a part of it."

How was Will's ministry question impacted? "My ministry, the one I want to have, is within the Christian environment," he says. "As a teenager, I know what I struggled with in terms of religion and Christianity. I wanted to be that positive, spiritual person for youth going through the same things I went through. I wanted to join the mission here to get students to find something deep with Christ before they leave, to help students find their spiritual path."

Currently in his fourth year of teaching at Kingsway, Will observes, "The way I've been able to interact with my students outside of class is amazing and translates into the classroom. As I saw teachers do this with me, I said, 'It looks like fun.'"

Now he realizes that it's a lot more work than he originally thought. "Yeah," he laughs, "but, it's worth it and I couldn't be any happier about what teaching is, at its core, because in the last four years I've really grown to love it."

Reflecting on his Kingsway experience, both as a student and a teacher, Will concludes that Kingsway staff really care about their students. He is convinced that the school does its best to make Christianity relevant and engaging for teens today. ■

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*Lee Richards is the president of Kingsway College in Oshawa, Ont.*



## Early Intervention for Club Foot Gives a New Spring to Baby's Steps



Samuel\* at three days old before any casting began.



These are the first braces after casting is completed.

Samuel's\* parents were supposed to be happy when he was born. Instead, they were distraught because their baby was born with a congenital birth defect known as club foot. They had never seen anything like it before, where their child's feet are twisted out of shape or position. If left untreated, the condition causes babies to grow up having to walk on the outside of their feet, a rather disabling condition.

Then came good news. Samuel became a patient of the Clubfoot Care for Kenya (CCK) clinic at Kendu Bay in western Kenya. With casting, bracing, and a minor operation on the Achilles tendon, the boy's life was changing for the better.

"We removed the cast and braced [Samuel's] feet for maintenance of the achieved correction," Deril Mbewa, an occupational therapist at the clinic, said in an email to ABW. "The parents are now happy and smiling all the way—when coming to the clinic and going back home."

A Better World Canada partnered with Kendu Adventist Hospital and CCK to start the new services in August. The facility is located at the rehabilitation centre on the hospital grounds.

"We've been trying to get it going for a long time," said Karen Leung, rehabilitation services co-ordinator for ABW.

For many years, ABW sponsored children's surgeries in the region near Lake Victoria. The majority of those patients had club foot. They faced a difficult surgery involving three bones being broken to reposition the foot. Although the feet were corrected, in many cases the child would face significant pain as well as arthritis later on, said Leung.

It was time for a new solution. "The global standard is really early intervention," Leung said. "In Canada, it's recognized at

birth. The child is put in casts and they are braced. By the time they are one year old, they are up walking and the foot is normal."

Staff use the Ponseti method of casting and bracing to gently reposition a child's club foot. A minor surgery is also performed on the ankle tendon.

"The newborn's tendons and bones are still quite flexible," said Leung. "So if you can do that early on, then once the foot is in good position, you try to maintain that with bracing until the child is five years old."

The infant is monitored regularly with the help of a supportive team that includes therapists, a physician, and parent advisor. Parents are educated and encouraged.

The hospital provides the facility and staffing, ABW provides the funds for the splinting and casting materials, and CCK provides oversight and the educational component. The Kendu clinic is now one of 24 CCK clinics in the country.

"We're starting off with four new cases a month," Leung said.

Since children are seen weekly, that will soon result in 10 or more visits per clinic. Leung, whose family was a major donor of the rehabilitation centre, is enthused that mothers are feeling optimistic rather than ashamed. They often feel cursed or blamed for their child's condition.

Leung added, "It's also exciting to be a part of a bigger network of recognized clinics across the whole country." ■

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

\*Name has been changed.





# Aiyana Potts

## A Leader in Her Community and Alberta's Summer Youth Team



Over nine summers, Aiyana Potts blossomed as a leader and was the obvious choice as lead member of the 2021 Summer Youth Team. The COVID-slim 2021 Team (L to R): Pastor Tsholo Sebetlela, Bella Potts, Aiyana Potts (lead member), Vania Russell, Akeem Ambrose, and Arvin McCarty.

*Hear Aiyana and other members of the Maskwacis community talk about their July-August 2021 Summer Team adventures in The Tsholo Report at [www.albertaadventist.ca/maskwa-movies](http://www.albertaadventist.ca/maskwa-movies).*

Aiyana Potts first got involved in the Alberta Conference's Summer Youth Team when she was 12. Back then the Summer Youth Team was a small group of Burman University students who volunteered to stick around for the summer to continue providing children's care and day camps in the Maskwacis community. Aiyana hung out with them and watched what they did.

Both Aiyana and the Summer Youth Team program have grown. Aiyana has managed to help out every year since the team's inception, seeing it expand into a four-month, paid team of seven to nine youth and a leader to oversee it for the summer. The team's reach grew well beyond the Maskwacis community and, under the oversight of Pastor Peter Ford, was able to travel to other communities, delivering children's programming and child care.

One of Aiyana's favourite memories is of a month spent on the road in the Northwest Territories with the team: one week in Fort Resolution, one week in Yellowknife, and a week in Inuvik—above the Arctic Circle. She's enjoyed the opportunity to spend time in other communities and learning how they do things in other regions. She's found that other communities are very similar to her own.

While Aiyana credits the Summer Team for helping her find her voice and giving her confidence, her biggest influence is back home in her community. She looks up

to her Aunt Melissa, her dad's sister. "She's a mother figure to me and always pushing me to do my best," says Aiyana. "She believes in me and cheers me on."

Now 22, Aiyana spent last summer as the first Indigenous Summer Youth Team leader from Maskwacis. As team leader, she oversaw all the summer programming delivered and supervised four other youth workers. She is also the first Summer Youth Team leader to have adapted the program to be delivered over a virtual platform during the COVID-19 pandemic. Aiyana is proud to be a leader in her community and thinks it very important that Maskwacis has opportunities for youth leadership.

Aiyana is also studying to be a teacher. She is driven to achieve this goal and is thankful that she has been able to develop many related skills over her years on the Summer Youth Team. She looks forward to a time when the church will have a building for programming where everyone is welcome. She hopes to help community members connect at this centre and to help deliver events like gym night, game night, and children's programming. ■

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*Breeann Burghardt is a graduate of the Burman University School of Business. As lead member of the Alberta Conference Summer Team for two summers while a student at Burman University, Breeann was one of the "big kids" Aiyana had learned from.*





# One Week in Paradise

“The trash I am going to throw into the garbage is my lack of belief that my body has the ability to heal.”

*Resounding applause filled the room.*

*“And the treasure I am going to take home from this week is the persistence to stand on God’s truth and promises and the power of prayer.”*

Again, the audience erupted.

At the end of “One Week in Paradise,” participants exposed the trash they decided to discard and the treasure they desired to take home. Over the past seven days, addictions had been overcome, weight lost, and relationships restored.

As I witnessed the testimonies, an inspired quote kept flashing in my mind: “I wish to tell you that soon there will be no work done in ministerial lines but medical missionary work.”<sup>1</sup> After I first read this statement, the conviction settled in my soul to investigate wholistic health. I longed to help sick and suffering souls in practical ways and ultimately lead them to Jesus.

Recently, I connected with Dr. George Cho and Daniel Cho—twins who share the same passion—and we began partnering on a program called One Week in Paradise, a seven-day wholistic evangelism and wellness immersion experience. This became a collaborative effort of various Seventh-day Adventist businesses and ministries: *Paradise Fields*, *It Is Written Canada*, *Lifestyle is Medicine*, *Not By Bread Alone*, *Energy Shack*, *Marcos Made God Inspired*, and *Pathways Lifestyle Medicine Clinics*. The grassroots team currently consists of two general practitioners, two naturopathic doctors, two massage therapists, two nutritionists, two fitness instructors, a couple of spiritual counsellors, and a host of other volunteers.

At our One Week in Paradise, guests were invited each morning to a 30-minute worship experience. Many initially felt fearful praying in public, but as the week progressed, all found prayer partners, and tears flowed freely as they celebrated their



achievements, praising God for what He was doing to transform their lives.

“This is the treasure I’m taking home with me: I’m going to spend my mornings with God. I always knew I should,” one participant confessed. “Now I know how to do it, because you showed me how. So every morning is going to be my devotional time, and I know He’ll speak to me. I know He’ll tell me what He wants for my life.”

Another beamed as she spoke: “My blood pressure went down; I lost five pounds—two inches around my waist—and I quit smoking! I thank God for this treasure!”

Choking back his tears, one gentleman vulnerably admitted, “I came here broken—not thinking I could be healed or loved. So I want to throw away my shame, because it is truly by God’s grace that I am here today, and the treasure I want to take home is me—the new me!”

Barely able to contain her emotions,

one woman disclosed, “What I’m taking home is the fact that I’ve known for a long time I’ve needed God in my life.”

Doctors marvelled at this feedback: to the people attending, having found Christ outweighed everything.

If you wish to learn more about the secrets behind the success of One Week in Paradise, René and I will be travelling throughout Canada this spring to share with anyone who wishes to have us visit their church. If you want us to visit your church, please, contact us at *It Is Written Canada* by calling (905) 404-6510 or emailing [information@iiw.ca](mailto:information@iiw.ca). Or write to: *It Is Written Canada*, Box 2010, Oshawa, ON, L1H 7V4, Canada. ■

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





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# The Blessing of Small Churches



I didn't realize how small Charlottetown was until I arrived here back in January 2020. As an international student moving from Toronto to P.E.I., for me it was quite the change.

But I'll be honest. I love small towns. The welcoming atmosphere, the way of life, and the smell of a countryside town have always been my passion.

The cost of living in big cities can be high. Stress, traffic, and high costs were the main reasons I decided to apply to a journalism program in Charlottetown. I didn't regret. When I got here, I fell in love with the city, and my life got way easier. I was finally able to do things that I couldn't while living in Toronto, like enjoying the sunset at the waterfront after work or talking to my neighbour going to school—tasks that would take a lot of time in a big centre.

But I was missing one thing. As a Seventh-day Adventist and international student living by myself, I needed to socialize with my brothers and sisters in faith.

Being involved in the church is a privilege. A few months ago, I contacted the local church in Charlottetown and

wrote to the pastor, Ramon Triguero, who quickly responded and invited me to attend the church the next Sabbath. I confess I was a bit nervous, especially because I hadn't made any friends yet and it would be my first time.

I got up the courage and planned my visit. The next Sabbath I got a ride to the church which is located outside Charlottetown in the community of Winsloe, far from downtown, but I decided to check the church out by myself. After the service, I ended up meeting and speaking with the people, and it turned out to be one of the best decisions I had ever made. Everyone was so welcoming and kind. The members were active, engaged, and happy to see me there.

It's amazing how small churches can be a game-changer for newcomers and new members. Small communities can embrace people who are alone in a way that big churches sometimes cannot.

Even though my family lives on the other side of the continent, I don't feel alone anymore when I meet the people at church every Sabbath.

It has been a few months since I started actively engaging in the activities, and I believe God has a thousand different

ways to take care of people.

I'm grateful for the work that the Charlottetown church does in the community. I'm grateful for how small groups are crucial to spreading the gospel and rescuing those who have distanced themselves from the church. I'm eternally grateful for what God has done for me since I first embarked on my new adventure.

Jesus chose only 12 men to take His knowledge to the world and start His ministry.

"Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19, NIV). A thousand years later, that "small group" has reached every corner of the world with a message of hope and salvation.

No matter how tiny or isolated on the map a church can be, it will always be powerful and big under the influence of God. ■

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*Henrique Pieper Silva is from Brazil and studies journalism at Holland College. He attends the Charlottetown Seventh-day Adventist Church in Prince Edward Island.*







"It's the mission. You believe in the mission," says Jasmin, pictured (right).

**F**ear gripped Jasmin as she sat on a plane that was taking her back to Sudan. A month prior, she had promised herself she would never go back. Now she was willingly returning.

Three and a half years ago, Jasmin accepted a call to work in the ADRA Sudan office as the finance director. It was a fitting position. She has 20 years of experience in finance and has served 15 years in ADRA. Prior to her post in Sudan, she had served in Sri Lanka, Mongolia, and Papua New Guinea. Sudan was not her first hardship posting; she had no illusions that it would be easy.

When Jasmin arrived in April 2018 at the ADRA compound, there was no gas, no reliable running water, and no source of electricity. In April, temperatures can still reach as high as 41 °C. With limited access to water and no air conditioning, the heat is oppressive.

The challenges didn't stop there. In 2019, a coup d'état ushered in a period of instability, violence, curfews, and uncertainty of what each day would bring.

Why did Jasmin stay in such difficult circumstances?

"It's the mission," she answered. "Generally, the Sudanese people are very good people. I feel loved by them. I know that they are there for me. Every time I found myself discouraged, I would go to the field to see the situation. With that, you're motivated again to continue. We don't preach there, and we don't share the Bible. But at least if they can see some good in the expatriate Adventists, they will see God through that."

Beginning in 2021, a series of events, including a lawsuit

against ADRA Sudan, made it clear that ADRA's reputation and ability to continue its life-saving work were under attack. The instigating individuals targeted Jasmin because of her influence in the office.

"They knew they could shake the organization if they succeeded in taking me out," Jasmin shared. "Things reached the point where I was no longer sure of my life."

As soon as she could, with the help of vigilant colleagues, Jasmin boarded a plane for home. Once home, she experienced a growing conviction that she needed to return.

"You know, if God is with us, who can be against us? I have a favourite text, Jeremiah 29:11. 'For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.' It's a text I cling to. God will not give me harm. If something bad happens to me, it's for His ministry."

After Jasmin's return to the ADRA Sudan office, she worked diligently to find a suitable replacement for her role. It was during this time that the court ruled in favour of ADRA Sudan and dismissed the lawsuit. ADRA Canada continues to work in partnership with ADRA Sudan to bring life-saving aid and education to remote and conflict affected areas of the country.

"Other forces might try to destroy an organization whose intention is to serve those in need," said Jasmin. "But then, they can't actually destroy an organization whose mission is led by God." ■

*Heather Grbic is a writer for ADRA Canada.*







Debbie at the entrance to the Giving Back facility in St. Thomas, Ont.

**T**he inspiration came five years ago from a person in recovery. While attending a local community services meal, she asked Debbie Boskovic, a volunteer, if she knew of any place where she could bake. The person in recovery said, “When you’re an addict, all you think about is yourself. But now that I’m in recovery, I want to give back.”

With those words, an idea took root in Debbie’s heart. She imagined a place where anyone, especially people battling homelessness and addiction, could come to volunteer and give back to the community. Debbie was persuaded that when people contribute meaningfully to the well-being of others, their own lives are changed for the better.

“Most of the time, these people are on the receiving end of help. There is no mechanism by which they can give back to others. Always receiving and never giving diminishes a person’s sense of dignity and worth,” Debbie says.

“Before COVID-19 hit, a thought came to my head. It was, *You need to start this by September 2021.* That thought came with the absolute assurance that I was going to do this, that it was going to work.” The time was finally right, and God’s hand moved in many ways to create Giving Back St. Thomas, the ministry and facility that Debbie envisioned five years ago.

ADRA Canada supports Giving Back through its Canadian Programs, which partners with churches and ministries across the country to reach those in need right here in Canada.

At Giving Back, volunteers have options for getting involved. With a certified commercial kitchen, they can bake treats for the local food banks and shelters. There is also a steady supply of cookies on offer for drop-ins to the facility. A sewing ministry creates beautiful quilts for children through

the Children’s Aid Society, which volunteers are welcome to join. Finally, there is a handyman ministry where a team responds to requests for help with small home repairs around the community.

More than three months into the ministry, Debbie and her team are slowly getting to know the street community. This population is particularly wary, so earning trust takes time. But already Debbie is seeing signs of acceptance. A few volunteers from off the street have helped in the kitchen and with the sewing. Debbie is hopeful that with time, these volunteers will feel safe enough to come regularly.

Debbie explains that individuals with a substance use disorder lose “the ability to enjoy things. They need the drugs to feel anything.” But she has boundless confidence in God’s ability to save and transform. “Imagine if by giving back, by helping others, which we know releases feel-good hormones, it could bypass some of those addictive pathways.”

She adds, “The people are the most important part of what we’re doing. The baking, sewing, and handyman jobs are just the channels through which we can develop relationships, serve our community, and reveal the beautiful character of Christ to those who need to know Him. So, let us smile and laugh a lot, show an interest in them, and listen with the love of Christ. We are not called to ‘fix’ them; only Jesus can do that. He just wants to love them through us, and He will do the rest.”

To learn more, please visit [www.givingbackstthomas.ca](http://www.givingbackstthomas.ca). ■

*Heather Grbic is a writer for ADRA Canada.*







# Champions of Faith

## Marie-Émilie Lacroix

*“But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.”—Acts 20:24, ESV*

**C**hampions of faith are “ordinary” members who make a difference in their community. This is the story of Marie-Émilie Lacroix. She is the Quebec representative for the Indigenous Ministries of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada, but her ministry is much broader than that. So we met with her to learn more.

**MESSENGER:** *Tell me about your Indigenous roots and how that has influenced you to get involved in the community through work and volunteerism.*

**MARIE-ÉMILIE LACROIX:** I am Innu from Mashteuiatsh and proud of it. I discovered my roots quite late in life, even though I never felt like the other members of my adopted family. I [felt like] an observer of their way of life that I did not understand. It wasn’t until later, when my children became independent, that I did some research, and it took me 20 years to find my biological family.

God had a lot to do with this fundamental discovery of who I am and what my culture is. It is a part of our human nature that God has put in us, the belonging to a family that gives a basis to our personal balance. In my culture, the human being is understood as having three inseparable dimensions: physical, mental, and spiritual. All three need to be nurtured on a daily basis for proper balance.

**MESSENGER:** *Tell me about yourself.*

**MARIE-ÉMILIE:** I was adopted a few months after I was born. I experienced abuse as a child, and then my teenage years and much of my adult life were very difficult. Fortunately, even as a child, I had a special relationship with God. I lived all my sorrows with Him. Then I met Him in the Bible and was baptized. He became my protector, my counsellor, and my best friend at all times. Without Him, I simply would not be here anymore.

He also provided for my happiness and balance by giving me five children and then allowing me to become a *kukum* (seven times a grandmother). I am also married to a generous

man. I love to study and have been fortunate enough to do so often. I graduated with a B.Ed. in 1972 and taught all levels and types of students for 30 years.

I had the great privilege of practising as a midwife for a good 20 years, which allowed me to see the miracle that God works in every birth. I later earned a bachelor’s degree in social work, which I completed with a master’s degree in 2019 after retiring from teaching. For the past six or seven years, I have been facilitating the Blanket Exercise across the province, which is a simulation that helps people understand the effects of colonization on First Nations people.

I have also been responsible for the First Nations ministry within the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Quebec for about seven years. This has allowed me to travel around Canada and visit several Christian Indigenous communities, certainly one of the countless blessings the Lord has poured out on me.

**MESSENGER:** *You’ve been involved in several community projects over the years. Is there a more recent one you’d like to share with us?*

**MARIE-ÉMILIE:** Yes, indeed, I have been fortunate to be involved in several projects, including a trip to Haiti in 2014 to stay with a family of a brother in the church. My husband was working to rebuild the health centre demolished by the 2010 earthquake, and I was working with women and children. I had been invited to give midwifery training, but instead I proposed an exchange of experiences, because this traditional and once universal custom was alive and well in this country. I facilitated and trained young girls to lead vacation Bible classes for two different age groups, a beautiful experience all around.

More recently, in August 2021, I went with my husband and Ngoy Kyala, then pastor of the Quebec City churches, to a First Nations community to respond to their request for help with the needs they had identified. We rented a 20-foot truck to bring clothing for all and for the four seasons, toys for the day care, educational games for the house, 10 computers for school work, and sports equipment. This trip, in the context of the







Marie-Émilie Lacroix

pandemic, was the subject of very special blessings from our Father. What joy and prayers were in the truck!

The project is not complete, however. I am still filling out funding applications for the remaining purchases of about \$160,000. I know that this is God's will and that He will answer in His time and according to His purpose. For more information on this and other ADRA projects, please visit [adra.ca](http://adra.ca) or email [stayintouch@adra.ca](mailto:stayintouch@adra.ca).

I am also involved in the opening of a community service centre in Quebec City as well as several social and international organizations. I thank the Lord for the talents and health that allow me to live new challenges and give me opportunities to witness for him.

**MESSENGER:** *What are the biggest lessons you've learned in life?*

**MARIE-ÉMILIE:** Rely only on God, for He is present in all places, at all times, and even in the biggest storms. I have come close to drowning many times in my life, drowning in grief and countless hard knocks that don't come from him. But I always got back up, albeit with more or less faith. I drifted away from my Father, lost sight of the heavenly city, and suffered longer than necessary, but through the prayers of one sister in particular, He brought me back to Him.

I have learned that He will always be with me, even if His presence is most discreet. I have heard Him say, "I love you,"

and I have accepted that He is the first and only one to love me. That is enough for me. He brought into my life people who knew how to love me despite my limitations. Humans sometimes disappoint cruelly, but God never does.

**MESSENGER:** *What would you like to say to someone who reads your story?*

**MARIE-ÉMILIE:** I like the phrase "Never give up." Like Moses, keep your arms and eyes up; it's the surest way to win every battle. I have not had an easy life, but the storm has subsided, and since then I have had peace and serenity, for His presence is my comfort and He is my fortress. Pray, speak, sing; this time is precious and winning.

**MESSENGER:** *What Bible verse or message of encouragement would you like to share in closing?*

**MARIE-ÉMILIE:** Jesus said, "I am with you always, to the end" (Matt. 28:20, ESV). His love is assured to me. His presence is unfailingly guaranteed to me. His battle suit is always available to us all. His grace is sufficient for us, and it is abundant.

*Tshingashkumitin Iame.* ■

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Rollande Giguère is the editorial co-ordinator for Le Messager adventiste du Canada.



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## British Columbia

### Longtime B.C. Pastor, David Jamieson, Elected as President of the Upper Columbia Conference

In his own words, "after much prayer and waiting on the Lord," David Jamieson, lead pastor of the Church in the Valley (CIV) in Langley, B.C., announced to his congregation on Sabbath, Dec. 4, that he felt God leading in his life and ministry to take up the responsibility to be the new president of the Upper Columbia Conference. That sister conference is part of the North Pacific Union Conference and is located in Spokane, Wash. It has a membership of over 30,000 and comprises 126 churches and 33 schools.

Pastor Jamieson explains his vision for ministry: "My passion in ministry is reaching out to lost men, women, boys, and girls with the everlasting gospel, in the context of the three angels' messages, and helping them prepare for the soon return of the Lord Jesus Christ. ... We want to encourage everyone, everywhere, to love God, love people, and serve the world."

Pastor Jamieson has been happily married to Shandra for over 36 years, and they have four children: Shantel, Stacia, Joshua, and Jared. They are all active in our church. He graduated with a BA in theology from Canadian University College in 1985 (now Burman University) and with M.Div. and D.Min. degrees in 1989 and 2009, respectively, from the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University.

Jamieson has served God's church in Canada for more than 36 years, during which time he successfully ministered in Manitoba, Newfoundland (as mission president), and 20-plus years in British Columbia as the lead pastor of the former Aldergrove-Langley church, now known as CIV.

He is a gifted speaker, a visionary leader, and a man of action. He has mentored several young pastors who served under his leadership at his congregations and have been shaped for ministry, a legacy for our church in North America. During his tenure, CIV has grown tremendously, by God's grace, and many souls were won for God's kingdom. The building of the CIV facility is his ministry's greatest capital project. The whole church family embarked on that vision, and it has become a centre of positive influence in the Lower Mainland.

The British Columbia Conference sincerely recognizes and



David and Shandra Jamieson

thanks David and Shandra Jamieson for their dedication, passion, and commitment to serve God's cause in our conference. Shandra has always been by her husband's side in a supportive role in ministry. It is a great loss for us, but we are certain that the seeds of their labours will remain among us and inspire us to continue that ministry for the glory of God. Please let us keep them in our prayers for the Lord's blessings to be poured abundantly on them as they begin this new phase in their ministry.

The appropriate committees in our conference are working to find a suitable replacement for Pastor Jamieson at CIV. ■



# Alrick Watson Named as New B.C. Conference Executive Secretary



Alrick and Tara Watson with their children, Shovonna and Malachi

After an intense search, the British Columbia Conference Board of Directors voted to elect Alrick Watson, senior pastor of the Westminster and New Life Seventh-day Adventist churches, to serve as the new VP for administration and executive secretary of our conference, effective Jan. 1, 2022.

Pastor Alrick Watson has been married to Tara, a preschool teacher, for 21 years. They have two children, Shovonna (Gr. 12) and Malachi (Gr. 9), both students at Deer Lake School. Pastor Watson brings a wealth of experience through his 18-plus years of faithful service in ministry. He holds a bachelor of arts in theology from Burman University (formerly Canadian University College) and a master's in pastoral ministry from the Seventh-day

Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University.

He began his pastoral ministry officially in 2013 as the pastor of the Quesnel and Williams Lake churches in B.C. (2013–2019). He then accepted a call to serve as the associate pastor at Westminster church and pastor at the New Life church (2019–2021). In 2021, he was appointed as the senior pastor at Westminster while continuing to be the New Life pastor. Pastor Watson is highly appreciated by his congregations for his dedication and commitment to a solid preaching of the Word, a shepherding care for “his” flock, and conducting profound Bible studies to those who seek the truth. He is blessed with a bright organizational mindset, and his attention to details is superb. Both these traits are highly important for someone serving in this position. Above all, he has demonstrated enough evidence of being a humble, dedicated, and visionary servant—one who walks with the Lord daily.

The churches pastored by Alrick Watson grew, and many souls were won for God's kingdom, through his inspiring leadership over the years. Before joining our ministerial team, Watson also served as a supervisor, assistant publishing ministry director, and director in Ontario and Alberta (2002–2013) and has led several literature evangelism campaigns in Canada. God has blessed him with a special gift of connecting with people and sharing the good news of salvation in Christ.

Mark Johnson, SDACC president, expressed the following regarding Pastor Watson: “I am deeply appreciative of the skill and love for both people and Jesus that Alrick Watson has shown through the years that I've known him. I am confident that he will be an effective executive secretary for the British Columbia Conference. Congratulations to Alrick and to the B.C. Conference. This is an excellent partnership.”

Wesley Torres, B.C. Conference president, adds: “On behalf of our B.C. Conference administrative team, I am happy to welcome Pastor Alrick Watson as its newest member. Pastor Watson has wonderful qualities as a leader and servant who will enhance our ability to offer a great service to our constituency. I am certain that our heavenly Father will bless him as he devotes his time in ministering to His church in this new capacity. I kindly request our church members to pray for him and his family.”

The B.C. Conference is working diligently to find a suitable replacement for the senior pastor positions in the Westminster and New Life churches. ■

**>> SDACC REVOLVING FUND REPORT:** As of Dec. 31, 2021, there were 373 depositors with a total deposit of \$31,792,264. There were 88 loans with a value of \$28,172,654.

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



# SDACC Hosts Its First-Ever Canadian National Pathfinder Virtual Camporee



Pathfinders from the Wisda Royals went on a prayer walk in their community.

For youth and leaders who appreciate and understand the importance of this generation as well as their contribution to the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, camporees and youth events have become a spiritual and leadership rite of passage.

The COVID-19 pandemic threatened the continuation of these events as many social gatherings were cancelled. However, this gave rise to opportunities for creativity, innovation, and change. In spite of these challenging times, ministry to children and youth continues by God's grace through online events that engage and equip the next generation of leaders.

On Aug. 4–8, 2021, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada (SDACC) hosted the first-ever Canadian National Pathfinder Virtual Camporee with the theme, #CONNECTED/#CONNECTÉ. Over 2,000 participants from across Canada and other international guests got together virtually for an exciting event focused on staying connected with Christ and His Church while getting trained and equipped to serve their local communities for God's glory.

A variety of music and Bible character presentations were featured at camporee for everyone's enjoyment. Mark Johnson and Paul Llewellyn, the SDACC president and vice-president for administration, respectively, along with conference presidents shared their words of greetings to all virtual attendees.

The opening night was graced by Armando Miranda Jr., North American Division (NAD) Club Ministries director. "Being connected with Jesus means everything. There's nothing in the world better than Jesus ... so connect to Jesus today

until He comes," Miranda said to the audience. On Sabbath morning Tracy Wood, NAD Youth Ministries director, challenged pathfinders to have meaningful connection moments and conversations with Jesus daily. Other dynamic Pathfinder preachers also helped drive the message across through short yet power-packed presentations.

During the day, pathfinders were engaged in a plethora of both online and in-person activities such as campsite setup, acts of kindness, Bible book activity, nature bingo, lashing, kits distribution, Kahoot! games, and other fun-filled events. More than 50 virtual Pathfinder honour classes were offered. In addition, the first Canadian Bible Heroes championship was held at camporee, with the following winners: Matthias Blackman, champion; Silas Rose, first runner-up; and Julia Chamberlain, second runner-up.

For the basic drill completion, the Bramalea Fil-Can Signet drill team (Ontario) bagged the championship trophy. Prizes such as Amazon gift cards, Pin2Win board games, scholarship grants and gift items from Burman University, and free tickets to the 2024 Believe the Promise International Camporee were given to those who participated in the "Heroes of the Day" activity.

The Sabbath afternoon livestream, hosted by Alyna Tshuma and Ayden Polishuk (Alberta), featured the baptism of Tony Henry (Maritime), as well as outreach reports from various Canadian conferences. As an example, the WISDA Royals (Quebec) went for a prayer walk—each Pathfinder made a card saying, "Today I prayed for you"—and then went out to pray for at least 10 households in the community. Other clubs did creative digital ministries.

Before declaring the #Connected camporee closed on Sunday evening, Edwin Martin (pastor, #Connected Planning Committee chairman, and Pathfinder liaison for the SDACC) expressed gratitude to all with great hopes that the experiences gained at camporee will turn into good memories that will impact lives forever, keeping everyone connected with God and His Church with a deeper passion to serve the community for Christ.

To relive the experience and watch the replay, please visit <https://www.camporee.ca>. We look forward to the Believe the Promise International Camporee on Aug. 5–11, 2024, in Gillette, Wyo., and the next Canadian National Pathfinder Camporee in August 2026. ■

—Edwin Martin, Adventurers /  
Master Guide / Pathfinders director,  
Ontario Conference



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

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**British Columbia Conference**

Tanya Avelar-Martinez  
tavelarmartinez@bcadventist.ca  
604-853-5451, ext. 300

**Manitoba-Saskatchewan Conference**

Aleisha Mazier  
amazier@mansaskadventist.ca  
306-244-9700

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506-857-8722, ext. 201

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## ■ Announcements

### PROCESS:

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

## ■ Obituaries

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

**Ruth (née Klatt) Jewkes** was born July 27, 1935, in Leduc, Alta., and died Sept. 7, 2021, in Kelowna, B.C. Ruth served for many years as a children's Sabbath school teacher and leader. She worked as a nurse aide, and then as secretary to the administrator, at Resthaven Hospital in Sidney, B.C. She worked as the bus driver for Vancouver Island Junior Academy and, until retirement, as the switchboard operator at Canadian Union College (now Burman University) in Lacombe, Alta. She was predeceased by her parents, Edmond and Amanda Klatt; brothers, Ted, Norman, and Gary Klatt; and sister, Inez Gabrys. Surviving: son, Darrell (Marie) of Dawson Creek,

B.C.; daughters, Linda (Paul) Boudreau of Kelowna, Sandra (Darren) Godsoe of Thornhill, Ont., and Rita Mahn of Oakwood, Ohio; foster daughter, Christina (Adam) Chalmers of Stillwater Lake, N.S.; nine grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

**Almeta (née Terrelonge) Rowe** was born Oct. 8, 1936, in Pleasant Spring, St. Andrew, Jamaica, and died Oct. 28, 2021, in Ajax, Ont. Almeta had a beautiful, soprano voice which she shared through her participation in church choirs over the years. She was a registered nurse, and in Canada, worked at Toronto Western Hospital, Scarborough General Hospital, and North York Branson Hospital in Toronto, Ont. Almeta help raise dozens of neighbourhood and church children over the years. She was a founding member of Toronto East Seventh-day Adventist Church and served as deaconess, songstress, and Sabbath school teacher for decades. She was predeceased by her parents, Benjamin and May Altica Terrelonge; brothers, Dempsey, Glassman, Leroy, Stanford, Venrice, and Winston; sisters, Cecilin, Cherry, Delceta, Dittah, Edna, Eulalee, Norma, Vida, and Vita. Surviving: spouse, Derrick; son, Adolph (Hortense) Williams of Markham, Ont.; daughters, Ann, Heather (Richard) Picart, and Renée, all of Pickering, Ont.; sisters, Aleithia, Doreth, and May Claire; and four grandchildren.

## ■ Tributes

### Edward Chipeur, 1933–2021



Ed grew up on a farm near Kelliher, Sask., and attended college at Burman University and Walla Walla University.

Wanda was the love of his life. They were married on Aug. 23, 1959, in Olympia, Wash. After teaching for over a dozen years in the western United States, Ed took over the family farm from his father. Ed retired from farming in 1987 and moved with Wanda to Abbotsford, B.C. His retirement was anything but retiring. He was active over his last 30 years pursuing three areas of great importance to him: teaching, selling

Christian books, and farming garlic.

Ed spent as much of his life outdoors as possible. His first year of marriage included a honeymoon in the Olympic Mountains and work at a fire lookout on Sauk Mountain. Family vacations always focused on mountains, wilderness, lakes, streams, hiking, and fishing. His last vacation, in July 2021, included a week on a fishing boat off the north coast of Haida Gwaii.

His legacy includes his children, Gerald (Barbara), Rebecca (Everett Davidson) and Mark (Mishka), his grandchildren, Stephanie, Lauren, William and Amy, and his great-grandchildren, Alec, Dallas, Kaiden, Madison, and Jordyn. His legacy will also continue to impact students through the Burman University Plant Sciences Laboratory established in honour of Ed and Wanda. The Lab will facilitate the study of botany.

### Allen John Fowler, 1937–2021



On Nov. 19, Allen Fowler passed away peacefully with Airlie, his wife of 64 years, by his side. It was a full circle moment as he had recently been admitted to Sherwood Care, the institution he had established and administered from 1969 to 1986.

Allen and his twin, Albert, were born in 1937 in Salmon Arm, B.C. He and Airlie grew up together and began dating as teenagers. They married on Allen's birthday in 1957. Allen joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1958.

In 1959, Allen and Airlie headed to CUC (now Burman University) in Lacombe, Alta., where he majored in theology and minored in education.

In 1966 Allen established a nursing home in Swift Current, Sask., and then another in Sherwood Park, Alta., in 1969.

After 17 years in Sherwood Park, Allen and Airlie moved overseas where Allen served in hospital administration in Pakistan, Botswana, and Zambia.

In all, Allen devoted 37 years to the health-care mission of the Adventist Church. The Fowlers retired to Sherwood Park in 2002.

Allen found calm and peace every summer on the back of a horse in the Rocky Mountains with family and friends.

Allen is survived by his wife,

Airlie; daughters, Lorna (Robin Brekkas), Barbara (Gerald Chipeur), and Vivian (David Grinde); granddaughters, Krista, Erica (Derek Broomfield), Stephanie, Lauren (Ryan Russell), Leanne (Jeff Ball); and great-grandsons, Jettsyn and Kashten Ball.

The distinctive figure of Allen Fowler in a black Stetson will no longer grace this earth, as he is asleep in Jesus awaiting the resurrection morning.

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**Upcoming Episodes on *It Is Written Canada*:** This month, we will be featuring Don Straub, a practising clinical counsellor who helps people struggling with everyday problems by giving them powerful, practical solutions. Below are the topics Don will be covering in each episode: Feb. 5: My Acceptable Addictions, Feb. 12: Emotional Dishonesty, Feb. 19: In the Hands of an Angry God?, Feb. 26: Letting Go of Deep Hurt (2/22)

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# 2022 OFFERING SCHEDULE

## FEBRUARY

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

## MARCH

Local Church Budget ..... March 05  
 World Budget - AWR\* ..... March 12  
 Local Church Budget ..... March 19  
 Conference Advance ..... March 26

\*Special materials provided.



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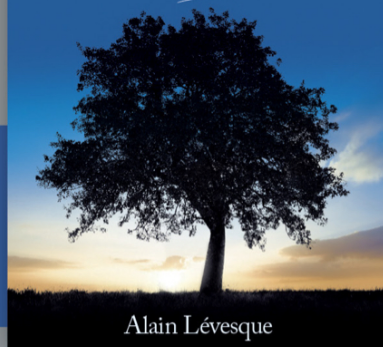
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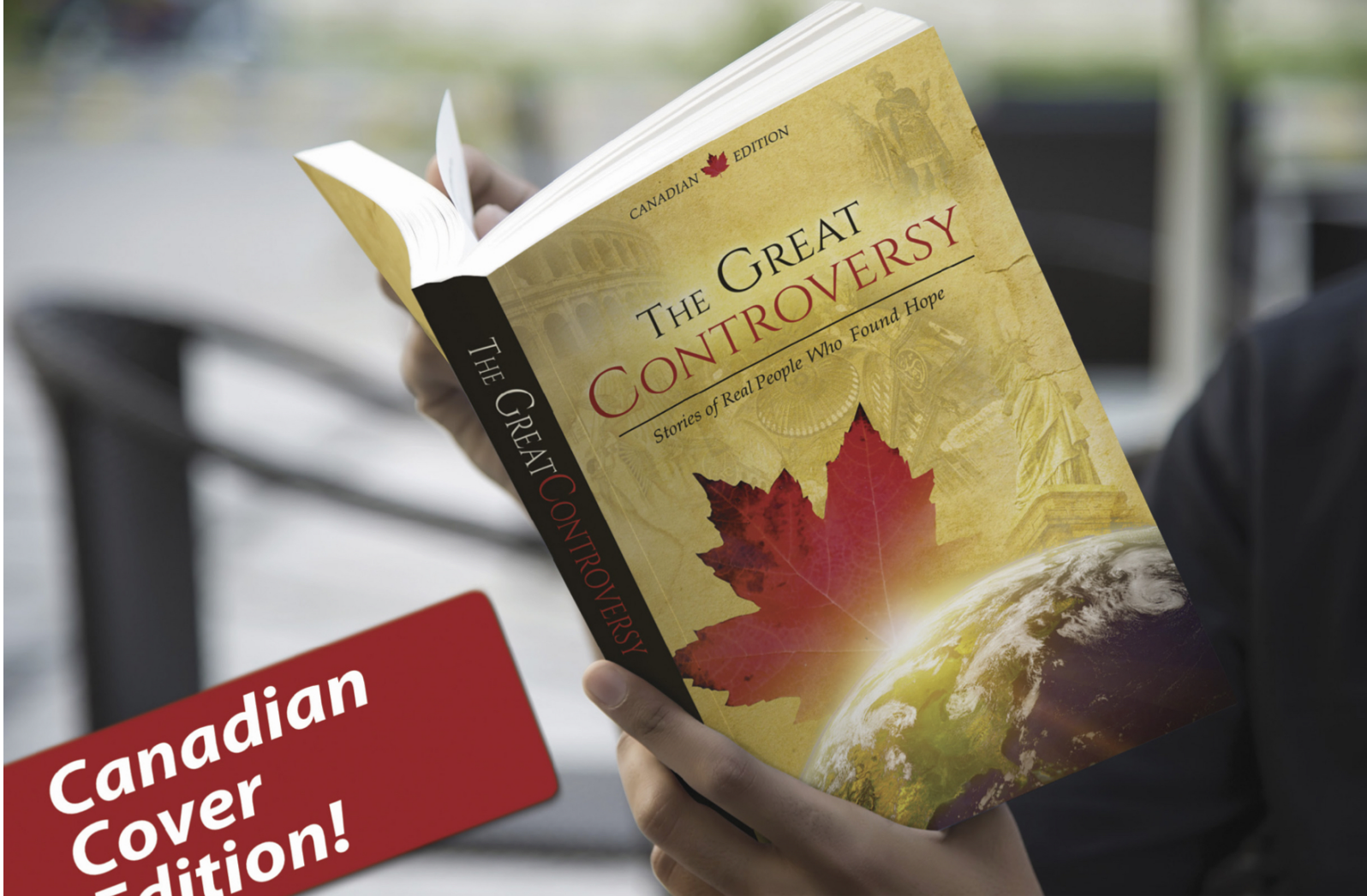
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